

THE POLICE OF IRELAND

The "Garda Síochána na hÉireann" (in English - "Guardians of the Peace of Ireland") is Ireland's national police force. The force is responsible for the maintenance of law and order throughout the Republic of Ireland. The mission of An Garda Síochána is to protect life and property, to safeguard the liberties of the individual, to preserve public peace, to prevent and detect crime, to provide guidance for young people as they seek to become caring, law-abiding citizens and in so doing to provide a quality service to the public while maintaining the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and efficiency.

Organised policing in Ireland began with the Dublin Police Act, 1786. The Irish Constabulary was established in 1822 and became the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1867. The Dublin Police was established in 1836. During one of the bloodiest periods in Irish History, the War of Independence 1919-1922, over 400 policemen were killed. In 1922 the Royal Irish Constabulary was disbanded and the Civic Guard was established. The Civic Guard was later renamed the Garda Síochána and in 1925 the Dublin Metropolitan Police merged with the new police force.

Today Ireland's Police has almost 11,000 members in police force stationed in about 700 police stations throughout the country. The population of the Republic of Ireland is 3.5 million with 1.1 million people in Dublin the capital city. As policemen they are lucky to have one of the lowest levels of serious violent crimes in comparison to that of other developed countries while their detection rates are comparable to other countries.

The entry level to the force is at the rank of Student Garda. Competitions for entry into the Garda Síochána are usually held once every three years. The Student Garda undergo an intensive two year training programme, with subjects such as Law, Social Science, Communications, Irish Language, Physical Training. The training includes theoretical training at the Garda Síochána College in Templemore, Co. Tipperary, and work experience at placement stations. Irish is the first official language of the Republic of Ireland and English is the second official language. Every member of our police force must be suitably qualified in both languages. Successful students will then be appointed to the Force, and have promotional prospects up through the ranks to the level of Commissioner.

The force is headed by the Commissioner. Immediately below him are two Deputy Commissioners, one in charge of "Operations" and the other "Strategy and Change Management". The Chief Administrative Officer has responsibility for resource management (personnel, finance, ICT and accommodation) has the same rank as a Deputy Commissioner. There are twelve Assistant Commissioners: one for each of the six geographical Regions, and the remainder dealing with various national support functions. At an equivalent or near-equivalent level to the Assistant Commissioners are the positions of Chief Medical Officer, Executive Director of ICT and Executive Director of Finance.

Reporting to the Assistant Commissioners are about 50 Chief Superintendents, about half of whom supervise what are called Divisions. Each Division contains a number of Districts, each commanded by a Superintendent assisted by a team of Inspectors. Each District contains a number of Subdistricts, which are usually commanded by Sergeants.

Usually each Subdistrict contains only one Garda station. A different number of Gardaí are based at each station depending on its importance. Most of these stations employ the basic rank of Garda, which was referred to as the rank of Guard until 1972. The most junior members of the force are students, whose duties can vary depending on their training progress. They are often have clerical duties, as part of their extra curricular studies.

The Garda organisation also has over 2,500 civilian support staff covering areas such as human resources, occupational health services, finance and procurement, internal audit, IT and telecommunications, accommodation and fleet management, scenes-of-crime support, research and analysis, training and general administration. The figure also includes industrial staff such as traffic wardens, drivers and cleaners. It is ongoing government policy to bring the level of non officer support in the organisation up to international standards - thus enhancing its capacity and expertise in a range of specialist and administrative functions, and releasing more of its police officers for core operational duties.

Also there is a Reserve Gardaí.

The Garda Síochána Act 2005 provided for the establishment of a Garda Reserve, consisting of 4,000, to assist the force in performing its functions, and supplement the work of members of the Garda Síochána.

The job of the Garda Reserve is "to be a source of local strength and knowledge". Reservists carry out duties decided by the Garda Commissioner and the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. With reduced training, these duties and powers must be operated under the supervision of regular members of the Force, and are also limited from those of regular members.

As of November 2010 there are 850 graduated Garda Reserve, and another 148 in further training, the first batch of 36 Garda Reserves graduated on 15 December 2006 at the Garda College, in Templemore.

Most uniformed members of An Garda Síochána do not usually carry firearms. It is a tradition of the service that standard policing is carried out in both rural and urban areas by uniformed officers equipped only with a wooden truncheon. From March 2007 all new Gardaí have been issued with ASP extendable batons, with existing members trained in time. In addition, the Garda Commissioner announced in October 2008 that all Gardaí are to be issued with Pepper Spray. As of December 2009, all Gardaí have been trained and issued with this Spray.

The force, when originally created, was armed, but the Provisional Government reversed the decision and reconstituted the force as an unarmed police force. This was in contrast to the attitude of the British Dublin Castle administration, which refused appeals from the Royal Irish Constabulary that that force be disarmed. In the words of first Commissioner, Michael Staines, TD: The Garda Síochána will succeed not by force of arms or numbers, but on their moral authority as servants of the people.

According to Tom Garvin such a decision gave the new force a cultural ace: "the taboo on killing unarmed men and women who could not reasonably be seen as spies and informers."

Since 1989, the Garda has been part of United Nations peace-keeping forces. Its first mission was when a 50 strong force was sent to Namibia. Since then the force has acted in Angola, Cambodia, Cyprus, Mozambique, South Africa and the former Yugoslavia. The force's first fatality abroad was Garda Sergeant Paul M. Reid, who was fatally injured while on duty with the United Nations UNPROFOR at "Sniper's Alley" in Sarajevo on 18 May 1995.

Members of the Garda also serve in the Embassies of Ireland in London, The Hague, Madrid and Paris. Members are also seconded to Europol in The Hague, Holland and Interpol in Lyon, France. There are also many members working directly for UN and European agencies such as the War Crimes Tribunal.

Garda officers also co-operate with members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland to combat cross-border crime. They have also accompanied politicians from the Republic, such as the President on visits to Northern Ireland.

Under an agreement with the British Government and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Garda and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland are allowed to inspect the Sellafield nuclear facility in Cumbria, England.

The Garda Band is a public relations branch of the Garda Síochána, and was formed shortly after the foundation of the force. It gave its first public performance on Dún Laoghaire Pier on Easter Monday, 1923. The first Bandmaster was Superintendent D.J. Delaney and he formed a céilí and pipe band within the Garda Band. In 1938, the Dublin Metropolitan Garda Band (based at Kevin Street) and the Garda Band joined and were based at the Garda Headquarters in Phoenix Park.

The band was disbanded in 1965. However to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Garda Síochána it was reformed in 1972.

Besides providing music for official Garda functions (such as Graduation Ceremonies at the Garda College) the band has a community orientated programme each year performing at schools, festivals and sporting events. It has a long association with Lansdowne Road for Rugby union and Soccer Internationals, the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin and the Rose of Tralee Festival.

In 1964 the band toured America and Canada under Superintendent J. Moloney, and has also travelled to international events and represented the country at police festivals and concerts in Switzerland, Germany and Northern Ireland.

Список використаних джерел

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