CHAPTER 1

POLICING IN THE UNITED STATES

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Discuss the concepts and mandate of the police in U.S. society
2. Describe the difficulty associated with attempting to make generalizations about law enforcement and the scope of the functions they perform
3. Identify the various levels and types of policing in the United States
4. Discuss some of the current concerns of police in the United States
5. Summarize the additional types of police and the functions they perform
Even in its most basic form, policing is a difficult and complex task. Any time one group of people is given power and authority to control the behavior of others, human nature will insert variety and intricacy into the equation. By definition, then, law enforcement is a complex and difficult profession. Unless one has been a police officer, it is difficult to fully grasp what that life is like. One of the goals of this text is to shed light on the reality of policing.

Today, police officers are under ever-increasing levels of public scrutiny. The actions that a police officer takes can save a life or produce a string of lasting, catastrophic effects. Although most police officers perform their duties honorably, ethically, and professionally, the actions of a single officer can tarnish the profession.

The mid-2010s have seen a series of incidents that the media have amplified, that have sparked sometimes fierce reactions from all sides, and that challenge the serious among us with a quest for solutions. Although these incidents represent a small fraction of the tens of thousands of police interactions that occur every day, when things go wrong, the consequences can be momentous.

After a nationwide drop in crime that lasted two decades starting in the mid-1990s, cities such as New York, Baltimore, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and Milwaukee began experiencing a spike in homicides and shootings of 30%–60% over the year before. This occurred in the wake of a series of racially charged incidents involving unarmed young Black men dying in confrontations with the police, rekindling a smoldering social tension over disproportionate treatment of minorities by law enforcement and the criminal justice system. One pivotal event was the death of Eric Garner in July 2014, after an officer put Garner in a chokehold during a confrontation on the street. In August 2014, Michael Brown was fatally shot by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, a town neighboring St. Louis. In April 2015, Freddie Gray died of spinal cord injuries he sustained while in custody of the Baltimore police. Police–community relations have deteriorated in the wake of these incidents; communities have sporadically erupted in protests, some ending in more violence. Politicians and police union representatives are caught up in the fray as well, with all parties demanding protection and justice.

This emotionally charged atmosphere has also led to increased dangers for the police. In December 2014, two Brooklyn police officers—Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu—were shot and killed assassination style as they sat in their patrol car. A review of his social media comments revealed that the shooter intended to retaliate for the killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown. Two Las Vegas police officers—Igor Soldo and Alyn Beck—were ambushed in a restaurant in June 2014 by a couple who appeared to hold a confused set of political views on government oppression and White supremacy. A gunman whom authorities characterized as an “anti-law enforcement survivalist” ambushed and killed Pennsylvania State Trooper Bryon Dickson in September 2014.

Some observers are calling the violent crime spike “the Ferguson effect” and are suggesting that the police may be holding back on their discretionary law enforcement duties due to a reticence to open themselves up to legal and disciplinary risks, beyond the physical risks they take every day. In addition, some fear that the crime spike will compel police departments to abandon progress they have made in their community-policing efforts and send them back into a more combative style of law enforcement.

Although the average rate for violent crime is still well below the 1995 level, spikes in crime are alarming to the public and the police alike. Everyone wants answers, but the causes of crime are complex and dynamic. Factors such as gang activity, domestic violence, a curtailment of stop-and-frisk strategies, and even changes in sentencing laws may have an influence on crime. Others believe that the rise in crime began before the Ferguson incident and point out that a sudden increase does not necessarily indicate a reversal of the 20-year downward trend. It is simply too soon to say.
Law enforcement is only a portion of the duties of the police, who provide many additional services, such as order maintenance and crime prevention. Here an officer directs traffic at a crowded Manhattan intersection.

This situation points to several key issues current in the larger arena of policing today that are explored throughout this text—including the complex causes of fluctuations in crime rates. The issue of public trust raises the question of the basis upon which the police claim to have legitimate authority over other citizens. In turn, the police and public both must scrutinize police policy and strategy and the methods used to accomplish those strategies, especially within the limits of the resources that departments have at their disposal. The use of force in particular must be scrutinized, especially in the face of the persistent issue of racial disproportion in law enforcement and the criminal justice system. This, of course, is in turn related to the question of how to hold the police accountable and what are the best measures of police performance. Meaningful measurement is reliant on accurate and complete data, and achieving that is a constant concern and an area with much room for improvement. Indeed, without accurate statistics, it is nearly impossible to know the truth about how the police are doing, especially when high-profile cases and emotionally charged issues dominate the conversation. True data could reveal that the police are assaulted even more often than they assault, or it could be the opposite. The data that could allow for an objective assessment of violence involving the police are simply not available.

Changes in technology and the militarization of the police are also salient issues, as are the attempts to steer police culture to a model more focused on community linkages and partnerships, on the health and welfare of the police officer, and on recruiting and hiring the personnel best suited to participate in a new paradigm. Additionally, terrorism and globalization are tied to the notion of a broader police mandate, resulting in the need for increased cooperation across police jurisdictions.

THE CONCEPT AND MANDATE OF THE POLICE

Every society needs citizens who serve as mediators and arbitrators to settle disputes among its members. The term police is derived from the Greek words polis and politeuein, which refer to being a citizen who participates in the affairs of a city or state. The contemporary police officer is just that—a citizen actively involved in the affairs of the state, in the broad sense of the word.

In all modern societies, specially designated citizens (police officers) are appointed to apprehend those who appear to have violated the rights of others and to bring them before other specially designated citizens (prosecutors, judges) who have the authority to sanction undesirable behavior.

Societies experience a tension between the needs of order and liberty, which often results in a paradox involving the need for police and the need for protection from the police.

The police in civilian society can impose or force solutions on citizens when problems or emergencies arise—such as making arrests, on the one hand, and providing services
for the physically or mentally ill, on the other. The police are responsible for protecting individual rights and ensuring an orderly society. To help accomplish the latter, police officers frequently intervene in the daily affairs of private citizens, for example when enforcing traffic laws or dealing with domestic violence. Individuals want the protection of the police when they are threatened or harmed, but—especially in the United States—they do not want the police to interfere in their activities and lives. Many early settlers came to this country precisely because they did not want government intervention in, and regulation of, their daily activities.

This often places individual police officers in difficult positions; both intervention and a lack of intervention may lead to public criticism. Some types of police agents are far more likely to intervene in the daily affairs of citizens than others; local police officers (municipal and county) are more likely than state or federal officers to investigate domestic violence, simple burglaries, and disorderly complaints. State troopers are more likely to stop speeding motorists on highways, and local officers are more likely to perform traffic details within city or county limits. Federal officers generally avoid such incidents altogether, but run investigations into federal crimes.

Regardless of the type of agent, police officers are influenced by the expectations of police administrators, courts, residents of the community, other officers in the department, and even their own perceptions, each of which entails expectations of moral and ethical behavior and accountability.

However, the job of a police officer is much more complex than most people realize. Societies expect police to achieve a variety of outcomes defined by the police mission and mandate.

- Reduce crime and maintain order.
- Reduce the fear of crime.
- Solve neighborhood problems and improve the quality of life.
- Develop greater community cohesion.

To achieve these outcomes, maintain order, and enforce the law, police do intervene in the daily affairs of private citizens. Regulation of morals, enforcement of traffic laws, mediation of domestic disputes, administration of juveniles, and many other police activities require such intervention. Neither police training nor the law addresses every conflict or intervention. Police officers exercise discretion—warn some individuals, arrest or ticket others, or refer parties in a dispute to a private attorney or professional.

Exhibit 1.1

Policing Activities Versus Enforcement of the Law

The terms police officer and law enforcement officer are sometimes viewed as interchangeable. In fact, the term law enforcement officer describes very little of what police officers do. The police in the United States are primarily providers of services. Among the services they provide are law enforcement, order maintenance, and crime prevention.

Police activities in the area of law enforcement tend to be more visible in the media and interesting to the general public. We often evaluate the police in this area rather than on order maintenance and service, on which they spend much more of their time; police provide far more than law enforcement to the communities they serve and devote a relatively small portion of the day to law enforcement activities.
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mediator. Almost all police officers practice some form of discretion with their actions. However, police must also follow department policies that in some cases remove officer discretion and require enforcement—for example, that all persons not wearing a seat belt be ticketed—or mandate the arrest of any persons they observe committing a serious felony.

The police officer’s job involves inherently problematic positions. A brief overview of the history of American policing may help us understand the origins and consequences of some of the issues encountered by police officers in a democratic society.

The police are also expected to share in a number of social service functions that require intervention in cases such as domestic violence, mentally ill and emotionally disturbed individuals, and child and elder abuse. This type of police responsibility is occurring at a time when some police have begun “severely limiting the types of calls that result in direct face-to-face responses by officers.”

SCOPE OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT SECTOR

Every day, tens of thousands of American citizens don uniforms, pin on badges and name tags, and strap on equipment belts that may carry a firearm and Taser, extra ammunition, handcuffs, pepper spray, and a baton. These citizens assemble at distinctively marked locations and disperse from these locations carrying radios and cell phones in clearly marked and equipped vehicles designed to make them easily identifiable. They go forth as police officers providing services, maintaining order, and enforcing the law in large metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas as well as on college
policing in the United States, on the borders between the United States and other countries, in airports and harbors, and in dozens of other settings.

At the same time, thousands of others cover their badges and firearms with street or business attire and assemble at distinctively marked locations, both in and out of the United States, to work on current investigations through the use of phones and computers or to disperse from these locations in unmarked vehicles to conduct surveillance, to conduct interviews, and to make arrests.

Others conceal their identities as police officers and attempt to pass themselves off as members of criminal groups to obtain information that will lead to arrests.

Other privately employed citizens don uniforms and badges more or less similar to those of the police; arm themselves with firearms, pepper spray, Tasers, and handcuffs; and proceed in marked vehicles to work in gated communities, shopping malls, industrial areas, and a wide variety of other locations to provide security for people and property.

Simultaneously, thousands of others go to work in police agencies of all types and sizes as nonsworn technicians, as communications personnel, as administrative assistants, and in dozens of other capacities.

**Levels of Policing**

American police personnel are employed at the international, federal, state, county, and municipal levels. The federal Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts comprehensive and detailed surveys of police agencies in the United States. There is one census for state and local agencies and another for federal agencies. In both cases, the most recent BJS data are from 2008. At that time, there were over 1.1 million police personnel employed full-time at the state and local (city, county, suburban) levels in approximately 18,000 agencies. Of those employees, 765,000 were sworn full-time officers, and 369,000 were nonsworn full-time; another 100,000 were part-time, both sworn and nonsworn.10

These state and local officers worked in agencies ranging in personnel size from 36,000 (New York City) to one (some 2,125 agencies with only one sworn officer were reported in 2008). Some agencies have no full-time sworn personnel, and instead hire a number of part-time officers or contract with outside agencies to provide their police services. See Table 1.1 for statistics on police personnel.

**Table 1.1 Police Personnel Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Agency</th>
<th>Number of Agencies</th>
<th>Number of Full-Time Sworn Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All state and local</td>
<td>17,985</td>
<td>765,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local police*</td>
<td>12,326</td>
<td>477,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff*</td>
<td>3,012</td>
<td>188,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary state*</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special jurisdiction</td>
<td>1,733</td>
<td>56,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constable/marshal</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>3,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal**</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: *Data on local police, sheriff, and primary state are from Reaves, 2015.

**Nonmilitary federal officers authorized to carry firearms and make arrests. Data on federal law enforcement officers are from Reaves, 2012."
The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—which uses a different methodology from the Bureau of Justice Statistics—also keeps statistics on law enforcement employment. The most recent FBI data available (from 2011) report 14,633 city and county agencies that employ over 1 million sworn, nonsworn, and civilian staff members. In addition, there are approximately 106,000 state police employees.

**State Police**

All states have some type of state police agency. In addition to their basic tasks, many of these agencies provide statewide communications or computer systems, assist in crime-scene analysis and multijurisdictional investigations, provide training for other police agencies, and collect, analyze, and disseminate information on crime patterns in the state. Also, many state police agencies have expanded their services to include aircraft support, underwater search and rescue, and canine assistance. State police agencies may also be responsible for state park security (park police or rangers), security of state property and state officials, and regulation of liquor- and gambling-related activities. State police agencies have the responsibility for traffic enforcement on highways, particularly in areas outside the city or township limits. Some agencies focus almost exclusively on traffic control (highway patrol departments), and others maintain more general enforcement powers (state police investigation departments). Typically, the state police are empowered to provide law enforcement service anywhere in the state, while the highway patrol officers have limited authority based on their specific duty assignment, type of offense, or jurisdiction.

**Federal Law Enforcement**

At the federal level, in 1789, U.S. marshals were the first police established for the purpose of enforcing directives of the federal courts. The U.S. Secret Service was founded in 1865 as a branch of the U.S. Treasury Department. It was originally created to combat the counterfeiting of U.S. currency—a serious problem at the time. Later, in 1901, following the assassination of President William McKinley, the Secret Service was tasked with its second mission: the protection of the president. Today, the Secret Service's mission is twofold: (1) protect the president, vice president, and others; and (2) investigate crimes against the financial infrastructure of the United States.
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Customs and Border Protection is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The responsibilities of the DHS are as follows:

- Prevention of terrorism and enhancement of security, management of national borders, administration of immigration laws, security of cyberspace, and ensuring disaster resilience.
- Security of the nation’s air, land, and sea borders to prevent illegal activity, and facilitation of lawful travel and trade.
- Coordination of police activities among agencies at a variety of levels, and provision of training, grants, and resources.

Other federal agencies that employ law enforcement officers include the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the U.S. Marshals Service, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the U.S. Supreme Court, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Amtrak, and the Library of Congress, among many others.

Other federal agencies employed more than 104,000 full-time sworn personnel in 2008. For the most part, they do not engage in the activities that local and county police normally provide. Relatively few federal officers (usually referred to as agents) are uniformed, and their primary duties involve investigation and control of federal crimes, such as bank robberies, illegal immigration, and interstate crimes. They are also responsible for protecting federal property and federal officials. At times, federal agencies provide

Suggestions for addressing these questions can be found on the Student Study Site: edge.sagepub.com/coxpolicing3e

According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, police are expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Reduce crime and disorder
- Reduce the fear of crime
- Solve neighborhood problems and improving the quality of life
- Develop greater community cohesion

To achieve these outcomes, police intervene in the daily affairs of private citizens. This includes asking or telling citizens not to move, where to stand, what to do, how to behave, and when they are free to leave. When citizens refuse to cooperate, police have the authority to force citizens to comply if necessary.

Police are most often called upon to stop some act of violence, unwanted behavior, or threats to public safety. In these situations, the use of unnecessary force by police can lead to negative consequences, including avoidable injuries or death, community complaints, distrust of the police, civil liability, civil unrest, and federal injunctive orders. On the other hand, insufficient use of force exposes officers to their own harm or death, negatively affects an officer’s ability to enforce the law, and may increase the danger to public safety. Fyfe (1987) concludes that unnecessary force “could be avoided by measures such as better training, officer selection, and other use-of-force options.”

1. Should police officers be permitted to use force when unarmed citizens refuse to comply?
2. What do you think would be a viable alternative to use of force in situations where citizens will not comply?
3. Which poses a greater risk to the community, unnecessary use of force, or insufficient use of force?
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training and logistical support for state and local police. Although each agency has a set of specific duties, there is still some overlap and duplication among them. See Table 1.2 for a description of the five largest federal agencies with authority for firearms and arrest.

### A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Police agencies vary in many ways beyond mere numbers. Many agencies use modern technological equipment, while others lack advanced equipment. Some officers are well trained; others receive very little training. Some routinely intervene in the daily lives of their fellow citizens; others do not. Some departments are keen to adopt new or promising strategies; others are more resistant to change. Some are held in high regard by their fellow citizens; others are not. The chapters of this text will discuss these and many other variations among police departments.

Regardless of their status as public or private, full-time or part-time, sworn or nonsworn, police personnel currently find themselves operating in a rapidly changing environment. For example, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for crime-scene mapping, traffic control, and border monitoring is slowly increasing, as is the use of global positioning systems (GPS) and sophisticated video surveillance. At the same time, the USA PATRIOT (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act extended government authority to tap phones and computers, which requires the police to process huge amounts of information.

All of these changes have been happening at a time when many municipalities are facing declining tax revenues and increasing tax burdens for middle-class citizens, leaving city officials struggling to balance public safety needs with other infrastructure needs.

Partly or mostly as a result of the economic downturn starting in 2008, the number of police officers started to decline in some areas. For example, in 25 of California’s cities that have a population greater than 140,000 people, the number of sworn police officers declined from 23,355 to 22,129 between 2009 and 2011. During the same period, an estimated 53% of counties were working with fewer staff in 2011 than in the prior year,

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**Table 1.2 The Five Largest Federal Agencies With Authority for Firearms and Arrest, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Number of Full-Time Officers</th>
<th>Agency Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customs and Border Protection</td>
<td>36,863</td>
<td>Enforcement of controlled substance laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)</td>
<td>16,835</td>
<td>Custody and care of federal inmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)</td>
<td>12,760</td>
<td>Investigation of violations of federal criminal law in a variety of areas (e.g., civil rights, terrorism, espionage, cyber-based attacks, public corruption, white-collar crime, and violent crime).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)</td>
<td>12,446</td>
<td>Promotion of homeland security and public safety through the criminal and civil enforcement of federal laws governing border control, customs, trade, and immigration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Service</td>
<td>5,213</td>
<td>Investigation of violent crimes, criminal organizations, illegal use and storage of explosives, acts of arson and bombings, acts of terrorism, and the illegal diversion of alcohol and tobacco products.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Reaves, 2012.

*Most recent data available*
Racketeering, Drug Conspiracy Charges for 27 in Schenectady, New York

[In April 2012,] United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian announced the unsealing of two indictments returned by a federal grand jury for the Northern District of New York in Albany, New York[,] which, in total, charged 27 with a federal racketeering conspiracy and/or federal drug felonies. . . .

Hartunian praised the outstanding cooperative efforts of the federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies that participated in this investigation and emphasized that his office will continue to work closely with authorities at all levels to prosecute gang members and narcotics traffickers. . . .

[Police agencies involved in the investigation included the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York State Police, the Schenectady Police Department, and the Schenectady County Sheriff’s Office.]

New York State Police Superintendent Joseph A. D’Amico said, “This multi-agency investigation and subsequent arrests extinguished an organized criminal network responsible for infusing illegal narcotics into the Schenectady community. This is a solid example of how collaborative law enforcement efforts work to make our communities safer.”

1. Despite the considerable resources directed at the “war on drugs,” narcotics continue to flow into this country. What kinds of improvements should justify a continuation of the war on drugs?

2. If you were a local police chief, how would you address the growing problems of gangs and narcotics in your city?

3. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of legalizing drugs in the United States?

Source: Racketeering, drug conspiracy charges for 27 in Schenectady, New York. Targeted News Service (USA)—Friday, April 6, 2012. Record Number: 3833234. Copyright (c) 2012 Targeted News Service. All rights reserved.
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and more than one-third of the agencies that applied for federal funding reported a drop of at least 5% in their operating budget.\(^{17}\)

One set of projections suggests that approximately “12,000 police officers and sheriffs’ deputies [were] laid off in 2011; approximately 30,000 law enforcement positions [went] unfilled; and approximately 28,000 sworn personnel faced work furloughs of at least one week.”\(^{18}\) Many communities are asking themselves how much protection can they afford or afford to be without.

### ADDITIONAL TYPES OF POLICE

#### Private Police

Estimates of private security and contract personnel indicated that between 11,000 and 15,000 companies employed at least 1.2 million private security personnel in a number of different occupations ranging from private security or contract guards, to executive protection, to private investigators, to industrial security, to contract employees for the military.\(^{19}\) (See Chapter 15.)

#### Special Jurisdiction Police

Special jurisdictions include college and university police, public and private school police, and agencies that serve transportation systems and facilities.\(^{20}\) In many cases, special jurisdiction police are both sworn and nonsworn police officers assigned to a specific geographic jurisdiction.

University police officers respond to requests for service that cannot be fulfilled by local police. As an example, the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign provides specific
class training in the following areas: active threat training, safe walk programs, crime prevention classes, rape aggression defense classes, and courses related to intolerance/hate crime prevention.21

Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs
Sheriff’s departments provide police services to counties, and sheriffs are one of the only elected law enforcement officials still in existence today. A majority of sheriff’s deputies perform duties similar to those of municipal police officers: routine patrol, criminal investigations, traffic control, and accident investigation. Additional duties and responsibilities of a sheriff include maintaining the safety and security of courthouses, which often involves sheriff’s employees serving as bailiffs. Sheriffs are also responsible for the security of jurors when they are outside the courtroom, serve court papers, extradite prisoners, and perform other court functions.22 Likewise, in most counties, the sheriff is responsible for the jail, the supervision of inmates, and the transportation of inmates to court.

Auxiliary/Reserve/Special Police
Auxiliary, reserve, and special police assist regular police officers. They usually work part-time; they can be armed or unarmed and either paid for their services or volunteer. The extent of training varies in many cases based on the duties assigned, but the training is usually very similar to that completed by full-time sworn police officers. This type of officer may be assigned to vehicle, foot, or bicycle patrol. Table 1.3 includes a list of some of these special tasks and the percentage of departments that designate personnel to perform each task.

Conservation Police Officers, Game Wardens
These types of police officers usually have full police authority and statewide or federal jurisdiction. The enforcement duties of Illinois officers, for example, include enforcement in state parks of criminal laws, vehicle laws, drug laws, fish and wildlife laws, timber transportation laws, endangered species laws, and snowmobile operation; as well as patrolling Illinois lakes and rivers to check boating safety equipment and watercraft registration.23

Tribal Police Officers
As of 2008, American Indian tribes operated 178 law enforcement agencies. A majority of these police departments are general-purpose police agencies, and the others are special jurisdiction agencies that enforce natural resource laws.24 These agencies provided a broad range of police services on tribal lands, including “responding to calls for service, investigating crimes, enforcing traffic laws, executing search warrants, serving process, providing court security, and conducting search and rescue operations.”25

<p>| Table 1.3 | Personnel designated to perform special operational tasks in local police departments, by size of department, 2013 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem or Task</th>
<th>Departments Employing 100 Officers or More</th>
<th>Departments Employing 99 Officers or Fewer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bomb/explosive disposal</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fugitives/warrants</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-entry surveillance</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical operations [e.g., SWAT]</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism homeland security</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Given the diversity and breadth of police services in the United States, there is a great deal of jurisdictional overlap. Thus, for example, a college student may be subject to the jurisdiction of the campus police, the city police, the county police, the state police, and a variety of federal police agencies all at the same time. In point of fact, which of these agencies is likely to become involved depends on the type and location of the offense in question and the existence of formal and informal agreements among the agencies. Although each agency has its unique qualities, all agencies face many of the same issues. The extent to which American police are prepared to perform their jobs varies from agency to agency.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The term police is derived from the Greek words polis and politeuein and refers to a citizen who participates in the affairs of a city or state. This is an excellent way of describing the role of the contemporary police officer—he or she is a citizen who is actively involved in the affairs of a city or state. Thus, a police officer is a specially designated citizen appointed to apprehend those who appear to have violated the rights of others and to bring them before other specially designated citizens such as prosecutors and judges who determine whether further action is justified.

To maintain order and enforce the law, the police are granted the right to intervene in the daily affairs of private citizens. Yet some kinds of police intervention generate suspicion and hostility toward the police. Citizens want the police to address their concerns and to solve the problems they bring to the attention of the police, but would otherwise prefer to be left alone. Therefore, police officers occupy inherently problematic positions in our society.

American police agencies operate at the local, state, and federal levels and come in a variety of sizes in both the public and private sectors. Especially when considering private police and their relationships with public police, the disparities in size and jurisdiction often make it difficult to comprehensively define the nature of the police, the relationships between officers and agencies, and the policies and practices of departments. Nonetheless, there are commonalities and shared challenges among these agencies.

In a democratic nation, we expect the police to operate within the framework of our defining principles—equal treatment, respect for individual liberty, and accountability. When police reflect these principles, they play an important role in social control and the overall well-being of society, which results in a more willing and cooperative public.
Ongoing social tensions point to the complex issues that departments are grappling with on a daily basis—appropriate policy and procedure, officer recruitment and training, policing strategies and operations, police performance, officer safety, optimal use of technology, and many others.

**KEY TERMS**
- Police 4
- Police officer 5
- Law enforcement officer 5
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 9

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
1. Why is it so difficult to discuss and generalize about the police in the United States?
2. Describe and discuss the various levels of public police in the United States.
3. What are some of the contradictions and tensions inherent in policing?
4. What are some of the issues currently confronting police in the United States?

**INTERNET EXERCISES**
1. Using your browser, locate information on public police agencies in your state. What is the size and jurisdiction of the largest agency? What information can you locate about your local or county agency?
2. Search for information online concerning private police in your home state.
3. Using your browser, see what you can discover about order maintenance and law enforcement as police functions.

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