

The Team Behind The Badge

In 1921, when the Washington State Department of Efficiency appointed the first six highway patrolmen to serve the public, by providing assistance along our roadways and upholding the law, Washington State was much different from what it is today.



1.3 million people, 40,000 miles of roads, and fewer than 200,000 licensed vehicles. The Troopers were the Washington State Patrol, and the Washington State Patrol was its troopers. A badge, an armband, a pistol, and an Indian motorcycle. With that and one hundred dollars a month, you were a Washington State trooper. These were dedicated people who served with commitment and pride.

Retired trooper sound bites.

Troopers are still the Patrol, but the Patrol is no longer just its troopers. Today, the Patrol is a highly trained, dedicated group of professionals committed to the duties entrusted to them by the citizens of Washington state. They are continuing a legacy...a tradition of pride and commitment to the highest standards of law enforcement, perfected by all that came before.

Today Washington State has almost 70,000 miles of roads, over 5 million citizens, more than 3 million passenger cars, 1 million trucks, and almost 100,000 motorcycles. It's a world that has changed...and it's a job that has changed with the times.

One thing that has never changed is our commitment to excellence in public safety. More than 2,100 Washington State Patrol employees are focused on serving the public with integrity, while valuing and protecting individual rights.



Today's Washington State Patrol is a law enforcement agency that's dealing with an ever-increasing amount, variety and severity of crimes. Crimes that begin or end on our highways, and spill from there into our local communities. What used to be a routine traffic stop can result in confrontations with drug traffickers, gang members, or known felons carrying fully automatic weaponry. Patrolling our roadways is a task that requires a team of highly trained professionals with a variety of skills. This team requires a lot of support to work effectively.

What the public sees is the visible patrol - troopers and sergeants working the road. While the department remains committed to traffic safety activities, there are many other ways in which the Patrol serves our state. Over 1,100 other employees work hard to provide the support critical to answer our citizen's call for public safety.

Whether performing drug and alcohol testing, investigating crime scenes, locating missing and abducted children, conducting fire safety compliance inspections, or providing around the clock emergency communications, the men and women of the Washington State Patrol are on duty to keep our communities safe and protect our security.

It's an ongoing challenge to stay current with today's crime prevention technology, and use it to increase the efficiency of the criminal justice community. This is a challenge that we've met and continue to surpass. Fingerprints that were once laboriously checked manually one at a time are now analyzed by our highly accurate, computer-based Automated Finger Print Identification System. These prints are then electronically compared to other prints in our criminal history repository or to latent prints recovered at crime scenes. Information that's instantly accessible to investigators, preventing criminals from avoiding detection and apprehension.



Infrared total station survey devices and computer-generated collision reenactments are used for crime scene and collision investigations. Communication tasks that often took the early employees hours are now done instantaneously. Cellular telephones, enhanced portable radio coverage, and in-car computers for filing reports and gathering information. State of the art communications systems and equipment that support our troopers by being able to quickly dispatch them to a location, whether it's a stranded motorist in need, or a criminal apprehension during a routine traffic stop, and continually provide and update information that can save lives.

Visual finishes out with audio – trooper receives/knows that violator has a warrant, etc

Our people are constantly being educated in the latest methods of crime prevention technology. Education that will be invaluable when public safety is at immediate risk. How to handle toxic hazardous materials that may have been spilled during a highway accident, or volatile chemicals found during drug related traffic stops. Emergency driving techniques for various situations faced while working the road. Special units are also trained and ready to handle and defuse explosives. Detectives are trained to investigate criminal activity and are involved with drug investigations, organized crime, evidence control, vehicular assaults, and task force coordination. As other influences come into our area and travel up and down our roadways, such as organized crime, including national and international gangs, trafficking illegal drugs and weapons, the Washington State Patrol is ready to meet them head on.

The Patrol isn't an entity unto itself. Instead, it's a resource for city and county law enforcement agencies when needed. A central focal point to facilitate the transfer of critical criminal information that passes from local to state, and then to federal agencies. These

coordinated efforts include analyzing forensic evidence in our modern crime laboratories by highly trained forensic scientists. The services we provide, such as DNA typing, drug and micro analysis, are invaluable to individual communities that find it cost prohibitive to build and staff such facilities. In 1999, the Crime Laboratory Division linked with the Washington State Toxicology Laboratory, creating the Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau.

Analysis performed in Patrol laboratories has helped to solve numerous homicides, theft rings, drug crimes, and rapes throughout the state and across the country...allowing the victims and their families to put the crimes behind them and go on with their lives.



When a major disaster occurs in our state, such as forest fires, flooding, earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions, much of the Patrol's immediate response efforts are road related – making sure detours are up and roadways are accessible to emergency equipment and personnel. But we also work closely with the Department of Emergency Management and local agencies to help coordinate and support overall rescue and recovery efforts. In 1995, the state legislature placed the State Fire Marshal within the Patrol, increasing our agency's public safety jurisdiction. The Fire Protection Bureau has broad fire safety responsibilities, including

firefighter training, fire codes, safety inspections, emergency mobilization, licensing, and arson investigations. This coordinated statewide effort ensures that uniform and efficient response will take place during times of crisis.

The public often only sees the dramatic scenes involved with law enforcement – high-speed pursuits...shootings...drug busts...civil disturbances...rescues...crime scene investigations...recovered stolen goods, and confiscated paraphernalia. All of these are reactive situations to crimes in progress.

A less dramatic element of the Washington State Patrol, but equally important, is the *prevention* of accidents and criminal activity *before* they happen. This involves services such as safety inspections of commercial vehicles and school buses; annual fire and life safety inspections in nursing homes and child care centers; Patrol personnel giving public safety presentations; and creating public service campaigns to educate citizens about public safety issues that can save their life. Washington State continues to experience the lowest recorded traffic death rate in state history, proof that these efforts are working.

As the new millennium begins, the State Patrol has adopted a more collaborative approach to addressing public safety issues. The Patrol now combines the traditional concept of law enforcement with Problem Oriented Public Safety. POPS is a policing philosophy that develops working partnerships among the Patrol, citizens, and other stakeholders. Together, we help solve traffic law enforcement and public safety problems in communities throughout the state.



The Washington State Patrol is accredited by the Washington State Association of Sheriff's and Police Chiefs and is one of the few state law enforcement agencies receiving accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. This is an international organization that upholds police agencies to the highest standards in law enforcement. There are over 400 different criteria the agency must meet to attain and keep this accreditation.

The image of the Washington State Patrol that the average citizen sees is the trooper or sergeant patrolling our highways. But the next time you see one of our troopers, really take a look at who's behind the badge...and you'll see so much more. You'll see a team of people functioning in a variety of roles to meet our goal of law enforcement excellence.

You'll see our mechanics who keep the fleet of patrol vehicles running at peak performance ... technology engineers who are designing new communication methods to help officers more effectively and efficiently do their jobs ... forensic scientists providing crime solving analysis ... Patrol pilots who assist troopers on the ground with traffic law enforcement, and act as a life line, transporting donor organs to hospitals ... communication officers who handle over four million calls per year ... public information officers that provide us with accurate accounts of incidents ... academy instructors who train and educate the Patrol and other agency's personnel ... you'll see the troopers of the past who have established the legacy.



You'll see the son or daughter that wants to be a member of the Patrol when they grow up – because of the legacy. A legacy of commitment and pride. A family of generations – sons ... daughters ... following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents. A family bonded together by the fears, joy, and pride of serving.

Since its inception in 1921, the Washington State Patrol has seen many changes, but never have we wavered in our commitment to serve.

