FAQs: Career Starters employment pathway

VICTORIA POLICE

Apply for this pathway now and start your journey in policing

Ready to join Victoria Police?

If you're passionate about policing and want to become a police officer, you can do so now. For the first time, Victoria Police are inviting people aged between 17-18 who have a learner's permit or driver's licence, to apply for the pathway and participate in the Career Starter Pathway pilot program.

Some people believe that older applicants have the life experience needed for policing. In fact, many young recruits bring fresh perspectives, strong problem-solving skills, adaptability, and a genuine desire to serve their community. What matters most is your character, commitment, and willingness to learn.

The Career Starter Pathway offers:

- a supported start towards a rewarding policing career
- support from Victoria Police Recruitment and experienced police officers
- time to prepare, learn about fitness, understand requirements, and get your probationary licence before you start
- a career with purpose, where you can help people, build life skills, and make a difference in the community.

If your application if successful, you could start police recruit training at the Victoria Police Academy as early as March 2027. Police recruits must be 18 years of age with a probationary driver's licence.

Objective

To establish an early entry recruitment pathway that enables Victoria Police to identify, engage, and retain prospective applicants from the career starter cohort prior to them reaching the minimum application age.

By opening applications to 17 and 18-year-olds with a learners permit or driver's licence, the initiative seeks to build a dedicated, prequalified talent pool that can be developed and maintained as an ongoing recruitment pipeline. This approach aims to capture applicant interest at a critical decision-making stage, strengthen early engagement, and reduce the likelihood of potential applicants pursuing alternative career pathways.

If you already know you're interested in policing, this gives you a head start instead of waiting until you're older and trying to figure out what to do in the meantime. We will provide tailored guidance, support, opportunity to explore the Victoria Police Academy and witness police recruits training at the Victoria Police Academy, and mentoring opportunities in this pathway.

Who's eligible?

You must be 17 or 18 years old and have your learner's permit or driver's licence during the application period.

If you turn 19 before or during the application period, you are not eligible for this pathway. Instead, you can apply through the standard police officer recruitment process, visit www.police.vic.gov.au/police-officer-careers. However, subject to demand, you may be able to take part in some pathway activities, such as a familiarisation session.

The target is 17–18-year-olds in secondary school (year 12), however, we will still accept and consider applicants in this age group who are no longer in secondary school.

The duties of a police officer

A general duties officer is a first responder at any reportable crime or public need, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They provide a vital service to the community and are a key part of Victoria Police. All recruits are typically required to complete a minimum of two to four years in general duties prior to applying for these areas.

General duties requirements as a police officer

Every day is different as a general duties officer. One day you might be responding to emergencies or restoring public order, then investigating crime and engaging with the community. Duties include, but are not limited to;

Out in the field, you will provide help that might include those experiencing:	• Mental health crises • Substance abuse issues or, • Family violence situations
You will be required undertake a range of duties including:	• responding to emergencies and calls for service • investigating crimes including theft, assault, and property damage or assisting specialist units • enforcing traffic laws including monitoring traffic and responding to traffic accidents • maintaining public order to prevent and address anti-social behaviour and ensure public safety • community engagement including building relationships, providing information, resolving disputes, and addressing local concerns.
Administrative tasks	• submit paperwork on jobs you attend • keep an ongoing diary of the duties you perform during each shift • prepare paperwork for courts • attend court hearings • give evidence in court.
Community Engagement	• attend community events • talk to and assist vulnerable members of the community • general interaction with the community members of diverse backgrounds • build positive relationships with community groups and members.

When do applications open for the Career Starters pathway?

Please visit the website link below to see the application open period.

Career Starter Pathway | Victoria Police

What is the purpose of introducing an earlier application age and changes to eligibility criteria for a younger cohort?

The changes provide motivated young people with a clearer and more direct pathway into policing by allowing them to enter the recruitment process earlier, from age 17, while they are still engaged in school or career planning. This helps applicants prepare for a policing career and maintain momentum towards joining Victoria Police.

Many students are interested in policing but lose momentum while waiting until they are older to apply. This pathway aims to:

- Provide a clearer transition from school to career
- Keep students engaged and focused
- Offer earlier access to structured career opportunities.

The pathway is about helping you prepare and apply early, not expecting you to have everything figured out when you are career planning.

I turn 18 years old before/during the application period, can I still apply for this supported pathway?

Yes, we are only considering applications from 17-18-year-olds with a learner's permit, during the application period, for this specific pathway.

If you turn 18 years old before, during or after the application period and hold a learner's permit or driver's licence, and want to apply for this pathway, you are eligible to apply.

Am I ready to apply at age 17 or 18?

Readiness varies from person to person. While some applicants may be highly capable, others may still be developing their confidence, emotional maturity and life experience. Victoria Police, together with careers teachers, will provide guidance and support throughout the process.

If you apply at age 17 or 18, you are applying for a supported pathway into a policing career. Offers to commence at the Police Academy as a recruit will only be made once you are at least 18 years old and hold a probationary driver's licence.

Do I need "life experience"?

You don't need everything figured out – but the following can help you through your application process, build and develop the foundational skills that we are looking for:

- Part-time jobs
- Volunteering
- Team sports
- Community involvement

Keep in mind:

- You'll need maturity and resilience
- It's a serious career choice
- Support and preparation are key.

How could this benefit applicants applying whilst in school and support their career development?

Applicants applying through this pathway and during school may benefit by:

- Starting their application journey earlier
- Receiving support from teachers and careers staff during the application process
- Having a clear goal to work towards in senior school
- Avoiding the need for "gap" jobs or courses while waiting to apply

- Possible opportunities to be mentored by a member at the Victoria Police Academy, in addition to support from Victoria Police recruitment.
- Stay engaged in education with a clear career goal.

How does early exposure help applicants prepare to apply for a Police Officer?

Early exposure allows students to:

- Gain a realistic understanding of policing
- Build confidence and readiness
- Identify whether policing is the right career fit.

What can applicants expect in terms of process guidance and support?

Applicants in this pathway will receive guidance and support throughout the recruitment process, including access to experienced police officers, wellbeing and mental health services, and clear readiness expectations.

Should applicants complete Year 12?

Yes, this should remain a priority and the police officer recruitment process will ideally run alongside school. If you are 17-18 years old but no longer in school, that is okay, you can still apply. Refer to eligibility criteria.

Successful applicants will only receive a letter of offer to join the academy as a police recruit once they're 18-years-old with a probationary licence. If an applicant turns 18 whilst they're still at secondary school, offers of employment to commence the 25-week training at the Victoria Police Academy can be delayed.

This pathway is designed to work with your education, not replace it.

Do I need to sit the Victoria Police Entrance Exam?

There are various stages in the recruitment process, one is the Victoria Police entrance exam. You may be exempt from the entrance exam component if in the last 5 years you passed the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or equivalent in Australia, with: An Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranks (ATAR) of 65 of above, and a minimum score of 25 in English.

Please note, the initial exam cost is $275.00. You will have three months to sit your exam. If you are unsuccessful on any component, you will be able to re-sit (costs apply).

What happens if I do not pass the Police Entrance Exam a second time?

If you are unsuccessful on the re-sit, an exclusion period will apply. Email communications will outline a reapplication date.

Do I need to complete a Victoria Police work experience placement to benefit/apply for the pathway?

No. If you have a genuine interest in becoming a police officer and you're eligible for this intake, you can apply.

Will there be opportunities to explore policing before committing?

The Victoria Police Recruitment Team provide monthly Victoria Police career information sessions in person at various locations throughout the state, and online webinars.

There will be tailored career information sessions for this pathway for careers teachers and the public to help prospective applicants make informed decisions about their future and applying for this pathway, before the application period opens. We will also have police officers join these sessions, so you can hear directly from them about their experience. If you are eligible and apply for this pathway, we will invite you to a familiarisation session held at the Victoria Police Academy, location in Glen Waverley between December 2026 and February 2027. These sessions will provide applicants with an opportunity to gain insight into policing careers, Academy life and recruitment expectations.

What if I change my mind?

That's completely fine. This pathway is about exploring your options, not locking you in forever. We understand at this age, you may be trying to figure out what career path to choose, and we are here to help you.

When do I start getting paid a salary?

From day 1 of your 25 weeks training at the Victoria Police Academy!

Once you have been deemed suitable (once you're 18 years old with a probationary licence) you will be offered a place in a squad and will commence training at the Victoria Police Academy for the 25-week training program, you will be paid;

- As a Recruit for the first 12 weeks (over $61K + super + leave loading + allowances)
- Then as a Constable at the end of week 12 (over $84k + super + leave loading + allowances)
- Then as a First Constable (once confirmed you have passed training), over $90K + super + leave loading + allowances.

If you're interested in policing, this pathway is a chance to **get started early, learn what the job is really like, and work towards something meaningful.**

Take the first step

Talk to your family and careers teacher. Start building your skills now and find out more about policing pathways by registering to attend an information career session.

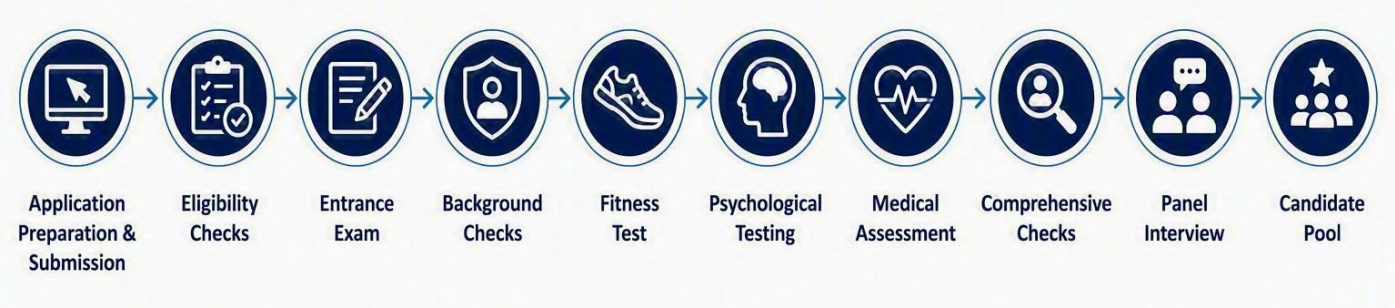
Stages of the police officer recruitment process

Applying through this pathway gives you guidance from our recruitment team, and a professional, experienced police officer mentor. You will go through all stages of the police officer recruitment process.

We understand applicants may still be studying i.e. year 12, and we will ensure each component does not impact your study commitments, as completion of year 12 should be your priority.

Applicants will progress through each stage of the recruitment, while the process is shown in a set order, some stages may run at the same time. We will also ensure the process is staggered and will not conflict with schooling requirements.

Further details on what each stage include can be found- Recruitment process for police officers



Still have questions?

Contact the Talent Attraction and Programs team at CAREER-STARTERS-PROGRAM-MGR@police.vic.gov.au