INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

Employee and Family WELLNESS GUIDE



IACP®
International Association of Chiefs of Police

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Dear Colleagues and Families,

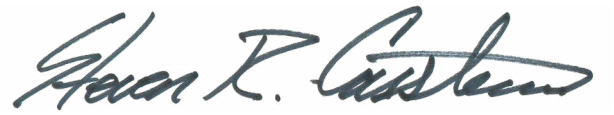
The job of a law enforcement officer is often stressful and demanding. And while an officer's individual health and wellness is critical, the lifestyle and culture of law enforcement affects more than just the officer. Spouses, partners, parents, children, and companions of law enforcement play an essential role in their officer's health and wellness, serving as an essential support system for their loved one. These families and friends also need support to respond to the unique challenges they and their officer face on and off the job. When officers feel that their family needs are met and respected, their safety, wellness, and ability to do their job improves, leading to healthier and safer officers and communities.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is committed to supporting law enforcement family wellness. This guide contains information on healthy sleep habits, financial literacy, injury reduction, nutrition, helping your child understand your job, and suicide prevention.

We encourage agencies to customize the Local Resources page of this guide by adding information for Employee Assistance Programs, peer support programs, fitness resources, agency chaplains, crisis and support hotlines, and other services that are available to law enforcement families.

We encourage officers and families to take time to sit down and discuss this information.

Sincerely,



Chief Steven R. Casstevens
President
International Association of Chiefs of Police

Insert message from agency official introducing this resource. Please delete this section prior to printing if you do not wish to add additional text.

Resource Contact List

IACP Law Enforcement Family Resources

The career, lifestyle, and culture of law enforcement affects more than just the officers. Spouses, partners, parents, children, and companions of law enforcement officers play an integral role in an officer's health and wellness and have unique needs of their own. The IACP offers a variety of tools tailored to help law enforcement family members care for their loved ones and themselves.

www.theiacp.org/ICPRlawenforcementfamily

IACP Officer Safety and Wellness

Explore the collection of IACP resources to support the safety, health, and wellness of every officer from recruitment through retirement, on and off the job, and across every rank. Learn about a wide variety of topics ranging from health and nutrition to suicide prevention.

www.theiacp.org/topics/officer-safety-wellness

Cop 2 Cop Helpline

COP 2 COP is a free, confidential, national, 24-hour telephone helpline that is available exclusively for law enforcement officers and their families to help deal with personal or job-related stress and behavioral healthcare issues. It is staffed by trained, retired law enforcement officers.

1-866-COP-2Cop (267-2267) • www.njcop2cop.com

Department Resources

Insert details on accessing chaplain services, peer/family support programs, Employee Assistance Programs, and other departmental resources.

Local Government and Community Resources

Insert details on accessing local crisis phone or text lines, counseling services, fitness facilities, and other local resources.

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness

Helping Your Young Child Understand Your Job

Children of law enforcement officers often face unique challenges when it comes to understanding their parent's job. Below are some suggestions to help navigate potentially tough conversations you may have with your child about what you do for a living. Be sure to tailor your conversation to your child's developmental understanding.

What is your Job?

When explaining your job, be sure to use age appropriate language. Provide examples of how you do your best to keep the community safe and what a typical day looks like. Discuss how you help people, protect people, and stop people from hurting others. Help your child find examples in their own life of how s/he helps others.

[2-5 years old]

"As a [police officer/trooper/ sheriff, etc.] my job is to help people who need it. How do you help people in your life?"



[6-10 years old]

"In my job, I do alot of different things, I help people in need, I try to make people feel safe, and enforce the law."



Why are you always gone?

Your child may notice that your schedule means missing some events. Be honest with your child about why and when you will have to miss things. Try some of these strategies:

- **Don't make promises you can't keep.** Sometimes things do come up unexpectedly, so be mindful of what you are committing to, as to not overpromise or disappoint your child.
- **Find a special activity or event to enhance special parent/child bonding time.** This will help your child feel more connected to you when you can't be there.
- **Explain why the work you are doing is so important.** Giving a purpose to the absence may bring your child some comfort.

Is your job dangerous?

Explain the safety precautions you take to stay safe: wearing your seatbelt, wearing your protective vest, and using your training. Clarify there is no way to guarantee your safety, but you have all the tools you need to keep you safe.

Show your child your vest and duty belt. Explain to your child that you are part of a team and that your team is crucial to your safety. Tell them who your teammates are, what they do to keep you safe, and what you do to keep them safe.





Helping Your Young Child Understand Your Job (cont'd)

Signs of Anxiety

Your child may begin to exhibit signs of anxiety when you discuss the dangers of your job. Be mindful in addressing their concerns, assuring them of your safety. Remind them you are protecting the community s/he lives in.

Anxiety is a form of stress, typically focused on what could happen. Some common signs of anxiety include:

- excessive, persistent worrying
- trouble sleeping
- restlessness
- lack of concentration
- irritability.[i]



Anxiety disorders affect one in eight children.[ii]

Model good coping skills to your child. Find healthy outlets for stress and anxiety. Exercising, journaling, or openly discussing your emotions are all ways to cope with stress and anxiety.

If anxiety results in your child's refusal to go to school, fear of the outside world, or difficulty focusing, schedule an appointment with your child's doctor.

Firearm Safety

If you see a firearm, don't touch it, leave the room, and tell an adult.

Teach your child what to do if they ever come across a firearm >>>

Help remove the mystery around your service weapons. Teaching basic gun safety removes some of the curiosity children may have.



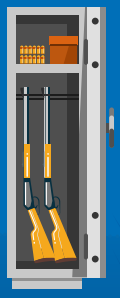
In **39%** of gun-owning homes

children ages 5-14 know the storage location of a parent's firearm without parental knowledge.



36% of children in gun-owning homes

reported handling the firearm, 22% of those parents were unaware.[iii]



Safe storage is the number one way to prevent firearm accidents. Weapons should be stored out of reach, in a safe with a lock, and unloaded. Consider adding a trigger lock and a specific gun lock box for storage when your firearm is not on your person.

[i] http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/anxiety-disorders.html# Updated March 2014.
[ii] https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/treatment
[iii] Baxley, F., & Miller, M. (2006). Parental misperceptions about children and firearms. *Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine*, 160(5), 542-547.

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness

Discussing Your Job with Your Teen

Teenagers of law enforcement families are sometimes faced with unique challenges, especially when it comes to navigating different views of the policing profession from their peers and social media. Below are suggestions for tackling potentially difficult conversations with your teenager about your career and tools you can both use to navigate these conversations.

What do you do at work?

When explaining your job, tailor your explanation to the knowledge and maturity level of the teen. Discuss what a typical day looks like, the tasks you enjoy doing in your position, and how it contributes to the profession and public safety. Encourage your teen to ask questions about your role and how it relates to their current perspective of law enforcement or what they might see on social media.

The community often sees law enforcement as the most readily accessible representative of the government. Explain to your teen how you work to engage with the community and how listening to the concerns of community members is crucial to building respectful relationships.

"My job is to keep the public safe."

"It's important to work with and listen to the concerns of our community."

Why are you always gone?

Your teenager may exhibit frustration and other negative emotions when your schedule interferes with family commitments and other extra curricular activities. Be honest and keep an open line of communication.



If you're going to be late or miss an event you promised to attend, contact your teen if possible and explain why. Validate your teen's emotions and remind him or her it's okay to feel frustrated. When you can make an event, be present and show your emotional investment.

When opportunities are present to share your profession, such as a family day or a department open house, take advantage of it so your teen can develop a better understanding of your job. Share with your teen when you talk about him or her at work, when coworkers ask how your teen is doing, or when you see something on shift that reminds you of your teenager in a positive way. It is important to illustrate to your teen that he or she plays a role in not only your personal life but your work life as well.

Why don't you trust me?

Law enforcement parents may be hesitant when it comes to stretching the boundaries of freedom for their teenagers. Since officers are frequently exposed to risks and dangers in their community, it's natural for them to be protective of their own children.



This may potentially lead to conflict and disagreements. Explain that, like other specialty professions, your role gives you a different context than other parents about safety. Just as you would have more knowledge about viruses as a doctor, being an officer means your professional experience can influence your parenting. Be transparent with your teenager and be proactive in providing your teenager with the skills needed to be safe when you are not present, giving you both peace of mind.

Discussing Your Job with Your Teen (cont'd)

Navigating the Views of the Profession in the Media

Your teen will read and see opinions from their peers, the media, and organizations that paint the profession in a negative light. Work with your teen to understand these negative viewpoints and share tools to help your teen be mindful of the information he or she is consuming.

- Help your teen develop **critical thinking skills** to gather all the facts of an incident before forming an opinion.
- Explain there are **missing pieces to every story**. Often the community may not fully understand law enforcement policies and procedures. Similarly, your teen should continuously strive to understand how history and community opinions can influence the perceptions of their peers.
- **Make your teen aware** of some agency policies to explain why you might take action in a specific situation.



Is it my job to defend you?

Children of law enforcement grow up with a very different and personal perspective of law enforcement than their peers. Remind your teenager that it is **not their job** to defend the law enforcement profession or completely disclose your profession unless he or she wants to. Instead, encourage your teen to focus on your role within an agency such as investigations or traffic enforcement and highlight your work with the community.

If your teen is experiencing bullying or harassment because of coming from a law enforcement family, **make the school aware and encourage your teen to walk away** from the situation. If harassment continues, speak with the school about additional or administrative intervention.

If your child is faced with a difficult conversation with a peer, **discuss healthy conflict-resolution and communication skills** your teen can use.



Vicarious Trauma and Fear

Teenagers with access to social media and news stories may experience stress from seeing the extent of the risk officers face in the field every day. **Encourage discussion of their feelings and fears**. Find an outlet such as a sports team or school club for your teen to channel their attention towards or seek out someone your teen can speak with who is familiar with the challenges of law enforcement. Speak with your teen about proactive measure you take to stay safe on duty such as always wearing your vest and buckling your seatbelt in a patrol car.

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness

Financial Literacy

Studies have shown that people who are financially stable are more productive, use less sick leave, and have higher morale. Instead of anxiety over paying bills and covering debt, financially stable individuals are focused on doing a great job professionally.[i] Below are some things to consider to ensure that you and your family are more financially stable.

Save, Save, Save:

Saving money can be a challenge, but having money for emergencies is crucial.

PAY YOURSELF *FIRST*:

1. **Don't make saving an afterthought.**
2. **Have a portion of your paycheck directly deposited into your savings account.**
3. **Have three to six months of expenses saved in case of an emergency.**[iii]

SET GOALS:

Have a vacation coming up? Need a new car? Set financial savings goals. **Calculate how much you will need to save and when you will need the money.** This will help you calculate how much you will need to save each month to reach your goal.

START PLANNING NOW.

The sooner you start to save, the more you will have when you need it most.

Nearly **70%** of adults in the US have ***less than $1,000 in savings.***[ii]

PLAN FOR RETIREMENT:

- Whether you have a pension plan, a 401(k), or other retirement plan, **think about when you want to retire**, how much you will need to retire comfortably, and what expenses you will need to cover in retirement.
- **Talk to your human resources personnel** for more information about retirement planning.
- **Utilize online pension calculators** such as the National Conference of State Legislatures. These show specifics on what age you can retire, how many years of service are required before retirement, and other nuances of your state's pension plan.
- **Consider other forms of savings for retirement.** There was a reported $968 billion gap between what the United States' state-run retirement systems promised to pay workers and what funds were actually available.[iv]

Open an IRA account which allows you to save with tax-free growth.[v]

[i] Stephen Miller, "Employees' Financial Issues Affect Their Job Performance," Benefits, SHRM Online, April 29, 2016, https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/benefits/pages/employees-financial-issues-affect-their-job-performance.aspx

[ii] https://www.gobankingrates.com/saving-money/data-americans-savings. Updated August 2016

[iii] https://investor.vanguard.com/emergency-fund/

[iv] Trusts, Pew Charitable. "The State Pensions Funding Gap: Challenges Persist." *A brief from the Pew Charitable Trusts: Washington, DC* (2015).

[v] https://www.fidelity.com/building-savings/learn-about-iras/what-is-an-ira. Updated 2017.

Financial Literacy (cont'd)



Budget Basics:

Creating a budget is essential. **Try using free online budgeting tools to create a realistic budget for you and/or your family. Include regular fixed expenses as well as credit card payments, savings, and other necessities.**

- When creating your budget, **prioritize your expenses into categories** such as:
  - **Fixed** expenses such as rent or mortgage.
  - **Flexible** expenses such as utilities and groceries.
  - **Savings.**
  - **Extras** like vacations, date nights, and movies with the kids.
- **Overspending on a budget can be easy** to do in a culture where credit is the accepted norm. Even if you live some place where credit isn't as widely used, being conscious of your cash flow is central to maintaining a healthy budget.
  - **Track every purchase** for a month to see exactly how much you spend per week. You might be surprised how much you spend on coffee or eating out.
- **Include the kids.** Teaching children about budgeting and money prepares them for life.
  - **Consider using an allowance** as a teaching tool to explain the basics of budgeting and saving.
  - **Make it fun!** Have kids brainstorm about where to donate money, what to spend their money on, and how to save it. Display a picture of their goal somewhere they can easily be reminded of it.
  - **As kids get older, include them in family budgeting**, teach them about being a smart consumer, various savings options, and explaining the differences between checks, debit cards, and credit cards.

Financial Literacy (cont'd)

Credit Consciousness:

Know your credit score, and your partner's credit score. While your credit scores remain separate, except for joint accounts, it is helpful to know how your family's spending habits may influence a credit score.

CHECK YOUR CREDIT SCORE *AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR.*

There are several **free online credit reporting agencies** that monitor your credit.

Credit scores range from 300 to 900[vi]



The average score in the United States is **700**[vii]



Only **38%** of people know their credit score off the top of their head.[viii]



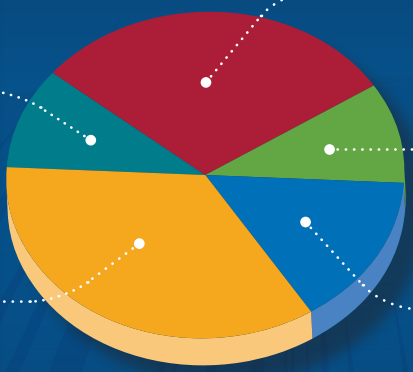
52% of adults haven't checked their credit score in the past year.[ix]

SCORES ARE CALCULATED USING SEVERAL VARIABLES TO DETERMINE YOUR CREDIT RISK.

Each piece of a credit score carries a weight and influences the overall score.[x]

10%
CREDIT MIX:
your mix of credit cards, retail accounts, and loans influence your credit score.

35%
PAYMENT HISTORY:
your history in paying past credit card accounts.



30% AMOUNTS OWED:
having credit accounts and owing money does not necessarily classify you as a high-risk borrower, but less debt is better.

10% NEW CREDIT:
opening several new credit accounts in a short period of time may represent a greater risk.

15% LENGTH OF CREDIT HISTORY:
length of credit history, and how long since you last used a credit account.

vi https://www.myfico.com/credit-education/credit-report-credit-score-articles
vii http://www.fico.com/en/blogs/risk-compliance/us-average-fico-score-hits-700-a-milestone-for-consumers. Released July 10, 2017.
viii Capital One https://www.capitalone.com/credit-cards/blog/credit-infographic
ix The National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) 2015. https://www.nfcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NFCC_2015_Financial_Literacy_Survey_FINAL.pdf.
x https://www.myfico.com/credit-education/whats-in-your-credit-score

Financial Literacy (cont'd)

Debt Discipline:

Nearly all adults in the U.S. — EIGHT IN 10 — ***have debt.***



76% of people in the United States live paycheck to paycheck.[xi]



The average household in the United States owes more than **$135,000** in total debt, including mortgage, auto loan, credit card, and student debt.[xii]

Total debt owed by U.S. Consumers is

12.84 TRILLION DOLLARS[xiii]



The average student debt in 2017: **$37,172**[xiv]



$2,858 of student debt is accrued *each second* in the United States.[xv]

Not all debt is bad.

Not many can buy a house or car without taking on some debt. These debts can be an investment into the future of your family. **However, it is vital to evaluate the amount of debt your family is capable of taking on.** How much can you put down towards the principal payment? How long will it take you to pay off this debt?

- Compound interest can result in additional hundreds, if not thousands of dollars, owed. **Pay off the debt with the highest interest rate first** to avoid paying more than necessary.
- **Pay more than the minimum** payment if you can.
- **Consider putting overtime pay or a portion of a raise toward paying off your debt.**
- **Set payment goals** and celebrate when you reach a milestone.
- **Evaluate the benefits** of consolidating like debts. You may be able to get a lower interest by consolidating all your credit card debts or student loans.

[xi] CNN Money, 2013. http://money.cnn.com/2013/06/24/pf/emergency-savings/index.html
[xii] American Household Credit Card Debt Statistics: Q2 2017
[xiii] American Household Credit Card Debt Statistics: Q2 2017
[xiv] https://www.debt.org/students. Updated 2017.
[xv] https://www.debt.org/students. Updated 2017.

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness

Estate Planning

Preparing personal and family estates are important for law enforcement personnel. They can bring peace of mind to families given that law enforcement is routinely ranked as one of the most dangerous professions[1], with thousands of injuries[2] and numerous critical incidents occurring each year.



Critical Incident Communications Folder

Create a critical incident folder containing all pertinent documents that family and friends may need in your absence. This folder should contain financial information such as bank accounts and PINs; legal documents such as a will or trust; contact information such as phone numbers for the department, police union, family, friends, and other important contacts; documentation of various insurance policies, and copies of personnel and financial forms filed with your department.

Below are several pieces to include when planning for your estate:

- **Create a will** with directives on property, assets, family, pets, and guardianship of children.
- **Make health care directives** for your wishes for the end of life, including a power of attorney for health care decisions.
- **Determine the financial power of attorney** who will be in charge of financial and property decisions in the event of incapacitation.
- **File beneficiary forms** denoting who will receive your monetary assets including bank accounts, investments, and retirement funds.
- **Research transfer on death options** for homes and vehicles to aid in easier assignment of property.
- **Consider additional life insurance** separate from that offered through your agency to assist with covering end of life expenses or provide for surviving family members.
- **Determine preferred final arrangements**, including what to do to honor your remains, the type of funeral service, and any law enforcement honors to be included in the service.

It is **important to keep this folder updated and accurate**. Major life events such as marriage or the birth of a child and changes in insurance policies should always be reflected. There have been instances where benefits have been paid out to unintended parties because beneficiary information was not updated. It is crucial to **store this information in a safe place** that can be easily accessed by select individuals.



Estate Planning (cont'd)

Line of Duty Death



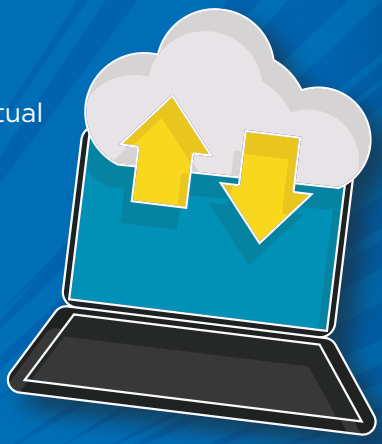
In the recent decade, an average of **153 law enforcement officers have died** in the line of duty each year.[3] With this in mind, planning for surviving family members is important for any public safety officer. Should tragedy strike, the U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) offers the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program to families of fallen officers as well as officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

The PSOB Program provides **death, disability, and educational benefits** to the eligible survivors of fallen or catastrophically injured first responders. More than 1,000 PSOB claims are determined each year. Educational benefits may be provided to spouses and children; this benefit is applied for after a PSOB death or disability claim has been approved.

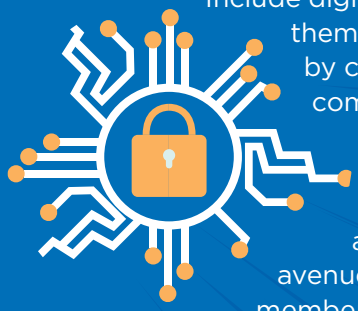
Also, some states provide additional benefits to survivors of fallen or permanently injured first responders. It's important to research your specific jurisdiction for possible benefits.

Visit **https://psob.bja.ojp.gov/** and **https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/4696** for more information regarding BJA's PSOB Program and how to file a claim.

Digital Assets



With the prevalent use of technology and the internet, digital and virtual assets are more crucial to consider than ever before. A digital asset is any content stored digitally,[4] from photos stored on phones or in the cloud, to social media accounts, bank accounts, emails, and other private data. Digital assets are a vital component to estate planning since much of the valuable information people have today is stored digitally, and often password protected.



Include digital assets and access to them in family estate planning by creating a secure but complete list of account passwords to be kept with other end of life paperwork. Many online account platforms have avenues for surviving family members to access a deceased loved one's account, but it may be cumbersome and, in some case, require legal action.

1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Economic News Release- Fatal Occupational Injuries Counts and Rates for Selected Occupations, 2016-2017," December 18, 2018. **https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.t03.htm**

2 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Fact Sheet – Police Officers – August 2016," April 2018. **https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/police-officers-2014.htm#1**

3 **https://www.odmp.org/**

4 "What Exactly is a Digital Asset & How to Get the Most Value from Them." MerlineOne. **https://merlinone.com/what-is-a-digital-asset/**

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness

Nutritional Needs

It seems like what is considered healthy changes every day. Understanding what is healthy and how to teach your family about good eating habits can be challenging given the constant cycle of fad diets and changing food pyramids. With some simple preparation, you and your family can be on track for a healthier lifestyle. Recognizing the important link between nutrition and officer and family health and wellness can lead to better job performance, healthier individuals and families, and safer communities.



Be Aware of the Link Between Stress & Food

Be mindful of the connection between stress—work and life—and the food you consume. Choose healthy food options in times of stress to lead to clearer thinking, increased energy, and better overall health.

It is common to choose "comfort foods" with increased fat and/or sugar content in times of stress, regardless of hunger — particularly officers under physical or emotional distress.[i]

- The FDA recommends limiting added sugar to **less than nine teaspoons daily**, as added sugars provide no nutritional value.[ii] This is roughly equivalent to:



6.5 slices of frozen pepperoni pizza



3 glazed doughnuts



1.5 cups of apple juice



3.3 cinnamon raisin bagels

Practice good coping skills to manage your stress levels.



Model good relationships with food to your family and encourage young children to do the same.

Find other outlets for stress—healthy amounts of exercise, journaling, or other relaxing activities.





Make these fun family activities. Try having a fun family movie night, go on a bike ride, or cook dinner together as a stress reliever.

[i] Dallman, Mary F. "Stress-induced obesity and the emotional nervous system." Trends in Endocrinology & Metabolism 21, no. 3 (2010): 159-165.

[ii] American Heart Association. Sugar 101. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Sugar101_UCM_306024_Article.jsp#.Ws-Tkljwa70. Updated 2018.

Nutritional Needs (cont'd)

Eat Healthy on the Job

Eating healthy while on the job can be particularly challenging given the unpredictability of law enforcement duties. Advance planning and thoughtful discussion of the realities of shift work can assist in better eating habits while on the job.

Assemble a week's worth of meals in advance to make it easier to eat healthy when facing an unpredictable and often shifting schedule.



Having easy, healthy meal options ready is especially important for night shift officers who may not have the same access to restaurants and grocery stores during their shift.

Spend time each week planning out meals, grocery shopping, and cooking lunches, dinners, or midnight meals.





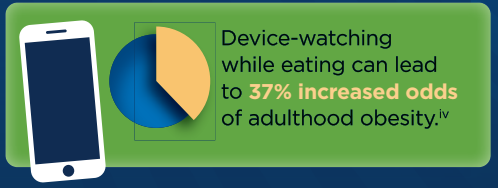
Make meal planning and preparation a family event – it can be fun. Not only does this help your family prepare for the week ahead but it offers an opportunity to model good eating habits to your children.

- **Keep healthy snacks in your car, desk, or bike.** Almonds, a low sugar granola bar, or a banana can help tide you over until you can get a filling, nutritious meal rather than settling for the drive through.
- **Have some go-to healthy options at local restaurants.** Sometimes you need to buy meals for the day, having a list of favorite, healthy meal options at local restaurants and grocery stores makes choosing a nutritious option easier.
- **Enquire at local convenience stores** for access to a microwave or toaster oven to heat up your meals when you are out on the job.
- **Establish an eating routine**, to include a break from the stress of your job.
  - Get out of your car, off your bike, or out of the office when you eat to train your brain to have a set meal time—free of distractions and to encourage healthy food consumption.

Eat Healthy at Home

Eating healthy at home can be nearly as challenging as eating healthy at work. Setting family routines when you can and being flexible with your shift schedule can lead to healthier family meals.

- **Make cooking a family event.** Create a family cookbook of favorite, healthy recipes for quick family meals.
  - Law enforcement is at a higher risk of obesity than civilians.[iii] Healthy eating is an important part of overall health and wellness.
- **Make a take-out favorite at home.** Homemade pizza or mac and cheese can be just as satisfying as the take-out version and you know all the ingredients that go into it.
- **Try new recipes regularly.** You might just find your new favorite meal.
- **Create a family dinner routine.**
  - Routinely having family meals are linked to reduced childhood obesity.[v]
  - Make family dinner a device-free zone, to promote family connectedness, and distraction free eating.



[iii] Zimmerman, Franklin H. "Cardiovascular disease and risk factors in law enforcement personnel: a comprehensive review." Cardiology in review 20, no. 4 (2012): 159-166.

[iv] Tumin, Rachel, and Sarah E. Anderson. "Television, home-cooked meals, and family meal frequency: associations with adult obesity." Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 117, no. 6 (2017): 937-945.

[v] Horning, Melissa L., Robin Schow, Sarah E. Friend, Katie Loth, Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, and Jayne A. Fulkerson. "Family dinner frequency interacts with dinnertime context in associations with child and parent BMI outcomes." Journal of Family Psychology 31, no. 7 (2017): 945.

Nutritional Needs (cont'd)

How Can You Create a Healthy Lifestyle?

Being healthy is more than just working out or excluding all fatty or sugary foods. Find a balance in your diet, exercise, and remember it is about an overall healthy lifestyle, not a temporary diet.

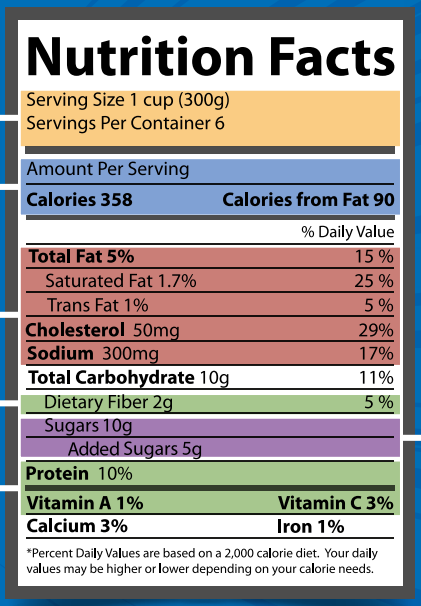
FOCUS ON VARIETY.

- Try new foods as a family.
- Choose greater variety in your food—color, nutritional makeup, ingredient makeup—this can lead to higher energy levels, which is crucial for long and unpredictable shifts.[vi]
- Aim for as many fruits and vegetables as you can. They make for an easy on-the-go snack to keep with you in the patrol car or in the precinct.
- Remember the less processed your food is, the better it is for you.
  - If the food can go bad, it is probably good for you.

LEARN AND TEACH YOUR FAMILY TO READ NUTRITION LABELS.

SERVING SIZE: Pay attention to the serving size and how many servings there are per container. New FDA guidelines require the serving size to reflect what people are actually eating on average, not how much they should be eating.[vii]

CALORIES: Pay attention to your caloric intake. Consider the nutrients and energy you will receive from these calories; high calorie count may not be all bad if it is highly nutritious. Some labels may note calories from fat as well, which shows how many of the total calories come from fat.



NUTRIENTS TO LIMIT: The American Heart Association recommends aiming for only 5-6% of daily calories coming from saturated fats.[viii]

Limit trans fat intake, as it raises poor cholesterol levels and increases the risk of developing heart disease. Trans fat typically comes from partially hydrogenated oils.[ix]

Hydrogenated oils can be found in many foods, such as margarine, shortening, fried foods or packaged baked goods.

Limit sodium intake to 1,500 mg per day or less. More can lead to high blood pressure, which is the leading risk factor of death in U.S. women and the second leading risk factor in U.S. men.[x]

NUTRIENTS TO EAT MORE OF: Getting more of these nutrients, including dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron, can lead to better overall health.

SUGAR: Two types of sugar exist: naturally occurring sugar and added sugar. Many food labels show both separately. Many names can be used for added sugar in an ingredients list including "syrup", "sweetener", and sugar molecules ending in "-ose." According to the FDA, "it is difficult to meet nutrient needs while staying within caloric requirements if you consume more than 10 percent of your total daily calories from added sugars."[xi]

[i] Raynor, Hollie A., and Maya Vadiveloo. "Understanding the Relationship Between Food Variety, Food Intake, and Energy Balance." Current obesity reports 7, no. 1 (2018): 68-75.

[vii] U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label. https://www.fda.gov/food/guidance-regulation-food-and-dietary-supplements. Updated January 2018.

[viii] American Heart Association. Saturated Fats. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/FatsAndOils/Fats101/Saturated-Fats_UCM_301110_Article.jsp#.Ws98j4jwa7. Updated August 2015.

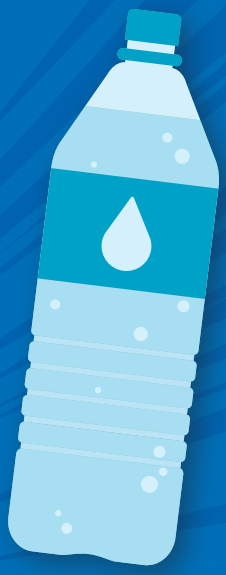
[ix] American Heart Association. Trans Fat. https://healthyforgood.heart.org/Eat-smart/Articles/Trans-Fat. Updated August 2015.

[x] American Heart Association. Sodium and Your Health. https://sodiumbreakup.heart.org/sodium_and_your_health. Updated 2018.

[xi] U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label. https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm385663.htm. Updated January 2018.

Nutritional Needs (cont'd)

Drink Enough Liquids



- **Recommended fluid intake: 15.5** cups for men, **11.5** cups for women.[xii]
- **Use your thirst level as a preliminary guide** for fluid intake, although your need for fluids depends on:
  - Climate, including the temperature and humidity you are in.
  - Exertion levels, sweating means you need more fluids.
  - Overall health, certain medical conditions, including obesity and high blood pressure, require more water intake.
- **Keep in mind how your uniform might make you sweat or overheat more easily.** Drinking lots of fluids can help keep you hydrated underneath your heavy vest or tactical gear.
- **Don't drink your calories.** Drinks have a lot of hidden sugars and are a major contributor to obesity.[xiii] Water is the most ideal fluid as it has zero calories and no added sugars or fats.
- **Carry a refillable water bottle** with you to promote more water consumption throughout your day.
  - Make it a family challenge.
    - Who can get to their recommend water intake the earliest, or who can drink only water throughout the day, no other beverages?
    - Decorate or buy fun family water bottles. If your water bottle is fun you just might drink more water.

[xii] Mayo Clinic. Nutrition and Healthy Eating. https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256. Updated September 2017.

[xiii] Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health. The Nutrition Source: Sugary Drinks. https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/sugary-drinks/. Updated June 2012.

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness

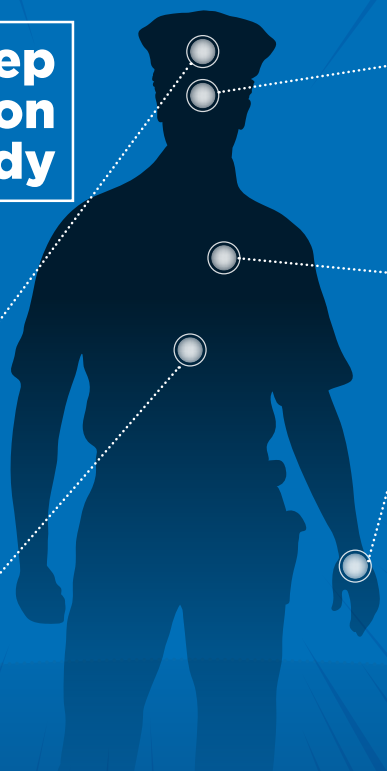
The Effects of Sleep Deprivation

While sleep deprivation is not exclusive to law enforcement, it is often amplified due to the unique stressors of the job and shift work. Sleep is essential to maintain and repair bodily functions and systems. Sleep, or lack of, has effects on all functions of the mind and body, which not only affects an officer's job, but also family wellness.

Awake for **19** hours — comparable to a blood alcohol concentration of... **0.05%**

Awake for **24** hours — comparable to a blood alcohol concentration of... **0.10%**[viii]

Effects of Sleep Deprivation on the Body



Impaired Alertness

Sleep deprivation impairs an individual's ability to remain focused and alert for long periods of time.[iii]

Increased Risk for Heart Disease

Sleep deprived persons are at a higher risk for heart disease and high blood pressure when only sleeping five to six hours a night.[iv][v]

Spatial Disorientation

Sleep deprived persons are more likely to become disoriented when navigating, and often report slower reaction times.[v]

Decreased Cognitive Processes, Problem-Solving, Concentration, and Reasoning

Lack of sleep inhibits decision making, interferes with forming sound judgements, and induces poor assessments due to increased irritability.[i]

Lack of Appetite Control

Sleep deprivation has shown to increase feelings of hunger and affect a person's ability to judge portion size.[ii]

Sleep deprivation can be dangerous

more than **40%** of police officers reported having **fallen asleep while driving**.

25% reported that happened **more than once a month**.[vi]



More than half of all police officers don't get enough sleep[vii]

[i] Rajaratnam, Shantha MW, Laura K. Barger, Steven W. Lockley, Steven A. Shea, Wei Wang, Christopher P. Landrigan, Conor S. O'Brien et al. "Sleep disorders, health, and safety in police officers." *Jama* 306, no. 23 (2011): 2567-2578.

[ii] Hogenkamp, Pleunie S., Emil Nilsson, Victor C. Nilsson, Colin D. Chapman, Heike Vogel, Lina S. Lundberg, Sanaz Zarei et al. "Acute sleep deprivation increases portion size and affects food choice in young men." *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 38, no. 9 (2013): 1668-1674.

[iii] Rajaratnam, Shantha MW, Laura K. Barger, Steven W. Lockley, Steven A. Shea, Wei Wang, Christopher P. Landrigan, Conor S. O'Brien et al. "Sleep disorders, health, and safety in police officers." *Jama* 306, no. 23 (2011): 2567-2578.

[iv] https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/signs. Updated June 2017.

[v] Valera, Silvana, Veronica Guadagni, Edward Slone, Ford Burles, Michele Ferrara, Tavis Campbell, and Giuseppe Iaria. "Poor sleep quality affects spatial orientation in virtual environments." *Sleep Science* 9, no. 3 (2016): 225-231.

[vi] Rajaratnam, Shantha MW, Laura K. Barger, Steven W. Lockley, Steven A. Shea, Wei Wang, Christopher P. Landrigan, Conor S. O'Brien et al. "Sleep disorders, health, and safety in police officers." *Jama* 306, no. 23 (2011): 2567-2578.

[vii] Rajaratnam, Shantha MW, Laura K. Barger, Steven W. Lockley, Steven A. Shea, Wei Wang, Christopher P. Landrigan, Conor S. O'Brien et al. "Sleep disorders, health, and safety in police officers." *Jama* 306, no. 23 (2011): 2567-2578.

[viii] Dawson, Drew, and Kathryn Reid. "Fatigue, alcohol and performance impairment." *Nature* 388, no. 6639 (1997): 235.

The Effects of Sleep Deprivation (cont'd)

What about working the night shift?

Our bodies naturally relax and cool down when it gets dark outside and become alert when then sun is up. **Working second or third shift can disrupt the circadian clock and make sleep more difficult.** Working against the natural rhythms of the body can cause sleep disorders and fatigue.

Law enforcement is a 24-hour job and for many, working the night shift is unavoidable. Learning how to adapt to the schedule and demands of the job can help combat some of the potentially dangerous symptoms of working the night shift.

If you work a permanent night shift:

- It is best to slowly shift your circadian clock enough to still be able to function on days off.
- The best way to do this is on days off, go to sleep as late as possible and sleep as late as possible.
- On a workday, minimize the sunlight exposure on the drive home by wearing sunglasses and utilize blackout curtains when trying to sleep.[ix]

If you work rotating night shifts:

- The circadian clock can't shift fast enough to keep up with a rotation.
- The American Psychological Association recommends avoiding symptomatic relief; caffeine to stay awake at night and sedatives to sleep during the day. These methods can be dangerous and only temporarily disrupt your circadian clock.[x]

What can officers do?

Practice a healthy lifestyle.

- Maintain balanced eating habits
- Refrain from tobacco use
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Exercise regularly
- Have an annual physical



Exercise proper sleep hygiene.



- Get seven to nine hours of sleep every night[xi]
- Limit caffeine intake close to sleep time
- Minimize screen time before bed

Talk to your doctor about sleep disorders.

- Law enforcement officers are **twice as likely** to have a sleep disorder as non-law enforcement[xii]



[ix] http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/01/night-work.aspx. American Psychological Association, 2011.
[x] http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/01/night-work.aspx. American Psychological Association, 2011.
[xi] National Sleep Foundation Memorandum released February 2015
[xii] Pearsall, Beth. "Sleep disorders, work shifts and officer wellness." *National Institute of Justice Journal* 270 (2012): 36-39.[x] http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/01/night-work.aspx. American Psychological Association, 2011.

The Effects of Sleep Deprivation (cont'd)

How can family help?

Assist in making the sleeping space **more comfortable and appealing**.

- Black out curtains, minimal electronics, supportive pillows and mattress, and a comfortable temperature are all ways to help with sleep.
- Ideal temperature for a room to sleep in is **60°-67°F**.[xiii]
- Suggested addition: minimize activity in the house when the officer is trying to sleep.



Encourage your partner to talk to a doctor about his/her sleeping habits, particularly if s/he snores frequently, has trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, or begins to show other health concerns.

Create a family bedtime ritual. Calming and relaxing environments help decrease stress and anxiety making falling asleep and staying asleep easier.

- One hour before you go to sleep have a 'wind down' hour. Do calming activities such as reading or taking a relaxing bath or shower. This is the crucial time to avoid electronic screens that can increase restlessness.[xiv]



Get into a routine as much as possible. Eating on a regular schedule and going to sleep and waking up on a regular schedule, no matter what the schedule is, all decrease the effects of sleep deprivation.

Communicate with family and friends to help distribute family responsibilities, such as sports practices, carpools, and grocery shopping.

Exercise regularly. Vigorous exercise can make it easier to fall asleep. Make it fun for the whole family. Think of creative family exercise opportunities like hiking, ice skating, dancing, and/or swimming.



[xiii] https://sleep.org/articles/temperature-for-sleep/

[xiv] https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-tools-tips/healthy-sleep-tips/page/0/1

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness

Injury Reduction

Being a law enforcement officer has routinely been ranked as one of the most dangerous jobs.[i] On average, officers sustain 30,900 injuries a year that require at least one day away from work.[ii] Officers and their families can work together to take steps to keep officers healthy and reduce injuries. The following are topics officers should be mindful of when it comes to injury reduction and tips on how an officer's family can help.



Shift Work

Law enforcement officers often work long hours that could potentially increase risk for injury. Working a night shift presents extra challenges to the body's natural circadian clock and ability to focus. Night shift officers are more likely to sustain an injury than daytime officers.

For more information about night shifts, sleep deprivation and how families can help check out *Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness: The Effects of Sleep Deprivation*.



Night shift scheduling may be unavoidable, extra cautionshould be taken to remain alert and focused.

The first night of the shift week is the most dangerous for officers.[iii] Work to maintain a consistent sleeping schedule on days off to avoid extreme fatigue.



Developing a family routine for sleeping, eating, and spending time together can contribute to a healthy sleeping environment for officers who work a night shift.

Law enforcement officers are at a higher risk of obesity than civilians.

Overweight officers suffer more severe injuries and take longer to return to work than physically fit officers.



Overweight officers miss an average of twice as many days after an injury as officers with a healthy weight.[iv]



Make fitness a family effort. Go on a bike ride, a swim, or take a hike.



Develop healthy eating habits at home with the family and while on duty.



Fitness and Nutrition

Ensuring proper fitness and nutrition routines can lead to a lower rate of injury, as well as decrease recovery time should an injury occur.

For more information about family and officer nutrition check out *Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness: Nutritional Needs*.

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Injury Reduction (cont'd)

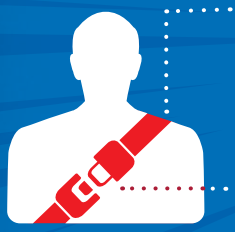
Safety While on Duty

Wear your vest. Ballistic vest wear contributes to less severe injuries and decreased recovery time. An officer not wearing body armor is **14 times** more likely to suffer a fatal injury than an officer who is.[v]



Ill-fitting, degraded, or previously punctured vests do not provide the maximum protection and should be replaced immediately.

The U.S. Department of Justice Bulletproof Vest Partnership can assist in providing new and proper fitting ballistic vests to officers or agencies in need.



Wear your seatbelt.

Seatbelt use contributes to less severe injuries in the event of a vehicle collision.

Officers wearing a seatbelt during a vehicle collision missed an average of **five fewer days** than those who didn't. Wear your seatbelt on and off the job and insist the entire family does too.

Injuries may still occur.

The sooner an injury is seen by a physician or athletic trainer, the quicker treatment can begin. Being seen at the start of discomfort or pain can reduce the chance of chronic injury.[vii]





Law enforcement officers are

3x

more likely to be injured on the job than other U.S. workers.[vi]

Take precaution and be mindful of some ways to reduce the chance of injury while in the field.

Distraction-free driving is crucial to injury prevention. Routine use of technology behind the wheel does not mitigate the risk of collision and injury. Patrol car distractions impact driving more significantly than fatigue or driving under the influence.[vii]



Distraction free driving should be a standard officers and families always follow.

Families should set up a plan of communication when the officer is on duty, to avoid unnecessary distractions or technology temptations while in the car. Consider agreeing to not contacting the on-duty officer, instead wait for them to reach out when it is safe to do so.



Ensure family members, particularly teens and young adults, understand the dangers of texting and driving.

i U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Economic News Release- Fatal Occupational Injuries Counts and Rates for Selected Occupations, 2016-2017," December 18, 2018. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.t03.htm

ii U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Fact Sheet – Police Officers – August 2016," April 2018. https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/police-officers-2014.htm#1

iii Ibid.

iv Zimmerman, Franklin H. "Cardiovascular disease and risk factors in law enforcement personnel: a comprehensive review." *Cardiology in review* 20, no. 4 (2012): 159-166.

v Tompkins, Dan. "Body armor safety initiative: To protect and serve... better." *NIJ Journal* 254 (2006).

vi Tiesman, Hope M., Melody Gwilliam, Srinivas Konda, Jeff Rojek, and Suzanne Marsh. "Nonfatal injuries to law enforcement officers: A rise in assaults." American journal of preventive medicine 54, no. 4 (2018): 503-509.

vii James, Stephen M. "Distracted driving impairs police patrol officer driving performance." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 38, no. 3 (2015): 505-516.

viii A.S. Woody Goffinett, "Athletic Trainers in Police Departments: Costs Efficiency and Risk Mitigation," Officer Safety Corner. *The Police Chief* 84 (May 2017): 12-13.

IACP International Association of Chiefs of Police

For more family support resources please visit: **www.theiacp.org/ICPRlawenforcementfamily**

The IACP's Institute for Community Police Relations (ICPR) is designed to provide guidance and assistance to law enforcement agencies looking to enhance community trust, by focusing on culture, policies, and practices.

For more information, contact us at...

ICPR@theIACP.org **theIACP.org/ICPR** **800.THE.IACP**

The public depends on officers.
Officers depend on each other.

Suicide is preventable.



Watch for the signs: Withdrawal, dramatic mood changes, increased consumption of alcohol or drugs, and hopelessness.

Safe Call Now
206-459-3020
www.safecallnow.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
www.suicideperventionlifeline.org

COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

IACP
International Association of Chiefs of Police