

The Maryland State Police, originally established by Chapter 303, Acts of 1935, had its functions recodified by Chapter 547, Acts of 1968. The Agency is charged with the enforcement of the motor vehicle and criminal laws of the State, and more specifically to safeguard the lives and safety of all persons within the State, to protect property, and to assist in securing to all persons the equal protection of law. The Agency also has the responsibility to preserve the public peace; to detect and prevent crime; to enforce the laws and ordinances of the State and its local subdivisions; to apprehend and arrest criminals and those who violate or are lawfully accused of violating such laws and ordinances; to preserve order in public places; to maintain the safe and orderly flow of traffic on public streets and highways; to cooperate with and assist law enforcement agencies in carrying out their duties; and to discharge its duties and responsibilities with the dignity and manner that will inspire public confidence and respect.

The Agency has Statewide jurisdiction, except in incorporated municipalities. Within such municipalities its jurisdiction is limited to: (1) when in pursuit of an offender or suspected offender; (2) when in search of an offender or suspected offender wanted for a crime committed outside the limits of the municipality, or when interviewing or seeking to interview a witness or supposed witness to such a crime; (3) when requested to act by the chief executive officer of the municipality in question or its chief police officer; (4) when ordered by the Governor to act within the municipality in question; (5) when enforcing the motor vehicle laws of the State; (6) in any building or place when ordered by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, or either of them, to guard the safety of the legislative process; (7) to protect the safety of an elected State official (Code 1957, Art. 88B, secs. 3, 4, 20, and 23).

The State Police also enforce the provisions of the Code relating to Controlled Dangerous Substances (narcotics) throughout the State without any limitation as to activities within municipal corporations or other subdivisions (Code 1957, Art. 27, sec. 298 (g)).

The State Police is directed by the Superintendent, who is appointed by the Governor by and with the advice and consent of the Senate to serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Chapter 547, Acts of 1968, also provides for the appointment of a Deputy Superintendent, who is designated by the Superintendent with the approval of the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Code 1957, Art. 88B, secs. 14 and 16).

The Investigation Division of the State Police has the responsibility to conduct requested criminal investigations that occur anywhere within the State of Maryland. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to, the detection and arrest of criminal offenders, the recovery of lost and stolen property, handling extradition proceedings, and performing other investigations as directed by the Superintendent of the State Police.

The Identification Division of the State Police maintains detailed files and records and cooperates with other law enforcement agencies in the exchange of information relating to crimes and criminals. Laboratory services are provided to all allied agencies upon request and field service technicians are available throughout the State to process crime and disaster scenes using the latest in scientific equipment.

In 1976 the State Legislature created the State Criminal Justice Information System. This system, which is a central repository for the collection, storage, and dissemination of criminal history record information, functions under the operational control of the State Police. The system compiles statistics on criminal activity throughout the State. This compilation of criminal statistics from all law enforcement jurisdictions is published in the form of quarterly crime reports for the entire State. Analysis of the figures indicating trends and other pertinent statistical data is accomplished by this system (Code 1957, Art. 27, secs. 742-755).

The State Police is also charged with the licensing of private detectives and security guards (Code 1957, Art. 56, secs. 75-92), as well as with the registration of firearms and the investigation, with the assistance of other police agencies, of those persons desiring to purchase a handgun from a registered firearms dealer (Code 1957, Art. 27, secs. 441-448).

The Agency is charged with the responsibility to investigate all applicants desiring to wear, carry, or transport a handgun. Investigations are conducted by members of the State Police and other police agencies. The Superintendent, after reviewing the report of investigation, has the authority to approve or disapprove the application and either issue, or refuse to issue, an appropriate permit (Code 1957, Art. 27, sec. 36). The Agency also operates a voluntary firearms registration service for those acquiring or owning firearms that are not controlled by other statutes. The Agency investigates and processes those persons desiring to secure a special police commission from the Governor (Code 1957, Art. 41, secs. 60-70).