

Police and Detectives

SOC: 33-3021 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$77,270

Median Salary

826,800

Employment

+3.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: See Requirements (BLS)

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 20.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

7.3/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	8.0/10	Investigative	6.4/10
Artistic	4.0/10	Social	7.8/10
Enterprising	6.6/10	Conventional	6.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Empathy, Good judgment, Leadership skills, Perceptiveness, Physical stamina, Physical strength

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Police and Detectives protect people, enforce laws, and investigate crimes **to maintain public safety and uphold justice**. They patrol communities, respond to emergencies, gather evidence, and solve criminal cases. Their work is critical in law enforcement, public safety, and community protection.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy problem-solving, law enforcement, and serving the community.

What Do Police and Detectives Do?

These professionals enforce laws, investigate criminal activity, and maintain public order.

Common responsibilities include:

- Patrolling assigned areas to prevent and detect crime
- Responding to emergency calls and incidents
- Investigating criminal activity and gathering evidence
- Interviewing witnesses, victims, and suspects
- Writing detailed reports and maintaining records
- Making arrests and issuing citations as needed
- Collaborating with other law enforcement agencies and the community

Key Areas of Police and Detective Work

Officers may specialize in specific areas or investigative functions:

- Patrol and Community Policing: Monitoring neighborhoods to deter crime and assist the public
- Criminal Investigation: Solving crimes such as theft, assault, or homicide
- Traffic Enforcement: Investigating accidents and enforcing vehicle regulations
- Specialized Units: Working in narcotics, cybercrime, K-9, or SWAT teams
- Evidence and Report Management: Collecting, documenting, and analyzing evidence

Skills and Abilities Needed

Police and detectives combine law enforcement knowledge with critical thinking and physical ability.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Career Pathway

This role typically requires formal education, training, and field experience:

- High School Diploma or GED: Basic law, civics, and physical education
- Police Academy Training: Intensive instruction in law enforcement, firearms, and emergency procedures
- On-the-Job Field Training: Supervised practical experience as a patrol officer or investigator
- Continuous Learning: Staying current with laws, investigative techniques, and community policing methods

Where Do Police and Detectives Work?

They are employed in organizations responsible for law enforcement and public safety:

- City, County, and State Police Departments
- Federal Law Enforcement Agencies
- Sheriff's Offices
- Private Security and Investigative Firms (in some cases)
- Specialized Units and Task Forces

Work environments may include patrol areas, offices, crime scenes, and emergency situations.

Is This Career Difficult?

This career requires physical fitness, mental resilience, and sound judgment. Officers face dangerous and unpredictable situations while enforcing laws and maintaining community safety.

Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Want to serve and protect your community
- Are physically fit and capable of handling high-stress situations
- Have strong observation and problem-solving skills
- Can communicate effectively and work in teams
- Are committed to ethical law enforcement and public service

How to Prepare Early

- Take courses in criminal justice, law, and public safety
- Participate in physical training and fitness programs
- Explore internships or volunteer opportunities with local police or community programs
- Develop communication, conflict resolution, and critical thinking skills
- Stay informed on laws, ethics, and law enforcement practices

Police and detectives protect communities, enforce laws, and investigate crimes, playing a vital role in maintaining safety, justice, and public trust.

*Generated by StartRight • Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & O*NET*

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/police-and-detectives.htm>