

OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

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Police and Detectives

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Summary

Quick Facts: Police and Detectives	
2012 Median Pay ?	\$56,980 per year \$27.40 per hour
Entry-Level Education ?	High school diploma or equivalent
Work Experience in a Related Occupation ?	See How to Become One
On-the-job Training ?	See How to Become One
Number of Jobs, 2012 ?	780,000
Job Outlook, 2012-22 ?	5% (Slower than average)
Employment Change, 2012-22 ?	41,400



Police officers enforce laws to protect people and their property.

What Police and Detectives Do

Police officers protect lives and property. Detectives and criminal investigators, who are sometimes called *agents* or *special agents*, gather facts and collect evidence of possible crimes.

Work Environment

Police and detective work can be physically demanding, stressful, and dangerous. Police officers have one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses of all occupations. Working around the clock in shifts is common.

How to Become a Police Officer or Detective

Education requirements range from a high school diploma to a college, or higher, degree. Most police and detectives must graduate from their agency's training academy before completing a period of on-the-job training. Candidates must be U.S. citizens, usually at least 21 years old, and able to meet rigorous physical and personal qualifications.

Pay

The median annual wage for police and detectives was \$56,980 in May 2012.

Job Outlook

Employment of police and detectives is projected to grow 5 percent from 2012 to 2022, slower than the average for all occupations. Continued interest for public safety will lead to new openings for officers; however, jobs may be competitive, depending on location.

Similar Occupations

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of police and detectives with similar occupations.

More Information, Including Links to O*NET

Learn more about police and detectives by visiting additional resources, including O*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

[What They Do ->](#)

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition*, Police and Detectives, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/police-and-detectives.htm> (visited November 05, 2015).

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