



# POLICE VEHICLES



## Police Car 101

The highly visible police car has been around for more than a century. Its wailing siren and flashing lights can put even the most innocent driver into a guilty panic. Built for speed, endurance and power, the police car is an essential law enforcement tool in our highly mobile society.

### First Set of Wheels

The first police car in the United States ran on electricity

in Akron, Ohio in 1899. With a full charge it reached 16 miles per hour speeds and lasted about 30 miles before needing to be recharged.

Though gasoline-powered cars became the overwhelming choice over the next century, the electric police car is making a comeback. In 2007, an all-electric police car debuted in Connellsville, Pennsylvania.



## Custom Made

Though some police vehicles are pickups or SUVs in rural or mountainous areas, most police cars in the United States are Dodge Chargers, Ford Crown Victorias or Chevrolet Impalas. Police cars need to be sturdy, roomy and have a powerful engine so a four-door sedan is the most practical.

## Souped Up

Due to the unusual demands on police cars, they are usually given structural modifications at the factory, including enhancements to the alternator, engine, steering, suspension and electrical system. Heavy-duty bumpers for ramming and upgraded cooling systems for the additional electrical demands may also be added. Back seat areas are modified for prisoner containment and cages are added in canine units.

## Under the Hood

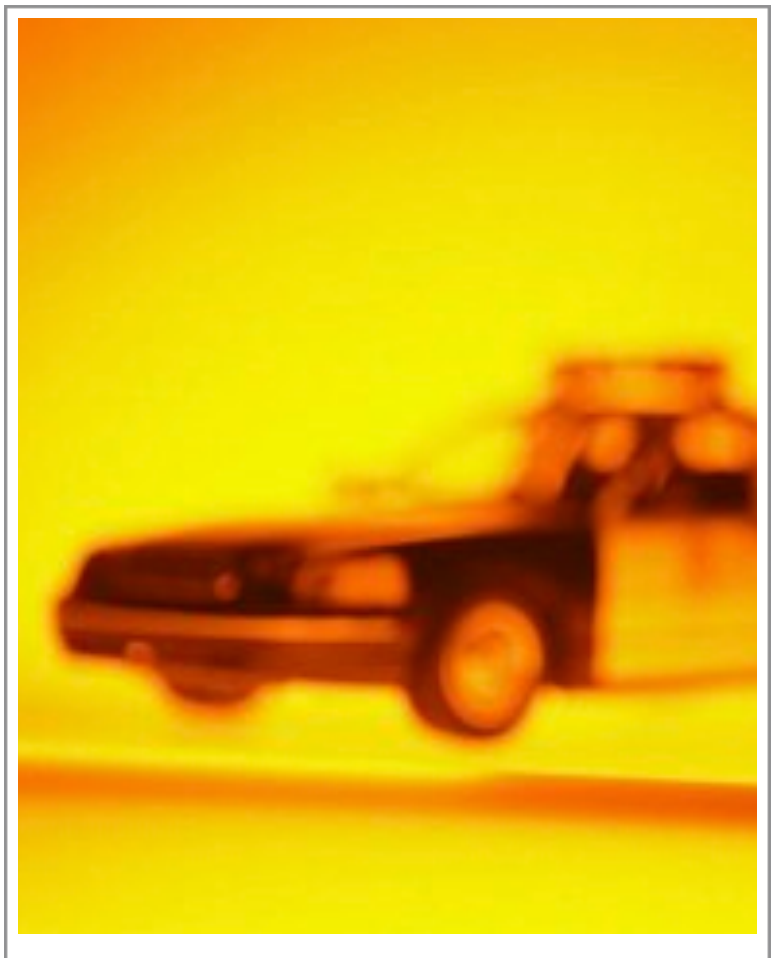
Most police cars have both audible and visual alert systems, like sirens and flashing colored lights. Other standard equipment includes two-way radios, on-board computer terminals, GPS tracking units, video cameras for inside and outside the vehicle, anti-theft devices and crowd control loudspeakers.

## Nicknames

Police cars also are known as squad cars, patrol cars, police cruisers, black and whites, cop cars and cherry tops. They are also sometimes designated as either marked or unmarked law enforcement vehicles.

## Reality vs TV

In film and television fiction, police cars are usually portrayed as containing a team of two police officers so that they may converse and interact on screen.



# INSTRUCTOR'S MASTER

## CADET HANDOUT



## GENIUS NOTES

### Why Are Police Cars Black & White

For years, people have identified police officers by their signature black-and-white police cars, but why do they follow this color scheme? There are actually a few different reasons for the paint job.

#### Visibility

The primary reason for the black-and-white color scheme of police cars is their visibility. Studies have shown that the alternation of light and dark colors increase the visibility of the vehicle in both high and low lighting.

#### Morale

Another major reason for the color scheme is the pride associated with the identification of the two colors. Due to the common usage of the colors from almost all departments in the United States, it brings forth the commonality of a brotherhood in law enforcement.

#### Standing Out

The black-and white-color scheme began in the 1950s. Prior to the paint job, the police used solid black cars. Some departments added a white stripe to this to make it stand out, but it was ultimately thought to appear too much like other civilian cars.

## STORY PROMPT



JOT DOWN NOTE FOR INCLUDING YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE

## **Solid Colors**

In the 1990s, many police agencies switched their color schemes to solid white, blue or green colors. This was done as a way to save money, as budgets were getting tighter. Police emblems were embellished as a way to make the cars more distinct from civilian cars.

## **Back in Black and White**

In the mid-2000s, departments began shifting back to the black-and-white paint jobs. Surveys of both officers and civilians have shown that the black-and-white color scheme is more favorable, accessible and identifiable.

# CADETS BEHIND THE WHEEL.

