

## **THE SENSE OF SECURITY IN THE UNIFORMED SERVICES, AS SHOWN IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE POLICE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Security reflects the subjective judgement of an individual, regarding the realisation of his or her need for security. The sense of internal security influences the overall functioning of a person, and the establishing of fruitful relationships. Moreover, it gives rise to successes and long-lasting achievements, while also being indispensable to leading a happy life.

The aim of this monograph was to discuss the sense of security among the uniformed services, based on the example of the Police. To this end, a diagnostic survey method, together with a questionnaire technique and a survey form, were employed.

### **Key words:**

security, risk, Police, crisis situation

### **ABSTRACT**

Poczucie bezpieczeństwa jest subiektywnym odczuciem człowieka o realizacji jego potrzeby bezpieczeństwa. Poczucie bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego wywiera wpływ na funkcjonowanie człowieka, tworzenia szczęśliwych relacji. Jest to także osiąganie sukcesów oraz trwałych osiągnięć. Jest niezbędne do prowadzenia udanego życia.

Celem napisania niniejszej monografii było przedstawienie poczucia bezpieczeństwa wśród służb mundurowych na przykładzie Policji. W pracy wykorzystano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego z techniką ankiety oraz kwestionariuszem ankiety.

### **Key words:**

bezpieczeństwo, ryzyko, Policja, sytuacja kryzysowa

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# **1 TITLE OF SECTION SECURITY MANAGEMENT – PROTECTION OF PERSONS AND PROPERTY**

## **1.1 PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF SECURITY MANAGEMENT**

The results of an own study

The study was participated in by 94 Police officers, 91% of whom were men and 8.5% women. It had been assumed that the study would cover persons with certain professional experience. The analysed group comprised respondents with both relatively short seniorities (1-3 years) and those who had worked for 21 or more years. The most numerous were respondents with professional experience of 3 to 15 years.

As many as 98.8% of the surveyed Police officers were employed in the prevention service; 2.1% in the logistic and support service; and 1% in the preliminary investigation service.

Out of the 94 respondents, 86 (91.49%) were men and 8 (8.51%) women.

*Table 1 Gender*

Gender	n	%
Men	86	91.49%
Women	8	8.51%

Out of the 94 respondents 46 (48.94%) had worked for 3 to 15 years; 39 respondents (41.49%) for less than 3 years; 5 respondents (5.32%) for over 20 years; and 4 (4.26%) for 16-20 years.

*Table 2 How long have you worked as a police officer?*

Seniority	n	%
Less than 3 years	39	41.49%
3-15 years	46	48.94%
16-20 years	4	4.26%
More than 20 years	5	5.32%

Out of the 94 respondents, 91 (96.81%) worked in a city with a population of over 100 thousand, 2 (2.13%) in a town of 20-100 thousand, and 1 person (1.06%) in a village.

*Table 3 The workplace*

The workplace	n	%
Village	1	1.06%
Town of up 20 thousand residents	0	0.00%
Town of 20-100 thousand residents	2	2.13%
City of over 100 thousand residents	91	96.81%

Out of the 94 respondents, 91 (96.81%) worked in the prevention service, 2 (2.13%) in the logistic and support service, and 1 (1.06%) in the preliminary investigation service.

*Table 4 The type of service*

Type of service	n	%
Preliminary investigation	1	1.06%
Criminal investigation	0	0.00%
Prevention	91	96.81%
Logistic/support	2	2.13%

Out of the 94 respondents, 73 (77.66%) perceived their job as dangerous, 13 (13.83%) had no opinion about it, and 8 people (8.51%) did not consider their job as dangerous.

*Table 5 In your opinion, is your job dangerous? please elaborate briefly*

Response to question 5	n	%
Yes	73	77.66%
No	8	8.51%
I don't know	13	13.83%

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide more specific answers, which included: health loss or death, contact with the criminal element, contact with dangerous individuals, uncertainty as to how a given situation might develop, interventions involving intoxicated persons, exposure to aggressive behaviour, stress, working in patrol cars on roads, the risk of accidents, unending road incidents, contact with various people, usually in motor vehicles, disciplinary procedures, terrorist threats, working at night, contact with pathological environments, high responsibility.

Out of the 94 respondents, 54 (57.45%) said the equipment did not provide them with adequate protection, 35 people (37.23%) were of the opposite view, and 5 (5.32%) had no opinion about it.

*Table 6 In your opinion, does the equipment of police officers provide them with the adequate protection?*

Response to question 6	n	%
Yes	35	37.23%
No	54	57.45%
I don't know	5	5.32%

What kind of equipment would, in your view, improve your protection while on duty? (an open-ended question)

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide more specific answers, which included: conducted electrical weapons, smooth-bore firearms, bulletproof jackets, patrol cars in running order, with good suspension and brakes, new patrol cars, terminals in running order, microphones for the stations, ID scanners, new uniforms and equipment.

Out of the 94 respondents, 83 (88.30%) could count on support from their colleagues, 19 people (20.21%) said this support came from their superiors, and 3 respondents (3.19%) mentioned other people as the source of support (to 2 of them it was their partners and to 1 his/her family).

*Table 7 On whose support can you count in your work?*

Response to question 10	n	% *
Colleagues	83	88.30%
Superiors	19	20.21%
Other people	3	3.19%

\* The percentage values do not add up to 100%, as this was a multiple-choice question

79 out of 94 respondents (84.04%) have experienced verbal aggression while on duty, and 15 respondents (15.96%) have had no such experience.

*Table 8 Have you ever experienced any verbal aggression while on duty?*

Response to question 12	No.	%
Yes	79	84.04%
No	15	15.96%

38 out of 94 respondents (40.43%) have experienced infrequent verbal aggression (once a month). 25 respondents (26.60%) experience it sometimes (once a week), 15 respondents (15.96%) never, 9 respondents (9.57%) often (2-3 times a week), and 7 respondents (7.45%) very often (every day).

*Table 9 How often does it happen?*

Response to question 13	No.	%
Never	15	15.96%
Rarely (once a month)	38	40.43%
Sometimes (once a week)	25	26.60%
Often (2-3 times a week)	9	9.57%
Very often (every day)	7	7.45%

53 out of 94 respondents (56.38%) have been shouted at, 34 respondents (36.17%) have experienced threats and/or insults, 27 respondents (28.72%) ridicule related to their profession, and 1 respondent (1.06%) a different kind of aggression (an accusation that the police use fines to mitigate their budget shortfalls).

*Table 10 What kind of aggression is it?*

Response to question 14	n	% *
Shouting	53	56.38%
Threats	34	36.17%
Ridicule related to respondent's profession	27	28.72%
Insults	34	36.17%
Other	1	1.06%

\* The percentage values do not add up to 100%, as this was a multiple-choice question.

50 out of 94 respondents (53.19%) have not experienced any physical aggression while on duty, and 44 (46.81%) respondents have had such experience.

*Table 11 Have you ever experienced any physical aggression while on duty?*

Response to question 15	No.	%
Yes	44	46.81%
No	50	53.19%

50 out of 94 respondents (53.19%) have never experienced any physical aggression while on duty, 37 respondents (39.36%) have experienced infrequent physical aggression (once a month), 5 respondents (5.32%) experience it sometimes (once a week), 1 respondent (1.06%) often (2-3 times a week) and 1 respondent (1.06%) very often (every day).

*Table 12 How often does this happen?*

Response to question 16	No.	%
Never	50	53.19%
Rarely (once a month)	37	39.36%
Sometimes (once a week)	5	5.32%
Often (2-3 times a week)	1	1.06%
Very often (every day)	1	1.06%

36 out of 94 respondents (38.30%) have experienced pushing or pulling, 10 respondents (10.64%) hitting or kicking, 4 respondents (4.26%) knife attack, and 1 respondent (1.06%) gun attack.

*Table 13 What kind of aggression is it?*

Response to question 17	No.	% *
Pushing or pulling	36	38.30%
Hitting or kicking	10	10.64%
Knife attack	4	4.26%
Gun attack	1	1.06%
Other	0	0.00%

\* The percentage values do not add up to 100%, as this was a multiple-choice question.

70 out of 94 respondents (74.47%) do not experience any fear before going on duty, 17 respondents (18.09%) report that they sometimes experience such fear, and 7 respondents (7.45%) regularly do so.

*Table 14 Do you experience fear before going on duty*

Response to question 18	No.	%
Yes	7	7.45%
No	70	74.47%
Sometimes	17	18.09%

45 out of 94 respondents (47.87%) fear legal responsibility while on duty, 32 respondents (34.04%) fear the reaction of their superiors, 17 respondents (18.09%) a lack of support and understanding from their superiors, 11 respondents (11.70%) physical aggression, 8 respondents (8.51%) nothing, 7 respondents (7.45%) verbal aggression, and 1 respondent (1.06%) indicated other threats (infectious diseases)

*Table 15 What do you fear most while on duty?*

Response to question 19	No.	% *
Verbal aggression	7	7.45%
Physical aggression	11	11.70%
Legal responsibility	45	47.87%
Lack of support and understanding from superiors	17	18.09%
Superiors' reaction	32	34.04%
Nothing	8	8.51%
Other	1	1.06%

\* The percentage values do not add up to 100%, as this was a multiple-choice question.

67 out of 94 respondents (71.28%) have not considered changing their jobs, and 27 respondents (28.72%) would do so if they could.

*Table 16 Would you change your job if you could?*

Response to question 26	No.	%
Yes	27	28.72%
No	67	71.28%

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide more specific answers, which included:

Opinions expressed by respondents in favour of their current job:

Working as a police officer gives me job satisfaction, I like my job, Job security, I hope that the job I have chosen will let me fulfil my professional objectives, Good salary, I changed my previous job to this one because I always wanted to do it, I have gained creditworthiness, This job gives me professional development prospects, I have always wanted to work for the police, Job stability, This job is satisfactory despite low wages and danger, Someone has got to do this job.

Opinions expressed by respondents in favour of changing their job

- Low wages, I would like to change the department I work for, No prospects of self-fulfilment, High likelihood of having an accident, Holidays and standard working system, The need to be available and involved at all times, Monotony at work, Responsibility and continual changes related to document preparation.

78 out of 94 respondents (82.98%) think that this profession is not considered reputable and respectable by the public, while 16 respondents (17.02%) say that it is.

*Table 17 Do you think that the profession of police officer is nowadays considered reputable and respectable by the public?*

Response to question 27	No.	%
Yes	16	17.02%
No	78	82.98%

Respondents were given the opportunity to justify why they think that this profession is respectable: Prestigious institution, Exclusive department, This profession has always enjoyed respect from the public, The public feels safer.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to justify why they thought their profession was not respectable, and quoted: Lack of support from the media, The public thinks that we impose too many fines, Police officers are ridiculed because their use of coercion means is legally restrained, Police officers are ridiculed because of low wages, The public does not respect the uniformed services, People have rights, but no duties, The public sees us as "the inevitable evil", A potential criminal actually has more rights than the police, Too few powers are vested in the police, The police is perceived as a repressive service, Negative opinions regarding police officers available online, The police is perceived as an institution that harms people, This profession has a negative perception among the public, Social habits have hardly changed since the PPR times, All claims, even the most absurd ones, are considered in detail, People dislike the police, The public is not supportive and makes it difficult for the police to perform their duties, The disrespect and impunity of the public, Police officers do not respect each another, so why should others respect us?

34 out of 94 respondents (36.17%) pursue some activities that improve their physical performance twice a week, 29 respondents (30.85%) once a month, 17 respondents (18.09%) once a week, 9 respondents (9.57%) twice a month, and 5 respondents (5.32%) never.

*Table 18 Do you pursue any activity that improves your physical performance?*

Response to question 28	No.	%
Once a week	17	18.09%
Twice a week	34	36.17%
Once a month	29	30.85%
Twice a month	9	9.57%
Never	5	5.32%

What measures do you take to make your duty safer? (an open-ended question)

Respondents, were given the opportunity to provide more specific answers, which included: Physical activity, Training courses, Training pursued on my own, Caution, Mutual assurance, I choose my partners carefully, Limited trust towards



people, Staying focused, I comply with the safety regulations (e.g. the safe triangle), Being familiar with the regulations, Experience, I take care of my equipment and use my own devices (e.g. torch and gloves), Accident insurance, Common sense, Being familiar with the means of physical coercion, Compliance with the binding procedures.

#### Final remarks

Respondents were also asked to assess their physical performance. As many as 89% of the fire fighters surveyed, and 84% of the police officers and municipal guards, assessed their physical performance as very good or good, whereas 2.13% of the police officers, 1.59% of the municipal guards and no fire fighter considered their physical performance weak. Over 90% of respondents in each group thought that physical performance exerted a considerable impact on the sense of security while on duty.

As regards the equipment available, the most frequent complaints are made by the municipal guards surveyed (65%), followed by the police officers (57.4%) and the fire fighters (35.8%).

Adequate support and legal regulations that should guarantee safety are indispensable to those who hold dangerous jobs. As revealed in the results analysed, this support is usually received from fellow workers. This involves 97.9% of the fire fighters surveyed, 91.2% of the municipal guards and 88.3% of the police officers. The second most frequently selected option refers to the support received from superiors (21.4% as regards the municipal guards, 21.2% the police officers and 20% the fire fighters). Respondents claim that the binding legal regulations pertaining to their professions fail to guarantee safety. The options regarding no or little safety while on duty were quoted by 88% of the municipal guards surveyed, 86% of the police officers and 78% of the fire fighters.

Uniformed workers face a high risk of aggression, both verbal and physical. Both types of aggression have been indicated by all surveyed groups, including 92% in the case of the municipal guards, 84% in the case of the police officers and 51% in the case of the fire fighters. The "Shouting" option is the most frequently chosen by the police officers, and the least frequently by the fire fighters, whereas "Threats", "Ridicule related to respondent's profession" and "Insults" are the most frequently indicated options by the municipal guards, and the least frequently chosen by the fire fighters.

Physical aggression while on duty has been most frequently experienced by the municipal guards (71.4%) and the police officers (46.8%), and much less frequently by the fire fighters (only 4.1%). As regards the kind of aggression, "Pushing or pulling" and "Hitting or kicking" are the most common options among the municipal guards, and the least common among the fire fighters. Some respondents have also indicated "Knife attack" and "Gun attack". In consequence, fear before going on duty is experienced by 7.45% of the police officers surveyed, 5.52% of the fire fighters and

only 1.59% of the municipal guards although it is the last group that has been most frequently subjected to physical aggression.

Respondents could also express their willingness or unwillingness to change their profession. Most police officers and fire fighters surveyed would be unwilling to change their job while more than every second municipal guard would do so.

As many as 95.1% of the fire fighters gave an affirmative answer to the question of whether their profession is considered reputable and respectable by the public, as compared to only 17% of the police officers and 3.1% of the municipal guards.

## REFERENCES

[1] *Article 4 Section 1 of the Police Act*

[2] *At the Central Register of Motor Vehicles, the National Contact Point was set up to exchange information with its counterparts in other EU Member States on motor vehicles which had been involved in the infringement of road-traffic regulations, and details on the owners or keepers of such vehicles.*

[3] *The Act of 6 April 1990 on the Police* (Journal of Laws of 1990 No. 30, item 179 as amended)

[4] *The Road Traffic Act of 20 June 1997* (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 1137, as amended)

Článok recenzovali dvaja nezávislí recenzenti.