



## **Safety Training Contributes to a Positive Work Environment**

Perhaps no municipal department better understands the importance of having a highly trained staff than law enforcement. The Comp Alliance appreciates the time and effort police officers undertake for safety instruction, whether it be hands-on, at the academy, or in the field. By preparing police officers, we can prevent workplace injuries from happening and create a safer, positive work environment.

Effective training can help officers better understand and respond to the needs of their communities, ensuring the safety of themselves and those around them. Law enforcement officers face a plethora of hazards in the line of duty, from minor inconveniences to situations that can be fatal. Consider additions to your existing training on firearms, tactical response, emergency vehicle operation, arrest procedures, domestic dispute calls, and more to cover reoccurring issues like safe lifting, de-escalation, situational awareness, and avoiding distractions behind the wheel. Highlight stressors in policing, how to recognize when an officer is experiencing adverse reactions to stress, and how to mitigate these adverse reactions through mental health, stress reduction, and counseling services.



Officers can stay alert to their surroundings and prevent injuries by following these tips:

- **Active listening:** This is an important skill for police officers to have, enabling them to engage with members of the public and other law enforcement professionals effectively. It also ensures that they notice important details and information to relay to detectives, emergency response teams, or legal teams in courts.
- **Communication tactics:** The use of a strong, assertive tone with clear instruction can help to de-escalate events, calm fears in others, and gain the upper hand in a situation. It also aids an officer in identifying where trouble is likely to arise if persons fail to heed proper verbal instructions.
- **Avoid Distracted Driving:** There are many distractions facing police officers within a police cruiser. While operating a vehicle, especially during a chase or response, all attention should be paid to safely navigating the vehicle on roadways.

- **Safe Lifting:** Many officers sustain back, neck, and lower body strain injuries from unsafe lifting. Consider a proper lifting program for police officers, including team lifting and lifting unstable weights, like the human body. Be sure to get an initial overview of the situation and determine how best to approach a safe lift.

The main goal of safety and health programs is to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths, as well as the suffering and financial hardship these events can cause for workers, their families, and employers. A safe, well-trained police force is vital because it protects lives, improves employee health and well-being, enhances productivity, reduces costs, attracts talent, maintains legal and ethical standards, and protects a department's reputation. It's a win-win for both employees and employers.

