



Police Employees

Definition

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program defines law enforcement officers as individuals who ordinarily carry a firearm and a badge, have full arrest powers, and are paid from governmental funds set aside specifically for sworn law enforcement representatives.

User's note

Because of law enforcement's varied service requirements and functions, as well as the distinct demographic traits and characteristics of jurisdictions, readers should use caution when drawing comparisons between agencies' staffing levels based upon police employment data from the UCR Program. In addition, the data presented here reflect existing staff levels and should not be interpreted as preferred officer strengths recommended by the FBI. Lastly, it should be noted that the totals given for sworn officers for any particular agency reflect not only the patrol officers on the street but also officers assigned to various other duties such as those in administrative and investigative positions and those assigned to special teams.

Data collection

- Each year, law enforcement agencies across the United States report the total number of sworn law enforcement officers and civilians in their agencies as of October 31 to the UCR Program.
- Civilian employees include personnel such as clerks, radio dispatchers, meter attendants, stenographers, jailers, correctional officers, and mechanics provided that they are full-time employees of the agency.

Summary overview

- A total of 14,169 city and county agencies provided data on the number of full-time law enforcement officers in 2008.
- Cities with less than 10,000 residents reported an average of 3.5 officers per 1,000 inhabitants, the largest officer to individual rate among city population groups. (See Table 71.)
- County agencies reported an average of 2.8 officers per 1,000 inhabitants. (See Table 71.)
- In 2008, sworn officers accounted for 69.2 percent of all law enforcement personnel in the United States. (Based on Table 74.)
- The rate of full-time law enforcement employees (civilian and sworn) per 1,000 inhabitants in the Nation was 3.6; the rate of sworn officers was 2.5 per 1,000. (Based on Table 74.)

What you won't find on this page:

Line-of-duty deaths of police officers. The annual UCR publication *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted* contains extensive information on line-of-duty deaths (felonious and accidental) and assaults on local, state, tribal, and federal officers. The publication can be found at www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#leoka.