



## What is it like to be an Edmonton Police Officer? (March 22, 2023)

I felt a compelling need to provide a perspective for all who have asked what it is like to be an Edmonton Police Officer. The recent murder of our two police Brothers has brought this to the forefront where many are trying to understand how the professionals of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) continue to march forward. I'm going to share my twenty years of experience and provide clarity around these common questions.

This journey really starts when a powerful influence in your young life sparks a flame of curiosity for policing. This could be a relative like my Uncle, who exposed me to the EPS yellow and white cars and grey crested shirts while wailing the car sirens to aggravate my Mom (his sister) during our dinner. It may also have been a uniformed mentor that assisted with a community event or school activity which opened your eyes to the opportunity to give back. This reason is intimate to every single person that completes the application, endures the training, and dons the uniform.

Policing Edmonton is an honour. Whether you are assigned to North or South of the river, you end up having a unique and cherished experience in the communities you protect. Downtown was my first stop, and the learning curve was steep. The violence and crime were in no short order, but you quickly realized how to slow down enough to truly understand the community's vulnerabilities. This taught me humility and trained me to invest into every interaction. This allowed me to develop incredible skills that I carried into other divisions and work areas. The people and the relationships are still strong in my thoughts, and some are still close community partners or friends.

What impacts does this have on our families and relationships within our EPS family? Shift work and constant calls for overtime is torturous on family schedules. Our families know they are number one, but yet they can't help but feel secondary to the demanding police career of their loved one. The EPS member will remind them they love them but knows they really cannot one hundred percent guarantee they will return after shift. The EPS member knows they cannot always share what they see on the streets of Edmonton, so they bury this deep into the vault hoping this never surfaces again. This reality is tested during times of grief or uncertainty in work or personal lives. This is the hardening that can develop into permanent scaring that lives with police long after the careers come to an end.



How do the dedicated and professional police officers of EPS still go to work shortly after a horrific murder of their members? This is the resilience and commitment of every member that wears the EPS crest on their shoulders. You can't explain the 'game face' phenomena unless you have truly championed through difficult times on the streets. You just know it's what you must do to ensure the safety of Edmonton communities is paramount and we need to put our personal feelings and emotions to the side so we can focus on the task at hand. This practice is unlike most professions and all First responders share this unique gift and unfortunately, burden.

This is what it's like to be an EPS officer. The human being that wears the uniform is prone to emotional trauma and damage just like the people they serve. We understand what the risks are but are comforted by the incredible training and support we have. We make mistakes and realize there are consequences that could impact our careers or livelihood. We tend to focus on others while ignoring our own mental or physical health. This is what we do and why we do it.

We ask you to remember this as we approach the funeral of Cst. RYAN and Cst. JORDAN. We are all grieving and know we must eventually move forward. In times like this, we need the support, understanding and patience from our community to allow us a moment of mourning to remember our colleagues and build up the resilience to return to our duties. This is what it is like to be an EPS officer!

Take care,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Hoople', is placed within a white rectangular box.

Curtis HOOPLE  
EPA President