French National Police

Formed 1966
Preceding Agency Sûreté Nationale
Employees 150,000

Jurisdictional Structure
Size 551,695km²
Population 60 million

Operational Structure
Headquarters Paris
Directorates 13

The National Police (Police Nationale), is one of two national police forces and the main civil law enforcement agency of France. The National Police comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior and has about 150,000 employees.

With primary jurisdiction in large cities and towns, Police Nationale:
- conducts security operations (patrols, traffic control, identity checks etc.)
- under orders and supervision of the Investigating magistrates of the judiciary, conducts criminal enquiries, serves search warrants, etc.;
- maintains specific services (“judicial police”) for criminal enquiries.

The other main agency is the military Gendarmerie, with primary jurisdiction in smaller towns and rural and border areas.

Organisation

Headed by the DGPN (Direction Générale de la Police nationale, General Direction of the National Police), the police is divided into directorates:
- Direction de l'administration de la police nationale (Directorate of Administration of the National Police; DAPN)
- Direction de la formation de police nationale (Directorate of Training of the National Police; DFPN)
- Direction centrale de la police judiciaire (Central Directorate of Judicial Police; DCPJ) – major criminal investigations (known as "36 Quai des Orfèvres" in Paris) (It is actually located at 11 rue des Saussaies.)
- Direction centrale de la sécurité publique (Central Directorate of Public Security; DCSP) - uniformed patrol and response
- Groupes d'Intervention de la Police Nationale (Intervention Groups of the National Police; GIPN) - 9 regional SWAT teams
- Direction centrale de la police aux frontières (Central Directorate of Border Police; DCPAF)
- Inspection générale de la police nationale (Inspectorate General of the National Police; IPGN) - headed by the Inspector General and responsible for internal affairs
- Direction centrale des compagnies républicaines de sécurité (Central Directorate of the Republican Security Companies; DCCRS) - riot police commonly referred to as the CRS
• Service de coopération technique internationale de police (Technical International Police Cooperation Service; SCTIP)
• Service de protection des hautes personnalités (Important Persons Protection Service; SPHP) – VIP protection, although the President of the French Republic is protected by both the Gendarmerie & the National Police (half/half) joined in a service called the Groupe de Sécurité de la Présidence de la République
• The Préfecture de Police (Prefecture of Police) provides police and security services in Greater Paris
• Recherche Assistance Intervention Dissuasion (Research, Assistance, Intervention, Deterrence; RAID) - counter-terrorist unit

Former Directorates
As of 1 July 2008, the following two National Police directorates:
• Direction de la surveillance du territoire (Directorate of Territorial Surveillance; DST) - counterintelligence, counterespionage, counterterrorism
• Direction centrale des renseignements généraux (Central Directorate of General Information; DCRG or RG) - records, research, analysis, policing gambling and horse racing

Ranks
The National Police is divided into three corps, in the terminology of the French Civil Service, in ascending order of seniority:

The Corps de maitrise et d’application (Authority and Enforcement Corps) corresponds approximately to the enlisted and non-commissioned ranks in a military force, or to constables and sergeants in a British-style civil police force.

Gardien de la paix stagiaire ("guardian of the peace, intern") 1st year after school
Gardien de la paix ("guardian of the peace")
Sous-brigadier, after 12 years of service
Brigadier
Brigadier-chief
Brigadier-major

The Corps de commande et d’encadrement (Command and Management Corps) corresponds approximately to the lower commissioned ranks of a military force, or to grades of inspector in a British-style civil police force. These ranks were previously known as inspecteurs if detectives or officiers de la paix if uniformed, although CRS officers always used the current ranks.

Lieutenant student
Lieutenant intern
Lieutenant (formerly Officier de la paix or Inspecteur)
Capitaine (formerly Officer de la paix principal or Inspecteur principal)
Commandant (formerly Commandant or Inspecteur divisionnaire)

The Corps de conception et de direction (Conception and Direction Corps) corresponds approximately to the higher commissioned ranks of a military force, or to grades of superintendent and chief officers in a British-style civil police force.
Rank insignia is worn on the shoulders or on the chest (squared shaped instead of rectangular).

Prior to 1995 two civilian corps ("Inspecteurs" and "Enquêteurs") existed in which plain-clothes officers were given the training and authority to conduct investigations. The closest Anglo-American equivalent is the private investigator.

The powers of making a full arrest, hearing suspects, overseeing searches ordered by the judiciary, etc., are restricted to members of the police or the gendarmerie with the qualification of "officer of judiciary police" (officier de police judiciaire or OPJ). Other officers are only "agents of judiciary police" (agents de police judiciaire or APJ) and have only limited authority, restricted to assisting the officers.

**Equipment**

**Vehicles**

Generally, in the provinces, a police station has six vehicles (four cars and two vans), eight motorcycles and two cars CRS (a van and an unmarked car). Most police vehicles are French brands such as Renault and Citroen but other French brands are also seen, e.g. Peugeot.

The Police operate 45 helicopters.

- Aérospatiale Alouette III (SE 3160, SA 316, SA 319B)
- Eurocopter EC 145
- Eurocopter Ecureuil (AS 350B, AS 350BA, AS 350B-1)
- Eurocopter Fennec (AS 550U-2)

Reference: [www.interieur.gouv.fr/rubriques/c/c3_police_nationale/c33_organisation](http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/rubriques/c/c3_police_nationale/c33_organisation)