



Establishment of a Garda Síochána RESERVE

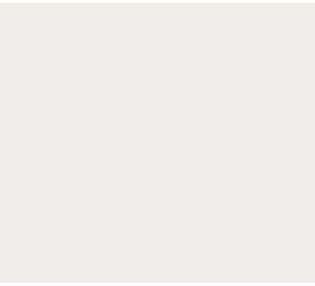
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Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Working for a Safer, Fairer Ireland.



ESTABLISHMENT OF A GARDA SÍOCHÁNA RESERVE



AN INFORMATION BOOKLET from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

OIREACHTAS APPROVAL

THE GARDA SÍOCHÁNA ACT 2005 PROVIDES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GARDA SÍOCHÁNA RESERVE.

During the passage of the Garda Síochána Bill through the Houses of the Oireachtas, extensive consideration was given to the issue of establishing a Garda Reserve. The provisions of the Bill were amended to reflect a strong consensus among Government and the main Opposition parties that the creation of such a Reserve was an important element in the reform of the Force now underway aimed at ensuring a modern, professional police force for the Irish State in the 21st century.

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GARDA RESERVE

In July 2005, following the passage of the Garda Síochána Act, and discussion with the Department, the Garda Commissioner wrote proposing the establishment of a Garda Reserve. By way of response, and in the context of advising the Garda Commissioner of the Government's policing priorities for 2006, the Minister set the objective of recruiting 900 Reserve members by September of this year.

COMMITMENT TO INCREASING THE STRENGTH OF THE FORCE TO 14,000 MEMBERS



The Minister has consistently made it clear to the Garda representative associations that he would never introduce a Garda Reserve as a substitute for increasing the strength of the Force from 12,200 to 14,000. It was only after the Minister obtained Government approval to increase the strength of the Force to 14,000, and in the context of the Garda Commissioner's proposals, that the Minister decided to go ahead with establishing the Reserve.

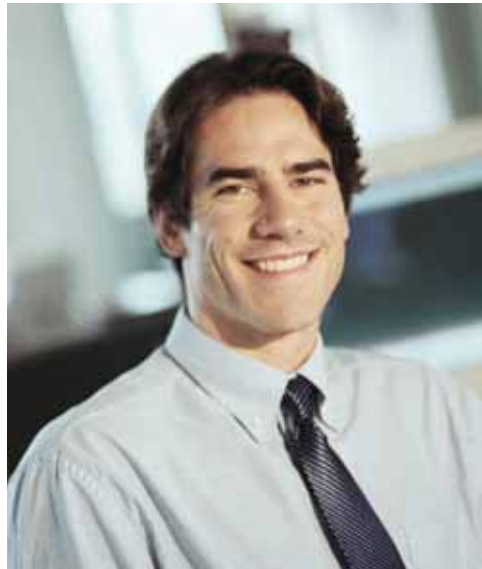
REGULATIONS

The Garda Commissioner has submitted his proposals on the recruitment, training, powers, duties and deployment of Reserve members to the Department, and officials are now in the process of drawing up the necessary regulations for the approval of Government under the Act.

THIS DOCUMENT

This document sets out the key facts as they relate to the establishment of a Garda Reserve and specifically addresses some of the misunderstandings about the nature of a Garda Reserve and how it will work in support of members of An Garda Síochána.

Reserve members will receive more than 120 hours initial training which is the best international standard.



RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, POWERS, DUTIES AND DEPLOYMENT OF RESERVE MEMBERS

ELIGIBILITY/ VETTING

The criteria for appointment as a Reserve member, in respect of character, educational qualifications, nationality and residence, will be broadly the same as for a permanent member of An Garda Síochána. Reserve members may be recruited between the ages of 18 and 60 years. Reserve members will also have to be certified by a registered medical practitioner, nominated by the Commissioner, to be of good health, of sound constitution and fitted physically and mentally to perform the duties of a Reserve member of An Garda Síochána.

Applicants to join the Reserve will be vetted to exactly the same extent as candidates for An Garda Síochána.

TRAINING

Reserve members will receive more than 120 hours initial training which will be in accordance with the best international standard. Training, which will be carried out over several months, will consist of a comprehensive training programme of five phases as follows (with ex-members of An Garda Síochána needing only to complete the first phase):

- PHASE 1 a two day induction course which will permit trainee Reserve members to acquire an appreciation of the Garda Organisation and its culture.
- PHASE 2 56 hours training at weekends / evenings over an eight week period during which the trainee Reserve member will learn basic law and Garda procedures
- PHASE 3 two days at the Garda College or regional centre over a weekend during which the trainee Reserve member will engage in role play exercises including radio procedures and be instructed in self defence, handcuff techniques and use of equipment.
- PHASE 4 a minimum of 40 hours over 10 weeks at a nominated Garda Station during which the trainee Reserve member will engage in accompanied beat patrol with a full-time Garda and Station duty under direction of a Station Sergeant
- PHASE 5 one day graduation day at the Garda College

DEPLOYMENT/DUTIES/SUPERVISION

The Garda Commissioner has proposed specific duties for Reserve members as follows:

“Reserve Gardaí will carry out duties (minimum 208 hours per annum) as directed by the District Officer and will report to line management in a like manner as a member of the regular Service. Each Reserve member of the Garda Síochána will perform a minimum of sixteen (16) hours duty per roster, each tour being of a minimum of four (4) hours duration. (13 rosters in a twelve-month period). The tours of duty performed will take into account the policing requirements of the area concerned as well as the employment requirements of the individual Reserve member.”



Reserve members will not be deployed in their own immediate neighbourhoods.

DUTIES

The Commissioner, in accordance with Section 15(5) of the Garda Síochána Act 2005, has determined that the duties of a Reserve Garda will be as follows:

1. Station Duty, other than the care and custody of prisoners.
2. Assistant to the Station Orderly.
3. Communications room duty, to include monitoring CCTV.
4. Foot patrol, accompanied by a member of the permanent Garda Service.
5. Static Security duty.
6. Road Traffic checkpoint duties, accompanied by a full time member.
7. Duty at the outer cordon of major events such as festivals and major sporting events.
8. Assisting in the event of accidents, fires and major emergencies.
9. Giving evidence in Court.
10. Community / Neighbourhood Policing.

The Commissioner may, on an incremental basis, subject to training, increase the range of duties carried out by Reserve members.

Reserve Gardaí will patrol when accompanied by a permanent member of An Garda Síochána.

Reserve Gardaí will not perform plain-clothes duty of any kind.

They will not serve in specialist units, carry firearms or drive official vehicles.

POLICING POWERS

The powers of Reserve members will generally be confined, at first instance, to the following areas of duty:

1. under the Road Traffic Acts - demanding driving licences and insurance details, enforcing the wearing of seat belts etc;
2. under the Public Order Act – dealing with the offences of intoxication, threatening behaviour, disorderly conduct and failure to comply with the direction of a member of An Garda Síochána; and
3. under the Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) Act – dealing with the offences of theft and burglary.
4. Reserve members would also be given the power of arrest under the Criminal Law Act 1997, which provides powers of arrest for both members of the Garda Síochána and civilians.





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ACCESS TO PULSE

Reserve members will have limited access to PULSE. They will not have access to intelligence entries on the PULSE System. All access to PULSE will be strictly controlled by the Information Technology Division of An Garda Síochána, based on a personal warrant number.

Reserve members will carry out the following functions on PULSE:

1. Inputting Driving Licence / Insurance details
2. Vehicle Checks
3. Update Vehicle Status
4. Warrant Searches

DISCIPLINE

Reserve members, when on duty and in uniform, will be subject to a similar code of discipline to that which applies to permanent members of An Garda Síochána.

RESERVE CONSTABULARIES

THE POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

There are many precedents for a successful Garda Reserve in other countries. For example, a Reserve Police Force has been in operation in the United Kingdom for over 175 years and Police Constabularies throughout the country consider the Reserves a valuable additional policing resource.

Canada, another common law country, has also operated a Reserve Police System for many years which is proving to be of major benefit for the effective delivery of policing in that country. Police Officers working in both these countries value the assistance given to them by their Reservist colleagues and work successfully with them in the communities they police.



Chief Constable, Peter Fahy, Cheshire Constabulary, England, with special (reserve) constabulary colleague

THE EFFECTS

Q. Will the establishment of a Garda Reserve affect Garda Numbers?

A. No. The creation of a Garda Reserve is in no way intended to serve as a replacement or substitute for a full-time Force with adequate numbers. The Minister has always made it clear that he would not establish a Garda Reserve as an alternative to bringing the strength of the Force to 14,000.

By December of 2006, as a result of a major recruitment drive, the combined number of fully attested Gardaí and Garda recruits in training will reach an historic high of 14,000.

In addition the case for further increases in the strength of the Force will continue to be kept under active review.

There is no question of there being a trade-off between the optimum strength of Gardaí and the creation of a Garda Reserve. They are complementary – not substitutes for each other.

Q. Will the establishment of a Garda Reserve erode the professionalism of An Garda Síochána?

A. No. The creation of a Garda Reserve, fully trained to the highest international standards, in no way detracts from the professionalism or vocation of full-time Gardaí.

The establishment of a Reserve will enhance rather than diminish the effectiveness of An Garda Síochána. A comparable situation applies to the support given to the teaching profession by the provision of classroom and special needs assistants and the support staff who work with doctors and other health care professionals. The permanent Defence Force – our Army and Naval Service – have had reserve members for decades without any dilution of the professionalism of those organisations.

International experience of police reserves has been overwhelmingly positive.



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Q. What impact will a Garda Reserve have on Pay/Benchmarking?

A. The Minister and the Department have given a categorical assurance that the deployment of a Reserve will in no way be used as a bargaining point in pay negotiations to diminish legitimate claims of the Associations representing the members of An Garda Síochána across the different ranks.

Q. Will the amount of overtime available in the Force be reduced?

A. The purpose of the Garda Reserve is to be a supplement to and emphatically not a replacement for Gardai or a means of reducing necessary overtime which is an important tool in the provision of effective policing.

The fact is that despite the major recruitment drive in 2005 and 2006 to increase the strength of the Force from 12,000 to 14,000 members, the overtime allocation for An Garda Síochána increased from €60.5m in 2005 to €83.5m in 2006 – an increase of €23m. This increase will yield over 2.7 million hours of Garda overtime for frontline policing throughout the State.



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- Q. Will the establishment of a Garda Reserve have any effect on retirement in the Force
- A. In the context of meeting the need for active supervision and mentoring of Reserve members by experienced professional officers, the Minister has indicated that he is open to considering increasing the retirement age for members of Garda, Sergeant and Inspector ranks from 57 to 60.
- Q. Will any other measures be taken to help manage the Garda Reserve?
- A. It is anticipated that over 500 posts will be created across the ranks in the context of the expansion of An Garda Síochána to 14,000 members. This will also enable the making of any additional appointments necessary for the oversight and management of the Garda Reserve.
- Q. Will service with the reserve be taken into account when people are being recruited to full-time service with An Garda Síochána?
- A. Yes. Future Garda Interview Boards will be required to take into account the experience gained by candidates who have worked with the Garda Reserve.



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