

History of Policing

History of Policing – Structured Overview

1. Early Precursors (Ancient to Medieval Times)

Period / Region	Key Features	Notable Examples
Ancient Mesopotamia (c. 2000 BCE)	Community watchmen appointed by city-states; duties included protecting property and enforcing trade regulations.	“City Guard” of Uruk
Ancient Egypt	Pharaoh-appointed officials (e.g., <i>medjay</i>) who acted as desert patrols and city protectors.	Medjay police in Thebes
Classical Greece	<i>Scythian</i> and <i>Athenian</i> magistrates oversaw market regulation, crowd control, and minor crimes.	<i>Arrephoroi</i> (young women supervising sacred precincts)
Roman Empire	Professionalized <i>cohortes urbanae</i> (urban cohorts) and <i>vigiles</i> (fire-watch & night police). Duties: crime prevention, fire fighting, crowd control.	Vigiles of Rome (est. AD 6)
Medieval Europe	Lords and monarchs employed <i>watchmen</i> , <i>constables</i> , and <i>shire sheriffs</i> to enforce feudal law.	Night watch in London (c. 1240)

2. Emergence of Modern Policing (17th–19th Centuries)

Country	Milestone	Characteristics
England	1667 – Night Watch Act; 1737 – Bow Street Runners (first organized, salaried detectives).	Paid officers, investigative focus, operated under magistrates.
France	1667 – <i>Maréchaussée</i> (military police) ? 1791 – <i>Gendarmerie Nationale</i> .	Military-styled, rural focus, later expanded to urban duties.
United States	1838 – Boston Police Department (first organized municipal police force).	Uniformed patrols, centralized command, civilian oversight.
Germany	1848 – Prussian <i>Gendarmerie</i> ; later <i>Polizei</i> reforms (1872) created a uniform civil police.	Professional training, hierarchical structure, emphasis on public order.

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Japan	1874 – <i>Keisatsu</i> (modern police) after Meiji Restoration.	Centralized under Home Ministry; blend of Western models and traditional practices.

Key Trends (1700?1900)

- Shift from ad?hoc watchmen to salaried, uniformed officers.
- Introduction of written codes, standardized uniforms, and rank structures.
- Growing reliance on municipal or state funding rather than private patronage.

3. Expansion and Professionalization (Late 19th – Early 20th Century)

Development	Description
Scientific Policing	Use of fingerprinting (first adopted in Argentina, 1892; UK, 1901) and crime scene analysis.
Police Academies	Formal training institutions (e.g., London Metropolitan Police Academy, 1903; NYPD Police Academy, 1915).
Communication Tech	Telegraph ? telephone (early 1900s) ? radio patrol cars (1930s) enabling faster dispatch.
Women in Policing	First women officers hired in the UK (1919) and US (1910s) for roles in juvenile and moral?offense units.
International Cooperation	1904 – International Criminal Police Commission (later Interpol) founded in