

GUEST EXPLORER PACKET

WELCOME! Thank you for your interest in the Spokane Police Department Explorer post. This packet is designed to help answer questions that you or your parents may have. If there is something that it doesn't explain, or you have more questions, feel free to ask any of the Explorers around you for help. You can also contact any of the numbers you find at the end of this packet.

1. REQUIREMENTS

- 16-21 years old (and have completed the 8th grade)
- Attend two meetings before receiving an application packet
- Successfully pass a background investigation and reference check
- Pass an oral board given by three Explorers and one advisor

2. EXPLORER DUTIES

- Training meetings every first, third, and fifth Tuesday (if there is a 5th)
- State/ Regional/ National competitions
- Actors for SWAT/ TAC teams
- Crowd control at civic events, such as, Bloomsday, Hoopfest, Jr. Lilac and Lilac Parades.
- Marching, Shooting, Leadership, Law Enforcement training

3. ACADEMIES/ COMPETITIONS

- Academies – We have a statewide Explorer academy for one week in August and one week in December. Each Explorer must attend at least one a year, and new Explorers must go to the first available one after they join.
- Content – There are classes on Explorer/Officer safety, gun safety, mock scenes on Domestic Violence, Felony Traffic Stops, Building Searches, Collision Investigation, Field Interviews, etc. Other subjects include but are not limited to: traffic control, crowd control, bike patrol, etc.

4. UNIFORMS

- Upon acceptance into the Explorer program, the Spokane Police Department furnishes your entire uniform except for black polishable boots and black BDU pants (approximate total value: \$40). You are also responsible for the appropriate color t-shirts (white or navy blue) that you must wear with your uniforms.

5. MEETING INFO/ ADVISORS

- Meetings are every first, third, and fifth (if there is a fifth) TUESDAY of every month. These are mandatory for all Explorers. Every meeting begins at 1730 (5:30 pm). Each Explorer is expected to be in uniform and sitting in their seats at this time.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What kind of grades must I have to be in Explorers?

A. All Explorers, whether in high school or college, must maintain an overall GPA of 2.5. Upon dropping below a 2.5, that Explorer is put on academic probation and has one quarter/semester to bring his or her grades back up. During that time, Explorers are not allowed to attend any events other than meetings. The Explorer must turn in his/her transcript ASAP after the quarter/semester ends. Exploring is designed to be a fun learning experience for students, but they must know that school has to come first.

Q. I have a job, what if I have to work on Tuesdays?

A. Explorers have held their meetings on Tuesday nights since it first began in the late 1980's. This won't change. We require Explorers to respectfully request Tuesday nights off. If this is not possible, we ask prospective Explorers to come back and apply again when they can get Tuesday evenings off of work. The reason for this is because we do a lot of administration work at these meetings. It is pertinent to everyone that all Explorers are present (simply because it's hard to plan date and times to do activities without everyone present).

Q. I play sports, and sometimes my practices run late or I have a game. Can I still be in the post?

A. We have had several Explorers involved in after school sports. Our rule is basically this: You are allowed to miss FOUR meetings before you are terminated from the program. If you don't want an absence, simply show up late to the meeting (of course, after letting a superior know that you'll be tardy). If your game nights are Tuesday's, we will work with you for the season. Unfortunately, we can't excuse a whole school year of absences. Please realize that it is incredibly difficult to run a team without a team member present. Like your sport teams, we have goals and "games" that we need to practice for as well.

Q. My brother was arrested last month, will this keep me out of Explorers?

A. Don't let this worry you. The Explorer Post judges you for you. We realize that you don't make decisions for other people. You are being looked at for your own merit, judgment, integrity, and dedication.

Q. Do I get to carry a gun?

A. NO! Explorers are NOT cops and have no police power what so ever! We cannot take police action on or off duty. We carry handcuffs for the simple reasons of training or loaning them to officers while we are on ride along's. In fact, if an Explorer tries to take action as a police officer, they are disciplined and possibly kicked out of the post.

Q. Is being an Explorer dangerous?

A. The Spokane Police Department has taken all appropriate actions to maintain the safety of its officers and its volunteers. While out “on duty”, Explorers are watched closely by commissioned police officers. Anytime an Explorer is in uniform (or any piece of clothing that has Spokane Police Department or Police Explorers on it), they are required to wear their bullet-resistant vest. This is strictly for their safety.

Q. What does it cost me to be in the program?

A. The Spokane Police Department provides all Explorers with a full set of uniforms, gear, and equipment (This includes, but is not limited to: Dress uniform, Duty uniform, travel uniform, bullet-resistant vest, duty belt, etc.) Two things that you have to buy are a black pair of polishable boots, and a black pair of BDU pants (Battle dress uniform pants- that “Military” cargo-style pants). Both can be found at stores like Army Surplus or the General Store. Black socks and a regular black belt are not provided either. In addition to those things, each Explorer must pay one dollar a meeting for Post dues.

Q. My friends invited me to a party this weekend, should I go?

A. On your oral board, you will be asked such questions as this. Our recommendation is that you do not go. Upon entering our program, you will not be allowed to attend parties where underage drinking or illegal conduct is taking place. Proper discipline action is taken according to the circumstances.

Q. Who teaches the Explorers?

A. We are fortunate enough to be led by six energetic, caring, youthful, Spokane Police Officers. These “advisors” are not only there to take us across the country, or provide us with Police Department knowledge, but they are also there in any other time of need. These officers are not here because they have to be, they are there because they like teenagers and they enjoy building their future police officers. They are great police officers and extraordinary leaders!

Q. What is the academy like?

A. The academy can be very un-nerving, especially if you've never been away from home for a week. But it's okay, I promise. The academy is a week-long "boot camp." Police officers from all over the state bring their Explorers together and put together a well disciplined, structure academy. Students learn how to march, chant, and sing. They are broken down as individuals, and built back up as a team- dependent on one another to finish the week. The police officers (aka "TAC officers") rant and rave, simply because they want to teach each Explorer that there is no "I" in "Team." Explorers sleep in military barracks and are woken up early in the morning to scrub their barracks clean. They hurry to get ready, and run outside for morning formation (within their "platoon"). After the Explorers go through "inspection", they are released for morning chow. They have a few minutes to eat, where they are not allowed to talk or look up from their food (Don't worry, only for the first couple of days). Explorers then hurry out to formation again and march to class. Classes are held for 8 hours a day, with a brief break for lunch chow. After class lets out, Explorers fall back into their platoons to learn more marching and more team building. Evening chow comes right before studying, more cleaning or barracks, and more TAC screaming.

No Explorer likes the first three days of their academy. But I have yet to meet an Explorer who didn't say the end of the week was better. Once Explorers show that they can work as a team, and learn to rely on one another, TAC officers back off.

On the last night, there is a dance full of junk food and dancing. Finally, you can let loose (to an extent) and have fun with the many friends that you are sure to meet over the course of the week. The next morning, you pack up, load your stuff into the vans, and go to graduation. It's a scary, challenging step to take, but one that you will never gain anywhere else, and you'll never forget. Are you up for the challenge?

Q. What is your mailing address?

A. Spokane Police Department
ATTN: Volunteer Services Unit
1100 W. Mallon Ave.
Spokane, WA 99260-0001

Q. Where is your office?

A. Our office is in the **Public Safety Building on 1100 W. Mallon**. Prior to becoming an Explorer you must enter the building through the public doors, going through security. Once past security, ask at the **Information Booth** to contact the VOLUNTEER SERVICE UNIT (Sgt. Martin Anderson or Sandy Alter). It is best to phone first so you know someone is in the office to meet with you.

Q. When are your meetings?

A. Our meetings are every first, third, and fifth Tuesday of every month (assuming there is a fifth Tuesday, it only occurs a couple times a year). Meetings start at 5:30 pm.

Q. Where are your meetings held?

A. Explorer meetings are generally held at the Spokane Police Regional Training Center at 2302 N Waterworks.

Directions: Take Mission east past Spokane Community College until it turns into Trent (Waterworks St.). Right after the two streets merge into one, you'll see flashing yellow lights. Take a left at that road, and follow it for approx. 1.5 miles. Don't make any turns, simply follow it around all the curves until you reach a fenced building. There's a sign and you'll see a huge obstacle course to the left, the building on the right, and another building directly in front of you, further up.

Follow the signs towards the classrooms. We'll be the only room full of teenagers in Navy blue shirts and black BDU pants. Feel free to come right in! Please keep in mind that the building is used for all city, county, and federal agencies within the Pacific Northwest. We respectfully request that you dress conservatively and appropriately for the meeting. While we do not expect suits and dresses, we do ask that you refrain from wearing any clothing that shows your stomach, your rear end, or anything that has inappropriate logos on it. We thank you in advance for complying with this.

Q. What are your contact numbers?

A. Volunteer Services Office:
Sandy Alter: (509) 363-8283
Sgt. Martin Anderson: (509) 363-8281