

POLICE SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

JOB PREVIEW

Experience has shown that many applicants for Police Service Representative (PSR) positions consider only the positive aspects of the job while ignoring some of its less attractive features. As a result, when new employees encounter negative job features, they sometimes react by leaving the job before training is completed or after only a few months on the job. Early resignations which result from lack of accurate job knowledge contribute to a much higher than desirable attrition rate among PSR Trainees.

There are many satisfying, rewarding aspects to the PSR position. There is no question that PSRs make significant contributions to the welfare and safety of their fellow citizens. It is, however, important for all applicants to carefully consider both the negative and positive features of a new career before deciding to test for this position.

The job factors listed below are realistic features of the PSR position about which many applicants are unaware. If any of these items present problems for you, we strongly suggest you consider alternative employment choices which may better fit your career goals.

Please initial on the line provided to indicate you have read and thought about each item .

TRAINING

1. PSRs undergo a rigorous training program lasting up to twelve months. Included are classroom lectures, readings, job simulators, and supervised on-the-job performance. Training requires frequent written, verbal, and performance testing. PSR trainees must expect to receive regular reminders of errors and mistakes. Upon successful completion of training, PSRs are then put on probationary status for an additional six months. _____
2. During training, PSRs must learn and correctly use an extensive vocabulary of police and law enforcement jargon. PSRs read and understand large volumes of written material (PSR Training Manual, LAPD Manual, etc.). PSRs learn and apply a large number of complex police policies and procedures. _____
3. In training, PSRs must develop eye-hand coordination sufficient to operate and view multiple monitors, their computer keyboard, and complex communications equipment in rapid succession or even simultaneously. Systems include a computer, communications switching station, and 20-key telephone system. The computer system requires the memorization and quick and accurate use of a large number of short command codes to obtain and input data. _____

WORKING CONDITIONS

4. PSRs work within an organization structured on a “military” model. They must wear a uniform on duty, are subject to inspection, and are part of a formal chain of command. PSRs have no choice on which days or shifts they must work and may not receive two consecutive days off. PSRs may need to change work schedules on short notice regardless of personal considerations or childcare needs, and must report for duty in emergency situations such as earthquakes or fires. _____
5. PSRs work in a windowless facility four floors below street level. PSRs are unable to leave their work station at any time during a shift other than at three 15 minute breaks and a 45 minute lunch. PSRs may not eat, drink, or socialize with co-workers at their work station. Due to work load, regularly scheduled breaks may be postponed. _____
6. PSRs work in an often noisy and distracting environment. PSRs must be able to concentrate on their jobs for extended periods of time while other PSRs are taking calls, people are walking around them, and conversations are taking place in close proximity. _____

PERFORMING THE JOB

7. PSRs attend a mandatory roll call meeting at the start of every shift. At roll call a large amount of information regarding criminal activity, criminal trends, procedural matters, and equipment status are discussed. PSRs are expected to retain and use this information, as needed, during the coming shift and over the next days, weeks, and even months. _____
8. PSRs rotate among several stations, each with different responsibilities and types of calls. PSRs must qualify through training for each station. Failure to qualify will result in termination from training. Before handling 911 calls, PSRs must first qualify on the complex radio/telephone communications system requiring coordination of calls from the public and response personnel. PSRs must be able and willing to serve each, to adapt to each, learn the specific duties, and accurately handle the types of calls common to each station. _____
9. PSRs evaluate and weigh information continuously. PSRs must consider numerous factors in determining the appropriate response, among these are: the nature of the incident, the proper response agency, availability of resources, potential safety of the caller and response personnel, geographic location of incident, emotional and physical condition of caller, and criminal trends. PSRs must interpret information and make quick decisions (urgency of response, referral to other agency) on which one or more person’s safety is at stake based on experience, police procedures, and “hunches.” PSR decisions are under constant review, mistakes or errors in judgment may result in criticism and/or formal disciplinary action. _____

10. PSRs must be able to quickly and accurately recognize letters, numbers, addresses, names, and license numbers received by radio, by telephone, or on a computer monitor. Data are often presented simultaneously or in rapid succession. Data must be accurately compared with information from previous calls (suspect descriptions, license numbers) to determine if it is new, and if so, should be reported as such. _____
11. PSRs must quickly and accurately obtain information from callers necessary to determine the appropriate response agency. PSRs must control conversations and get needed information. This may be complicated by callers who are often aggressive, distraught, confused, profane, or nearly incomprehensible. _____
12. PSRs must maintain professional standards and attitudes when obscene language is directed at them, in emergency situations, and in handling large numbers of nuisance, hang up, or non-emergency calls. _____
13. PSRs must have sufficient verbal and written communications skills to efficiently relay relevant information via radio or computer system. Written communications must be concise and to the point while providing information (suspect description, incident type, caller name) the PSR determines may be important to the safety of the caller and responding personnel. _____
14. Any call may require the PSR to perform several activities simultaneously. Examples include maintaining contact with a caller while calling the appropriate response agency, updating incident information while monitoring radio traffic, or speaking with a caller while determining response unit availability. _____
15. PSRs often work at a rapid pace over which they have little control. Due to work load and the nature of incidents, PSRs are unlikely to be able to follow-up on and learn the final resolution of calls received earlier in their shift. _____

With my signature below, I state that I have read and considered each item on the job preview.

Print Name

Signature

Date

SUBMIT WITH YOUR APPLICATION