

Essay on Primary Roles of Public Police

In 1651, the first police officers hired in Quebec, Canada, were working as guards who patrolled the streets at night. However, police today are much different from that. They are now defined as an organized civil force whose primary role is to maintain public order, detect and prevent crimes and enforce laws.

On the most important roles of public police is to maintain **law and order**. Human beings have the freedom of movement, and the police come in to ensure that that protected right is not violated. They, for example, patrol, respond to urgent calls, provide advice and directions, oversee safety arrangements for major public events and intervene in unlawful activities. They are also supposed to search for missing persons both on land and in inland water. With the help of the local people, various organizations and the public authority, they aim at preventing crimes from being committed and preventing public disturbances (Gaines & Kappeler, 1999).

Moreover, crime detection and prevention is a crucial purpose in the police. It involves the deployment of personnel trained in patrol duties and detecting crimes. The police are committed to using all measures to ensure a safe environment for all. Crime prevention is a policy seeking to reduce or eliminate crime. It involves programs, which require both **government and criminal participation**.

Furthermore, the police have the objective of ensuring that certain human rights are not violated. For example, the right to life and the right to own property are things that are protected by the law. However, police face a number of challenges when carrying out their mandate. In some cases, for instance, the police have to use force to arrest suspects and search their properties. Detention is another common practice. Human rights groups challenge the power of the police to do such things. However, what they do not fully understand is that the police are well trained to respect individual rights, and can carry out their work without degrading anybody (Gaines & Kappeler, 1999).

The police also have a role in investigating crimes. This job requires a high level of discretion. Though the police are expected to investigate crimes, it is not at all times that they have to follow the formal procedure. This means that the primary motive of the police is to **keep the peace in the society**, which mainly requires sensitivity and common sense, and commonly not legalistic interventions. In the investigation of crimes, the main choices of strategy are the proactive and the reactive policing. The reactive involves responding to public calls for help. Here, the police officers are, when not answering calls, patrolling openly to find any wrongdoings. This method involves heavy dependence on the public, which is good, but its downside comes in when we see that the patrolling is heavily inefficient, as it is not that easy to bump into a criminal who is just from burglary (Dempsey & Forst, 2013). The proactive method involves building up pictures of threats to the peace through targeting and surveillance of potential criminals (Dempsey & Forst, 2013). This method requires a specialist team that is reliant on analysis of crime patterns and discreet information. This method, thus involves a lot of discretion and sometimes the targets will be chosen out of prejudice and not criminal history.

The police are also given certain doctrines to follow to prevent breaking of people's right of privacy. They include the plain view and the curtilage doctrines. The plain view doctrine suggests that the police can only arrest a suspect on suspicion of possession of illegal items because how they perceived the item appeals to the five senses. The curtilage doctrine implies that the police can only enter and make an arrest in a curtilage with a warrant. A curtilage is an area near one's home, working place, where one performs his or her private actions.

In conclusion, the public police play a large part in protecting the public from evils. However, it is essential for not only the public, but also the government, the local authorities and other organizations to realize that the police can only do their work with their **full support**.

References

Dempsey, J., & Forst, L. (2013). An introduction to policing. Stamford, CT : Cengage .

Gaines, L. K., & Kappeler, V. E. (1999). Policing in America. New York, NY : Elsevier.