

- ❖ Good personal hygiene-handwashing extremely important
- ❖ Ergonomics
  - ✓ Proper manual handling and correct lifting techniques
- ❖ Ensure adequate rotation and breaks during repetitive physical tasks and awkward positions
- ❖ Ensure use of personal protective equipment e.g. hearing protection in firing range, bulletproof clothing
- ❖ Follow recommended shiftwork pattern
- ❖ Learn relaxation exercises and perform them during long waiting periods
- ❖ Follow safety procedures for working alone
- ❖ Attend health surveillance programme to identify ill health effects early and appropriate vaccinations
- ❖ Stay fit from regular exercise and training-it will help in reducing likelihood of injuries
- ❖ Seek counseling when experiencing mental burnout, stress and post traumatic stress

## *WORKING IN THE POLICE FORCE*



**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**

*FACTS ON THE HEALTH  
AND SAFETY RISKS*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Police and law enforcement personnel work is dangerous whose main job is to protect the public - they may be called to any number of work environments and perform a variety of tasks
- ❖ Main duties are to:
  - Respond to emergency calls such as crimes, accidents, and natural disasters
  - Patrol assigned areas to maintain public safety
  - Enforcement of traffic
  - Enforce laws and regulations
  - Investigate crime and accidents
  - Perform first aid
  - Educate the public on crime prevention and safety

## 2. HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS

### ❖ Physical Hazards

- Exposure to ambient environmental factors - heat, rain, wind which can cause acute (e.g. heat stress and heat exhaustion from outside duty and exposed to the sun which can be worsened by protective clothing) and chronic diseases e.g. rheumatism
- Exposure to noise especially gunshots in firing range or sirens

### ❖ Biological hazards

- Exposure to various infectious diseases including blood borne diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C while helping victims or apprehending suspects e.g. needlesticks in IV drug abuse scenarios
- Animal bites e.g. dog bites
- Other infections caused by insects or rodents when entering polluted or infested areas e.g. sewers, basements

### ❖ Chemical Hazards

- Exposure to carbon monoxide while directing traffic
- Exposure to lead while directing traffic, working on the firing range or doing finger printing work

### ❖ Ergonomic Hazards

- Musculoskeletal pain due to physical overexertion, prolonged sitting or awkward postures e.g. backache
- Upper limb disorders and back problems e.g. strains, sprains, pain, numbness
- Cumulative trauma disorders of lower extremities e.g. flatfoot due to prolonged extensive foot patrolling assignments

### ❖ Psychosocial Hazards

- Exposure to dangerous and serious traumatic events are a main source of stress
- Fatigue due to shiftwork and long hours
- Fear of prosecution

### ❖ Safety Hazards

- Risk of being attacked, wounded or even killed by criminals and suspects
- Risk of injury due to:
  - Slips, trips and falls while chasing suspects or ascending or descending from roofs or stairs
  - Cuts and lacerations due to struck by (e.g. knife) or stepping on or striking against sharp objects
  - "Friendly fire" or self inflicted wounds e.g. while cleaning firearms
- Traffic accidents due to speeds traveled and road conditions

## 3. PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- ❖ Necessity for extensive and proper training
- ❖ Learn correct "universal precautions" to prevent blood borne infections