



OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

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Police and Detectives

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Summary

Quick Facts: Police and Detectives	
2019 Median Pay	\$65,170 per year \$31.33 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Work Experience in a Related Occupation	See How to Become One
On-the-job Training	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Number of Jobs, 2019	813,500
Job Outlook, 2019-29	5% (Faster than average)
Employment Change, 2019-29	40,600



What Police and Detectives Do

Police officers protect lives and property. Detectives and criminal investigators gather facts and collect evidence of possible crimes.

Work Environment

Police and detective work can be physically demanding, stressful, and dangerous. Police and sheriff's patrol officers and transit and railroad police have some 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

The education typically required to enter the occupation ranges from a high school diploma to a college degree. Most police and detectives must graduate from their agency's training academy before completing 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 \$65,170 in May 2019.

Job Outlook

Employment of police and detectives is projected to grow 5 percent from 2019 to 2029, faster than the average for all occupations. The need for public safety is expected to lead to new openings for officers, although demand may vary by geographic location.

State & Area Data

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for police and detectives.

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*, Police and Detectives, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/police-and-detectives.htm> (visited March 12, 2021).

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PSB Suite 2135

2 Massachusetts Avenue NE

Washington, DC 20212-0001

[Telephone:1-202-691-5700](tel:1-202-691-5700)

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