



FRANCE: National Police, Gendarmerie and First Responders

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Overview

La Police Nationale (PN, or National Police), La Gendarmerie Nationale (often simply referred to as the Gendarmerie, or military police), Les Sapeurs-pompiers (SP, or firefighters), La Brigade des sapeurs-pompiers de Paris (BSPP, or Parisian firefighting brigade), le Bataillon des marins-pompiers de Marseille (BMPM or Marseille Marine Firefighting Division) and La Sécurité Civile (SC, or Civil Security), guarantee the safety of the French population and of the country's national interests at home and at times abroad. They also prevent and deter crime, and help those in need when there is a crisis. The PN and SC are part of the Ministry of Interior (Mol). The Gendarmerie, or military police, hold military rank but were attached to the Mol in 2008 for budgetary reasons and their roles overlap in places with the PN. BSPP and BMPM are specialized units of the French Army and French Navy, respectively.



Budget

The 2013 budget reflected a renewed focus on security. Although many other sectors (including defense) were cut in the latest budget cycle, security was one of the few sectors that was actually augmented (defense cut almost 8,000 jobs). After a flare-up of violence in the summer of 2012, President Hollande promised additional resources for the PN, particularly in troubled suburban areas surrounding large French cities. This pledge was evident in the 2013 budget, which cancelled a previous plan to eliminate 3,200 positions, and instead planned to create 5,000 additional jobs by 2017.¹ Many of these new positions will be focused in priority areas for safety, particularly in areas with a high risk for trafficking, underground activities, and violence. The plan also included provisions to replace any future retirees. Total security spending increased by 360 million euros from 2012, with 6.7 billion euros allocated to the PN and 4.9 billion euros allocated to the Gendarmerie.²

POLICE NATIONALE: SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Both the PN and the Gendarmerie are national police forces in France, and they have similar goals and attributes, making their distinction at times confusing. Since World War II, the PN and Gendarmerie have been assigned zones of activity based on population. The PN controlled cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants, and the Gendarmerie handled rural areas and small towns. Today, these zones have been redefined to reflect the rise of "conurbations" - large, continuous, urban and industrially developed areas. These areas are now under the authority of the PN, while the Gendarmerie controls rural and suburban areas, as well as smaller cities.

The mission of the PN stands on three pillars: to maintain the safety of the public, to collect information and to act as a judicial police. They protect persons and property, secure intelligence and information, and enforce all laws and regulations and upheld. The PN also handle all questions regarding the movement of foreigners in France, policing the borders.



Organization

The PN is comprised of several different departments and services.

¹ <http://www.acteurspublics.com/2012/11/07/la-mutualisation-police-gendarmerie-intensifiee-en-2013>

² <http://www.leparisien.fr/flash-actualite-politique/l-assemblee-nationale-adopte-le-budget-2013-de-la-mission-securite-07-11-2012-2297809.php>

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La direction des ressources et des compétences de la police nationale (DRCPN): The department responsible for managing all PN financial, material, and human resources.

L'inspection générale de la police nationale (IGPN): Inspection department, responsible for monitoring all active PN services, oversees PN training institutions, and conducting studies and audits to determine effectiveness of police services. In recent years, the ICPN has focuses on public perception of the PN, as police behavior has been a point of controversy in French media.

La direction centrale de la sécurité publique (DCSP): Maintains public order, ensures the safety of all persons and property, and plays an important role in crime prevention and general information gathering. The DCSP has the largest budget and the biggest workforce in the PN, covering 26.2 million people (40% of the entire French population) and 75% of sensitive urban areas. The DCSP acts as an emergency service to victims of crime, responding to emergency police calls. It leads the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking, and supervises major events (sporting events, protests).³

La direction centrale de la Police judiciaire (DCPJ): Judicial Police officers are distinctive in that their jurisdiction covers multiple territories—for some officers, the entirety of France. These officers are responsible for carrying out investigations and gathering evidence. They work on everything from crimes against persons and property to breaches of business law, from terrorism to cybercrime, from drug trafficking to money laundering. The DCPJ has approximately 5,200 employees, 1,470 of which are located in the central offices in the Ministry of the Interior.⁴⁵

La direction centrale du renseignement intérieur (DCRI): DCRI was one of the first projects initiated by President Sarkozy. Intended to be a “French FBI”, the DCRI deals with issues of national security, terrorism, cybercrime, and monitors potentially violent social movements.

La direction centrale des compagnies républicaines de sécurité (DCCRS): The DCCRS is best known as France’s riot police unit, providing order and security during major events (sporting events, demonstrations, concerts, etc). They also provide services such as beach lifeguarding, mountain rescues, road safety (surrounding major cities), and youth delinquency prevention. In addition to its own mission, the DCCRS provides support for several other police services, including working with the DCSP to fight small crime and urban violence, assisting the DCPAF in monitoring France’s ports and airports, and contributing to the SPHP mission to protect high security official in France and French embassies abroad.⁶

La direction centrale de la police aux frontières (DCPAF): The DCPAF is responsible for monitoring French borders and immigration control. They ensure legislative compliance of cross-border traffic, fight illegal immigration, contribute to the security of international transport, and support the general security of all French ports and airports. The DCPAF also works with 10 police and customs coordination centers in Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, and has 4 joint police forces with Germany.⁷

Le service de protection des hautes personnalités (SPHP): The SPHP is comprised of nearly 770 police officers and is responsible for protecting the President, high level government officials, foreign guests, and other individuals considered at risk. It is based in Paris, but also holds offices in Strasbourg due to the presence of several European institutions serving the European Parliament.⁸

Other National Police Services

La coopération internationale (DCI): Joint mission with the Gendarmerie.

L'unité de Recherche, assistance, intervention, dissuasion (le RAID): Elite police unit.

Le service de sécurité du ministère de l'Intérieur (SSMI): Protects the Ministry of the Interior, and surveys persons held in custody.



CRS OFFICERS

³ <http://www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Organisation/Direction-Centrale-de-la-Securite-Publique>

⁴ <http://www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Organisation/Direction-Centrale-de-la-Police-Judiciaire/L-organisation-et-les-structures>

⁵ <http://www.vie-publique.fr/decouverte-institutions/justice/fonctionnement/justice-penale/quel-est-role-police-judiciaire-procedure-penale.html>

⁶ <http://www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Organisation/Direction-Centrale-des-Compagnies-Republicaines-de-Securite>

⁷ <http://www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Organisation/Direction-Centrale-de-la-Police-Aux-Frontieres>

⁸ <http://www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Organisation/Service-de-Protection-des-Hautes-Personnalites>

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La délégation aux Victimes (DAV): The DAV was inaugurated in 2005 and provides guidance and trainings for working with victims. It is an international delegation and is thus not open to the public.

La mission de lutte antidrogue (MILAD): Mission to direct and coordinate the Ministry of the Interior's policy for the fight against drug trafficking.

Le service d'information et de communication de la Police nationale (SICOP): Works on the communication policy of the PN.

Le service de veille opérationnelle de la Police nationale (SVOPN): Monitoring tool to provide important information on operations to assist with decision-making. The SVOPN disseminates departmental instructions from the Director General of the PN.

Le service historique de la Police nationale (SHPN): Archives

Le Service central automobile (SCA): Manages and maintains the main fleet of PN vehicles.

Equipment



UNIFORMS: The uniforms of the PN change approximately every 20 years. The latest change in PN uniforms was in 2006, designed by Balenciaga-Uniforme.⁹ It was considered a significantly more comfortable and modern upgrade from the 1985 version.¹⁰

Uniforms are procured through a public tender. Between 2008 and 2013, this contract was held by Armor-Lux, a French company that also supplies the postal services and French national railway employees. However, in April 2013, the French Ministry of the Interior announced it would switch to INEO, a subsidiary of the group GDF-Suez (also French).¹¹ Armor-Lux took the case to court, but lost.¹² Through the INEO consortium, Saint James, a French company based in the Brittany region, won a four year contract to make sweaters for the PN. This contract is for approximately 100,000 sweaters, or 25,000 a year.¹³

WEAPONS: Both the PN and the Gendarmerie are extremely reluctant to use lethal methods of force. Some of this is cultural (in France, only the police are authorized to use most kinds of guns, so citizens are almost always unarmed), but it is also written into the legal code that officers may only use their weapons "when absolutely necessary," and the response must be proportionate.¹⁴ Because of this, non-lethal weapons are preferred, and officers prefer to use intimidation by wearing items such as the Tonfa (the police baton, resembling a large stick) and by traveling in teams of 3 or 4.

SIG SAUER SP 2022: Used by the Police Nationale, as well as the Gendarmerie, French customs officials, and Prison administrators. This is a 9mm Parabellum caliber, a semi-automatic pistol designed in Switzerland and produced in Germany. It was first released in 2002, after it won a tender agreement. It was largely chosen for its numerous safety features and will be in service until at least 2020.

Le baton de police à poignée latérale (TONFA): Originally an Okinawan weapon, the Tonfa was introduced to the French police by Robert Paturol, a police officer and an ex-champion of French boxing. While on a visit to the U.S., Paturol witnessed the use of the Tonfa by the LAPD, and decided to bring back the knowledge and training. He adapted his own method for the Tonfa, which is currently being taught to officers in the PN.

Remington 870: Shotgun manufactured in the US by Remington Arms.

Benelli M3: Detachable semi-automatic rifle designed and manufactured by the Italian company Benelli Armi SpA.

Beretta MP12 SD: Another Italian weapon, the Beretta MP12 submachine gun was designed by Italian engineer Domenico Salza. In 1988, a special version was made specifically for the PN per their request.

HK MP5: German submachine gun produced by Heckler and Koch.

HK G36: German model assault rifle designed by Heckler and Koch.

⁹ <http://www.vogue.com/voguepedia/Balenciaga>

¹⁰ <http://forcesdepolice.forumactif.com/t106-la-nouvelle-tenue-de-la-police-nationale>

¹¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2013/04/17/uniformes-police-armor-lux-fin_n_3100892.html

¹² <http://www.ouest-france.fr/uniformes-de-police-armor-lux-saisit-le-tribunal-233304>

¹³ <http://www.challenges.fr/entreprise/20130514.CHA9364/la-police-nationale-troque-les-pulls-made-in-france-d-armor-lux-pour-ceux-de-saint-james.html>

¹⁴ http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/justice/quand-les-gendarmes-peuvent-ils-faire-usage-de-leur-arme_503811.html

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Lanceur de balle de defense: The “Flash-ball” is a trademark registered by the French firearms manufacturer Verney-Carron. It is a non-lethal handheld weapon (see photo).

Lance-grenades fumigènes ou lacrymogènes « Cougar »: Tear gas grenades; used for large scale protests and events that may turn violent. This weapon is for special use only, and not carried by the average officer.

Pistolet à impulsion électronique (PIE) Taser X26: The Taser gun can be fired from 10 meters away, and provides a 50,000 volt charge to paralyze targets. Although considered to be a non-lethal weapon, it has been controversial in France due to the possibility of injury or death to vulnerable persons. In 2009, France suspended use of the Taser for local police, claiming that training had been “insufficient”. At the time, approximately 4,600 tasers were in use by the Police Nationale and the Gendarmerie. In 2007, the PN and the Gendarmerie combined used tasers 280 times.¹⁵



Other Equipment

Most officers also have handcuffs and Acropol Radios (**A**utomatisation des **C**ommunications **R**adiotéléphoniques **O**érationnelles de **P**OLice).

Vehicles (most common)

-**Ford Transit** : Manufactured by Ford of Europe AG, a subsidiary of Ford Motor Company, headquartered in Cologne, Germany.

-**Peugeot 307**: French

-**Peugeot 308 SW**: French

-**Renault Scenic**: French

-**Renault Megane III**: French

Mopeds:

-**BMW R1150**: German

-**Yamaha FJR 1300**: Japanese

-**Yamaha TDM 900**: Japanese

-**Yamaha Fz6 Fazer**: Japanese

-**Yamaha Tmax 500** : Japanese

-**Yamaha X-max 125** : Japanese

THE GENDARMERIE NATIONALE: SAFETY, LAW AND ORDER & CRIME PREVENTION

According to MoI, there were 98,155 civilian and uniform persons working at GN in 2011, the most recent year for which figures are available. Its mission is to maintain security, peace, law and order, and protection of the people within France. During peace time, GN forces spend about 50% of its time carrying out missions that guarantee homeland security (i.e. law and order, public safety). The remainder of the time, they perform judicial police work and patrol the vast majority of road networks in rural areas where the risk of severe road accidents is high. They operate in France, in French overseas territories, in French embassies and take part in foreign missions.



Organization

The GN is composed of 11 subunits and a special chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) unit:

The surveillance unit gathers and disseminates information to the different governmental agencies. The goal of this unit is to find out and to prevent any threat that could harm the safety of the public, businesses, government and national sovereignty.

The Groupe d'intervention de la gendarmerie nationale (GIGN) is a highly specialized unit. Its expertise covers crisis management, surveillance and raid. It contributes to the fight against terrorism and organized crime, and

¹⁵ <http://www.raidh.org/French-court-suspended-Taser-use.html>

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maintains the safety of strategic national interests in France and abroad. Only the highest echelon of the government can directly give a mission to GIGN.

The Gendarmerie départementale (GD) is a regional, 'company size' unit of 100-200 gendarmes at the county level. GD forces are divided in five specialized entities: aerial units with helicopters, mountain units, road safety units, prevention of juvenile delinquency units and units that operate in areas with high crime rate.

The Gendarmerie mobile supports GD when needed. Its mission is to reconcile the general safety of the population with the enforcement of law and order.

The Garde républicaine maintains the security of government officials and buildings.

The Centre national d'entraînement des forces de gendarmerie (CNEFG) conducts training for all GN units.

The gendarmerie de l'armement is a specialized unit of the GN. It carries all of the missions of the GD and carries safety and prevention missions on behalf of the PN.

The Gendarmerie de la sécurité des armements nucléaires (GSAN) is responsible for the safety of the country's nuclear arsenal.

The Gendarmerie des transports aériens (GTA) is a specialized unit that works with the airline industry in order to prevent inflight crimes and to defuse threats that could harm airlines and passengers.

The Gendarmerie de l'air is a special unit of GN that reports to the chief of staff of the French Air Force. Its mission is to maintain aerial safety while it advises the authorities on policies and courses of action. It conducts missions at home and abroad.

The Gendarmerie maritime is a specialized unit that reports to the chief of staff of the French Navy and other government agencies that have marine interests. It focuses on national defense and general marine police.



Equipment and Procurement Information

The Gendarmerie relies on the RUBIS radio-communication system in all of its vehicles. Procurement is both centralized and decentralized and follows public tender procedures. The *Bureau de la commande publique de la Direction Générale de la Gendarmerie Nationale* handles the purchase of strategic items while the basic general daily necessities are handled at the regional level.

GN's equipment is divided into two groups:

- Telecom and IT: radio-communication devices, custom-designed software, technical training etc.
- General purchases: vehicles, motorcycles, buildings, weapons, uniform, laboratory equipment etc.

WEAPONS:

Sig-Sauer SP 2022: General service pistol, in common with the PN.

MAS GI: Semi-automatic pistol, produced by manufacture d'armes de Saint Etienne (French).

MAC (1950 model): Semi-automatic pistol, produced by Manufacture d'Armes de Chatellerault et Manufacture d'Armes de Saint Etienne, both French producers.

Revolver Manurhin MR-73: Single or double action revolver, in production in France since 1973. It was specially developed for the gendarmerie.

Taser X26: Taser International, Inc, a Texas based American company produces the Taser X26, along with all other Taser models. Although considered to be a non-lethal weapon, it has been controversial in France due to the possibility of injury or death to vulnerable persons (see photo).

PM Heckler & Koch MP5: Submachine gun produced by the German firm Heckler & Koch. Used by the Gendarmerie Mobile and the Garde Républicaine.

PM Heckler and Koch UMP9: Submachine gun produced by the German firm Heckler & Koch. Cheaper and lighter than the MP5 model. Used by the Gendarmerie Départementale.

Fusil d'assault HK G36: Used in Afghanistan and by the GIGN.

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VEHICLES:

Peugeot Partners: The “Union des groupements d’achats publics (UGAP)” placed an order for 960 Peugeot Partners between 2013 and 2015, a utility vehicle produced by PSA Peugeot Citroën (French). At the same time, UGAP placed an order for the following models:

- Peugeot 208
- Peugeot 308
- Peugeot Expert
- Ford Focus wagon (American)
- Volkswagen Caddy 4x4 (German)

UGAP also ordered a minimum of 270 motorcycles, in the models **BMW R1200RT** (German) and **Yamaha TDM 900** (Japanese).¹⁶



FIRST RESPONDERS

The emergency system in France is complex and significantly different than the one in place in the US. One of the biggest differences is that in France, critically injured victims are not transported to the hospital. In cases where the victim’s life is in immediate danger, emergency support is brought to the victim, and they are treated on the scene. Only victims who are stabilized are transported to a hospital.

FIREFIIGHTERS

Firefighters in France spend approximately 10% of their time fighting fires. The rest of the time is split providing aid after traffic accidents, responding to emergency incidents such as gas leaks and stuck elevators, and acting as Emergency First Responders (the largest role).

France has approximately 248,300 firefighters split across the town, regional, and national levels,¹⁷ and nearly 200,000 (85%) of these are volunteers. Another 30,000 firefighters make up the full-time professional force, which operates mainly in large cities and at-risk areas. Finally, there are military firefighting brigades stationed in Paris and Marseille (*Brigade des Sapeurs Pompiers de Paris, Bataillon des Marins-pompiers de Marseille*).

At the town level:

Firefighters report to the mayor. Each town is protected by one or more *Centre de Secours*, or shares one with a neighboring town depending on population size. If a *Centre de Secours* is shared between many towns, there will be smaller *centres de première intervention (CPI)*, first aid centers, in those towns.



At the regional level:

Le service départemental d’incendie et de secours (SDIS) oversees all the firefighters, analyses risks and establishes safety measures across regions of France.

At the national level:

Firefighters are under the supervision of the *Direction générale de la sécurité civile et de la gestion des risques (DGSCGC)*, an MoI agency. Its mission is to prevent natural and technological risks and to coordinate help during extreme crises.

Special firefighting units

La brigade de sapeurs-pompiers de Paris (BSPP), fire brigade of Paris, protects a region of 7 million people in the cities of Paris, Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-de-Marne. BSPP is a unit of the French Army with a civil mission that rests on three pillars: helping people during a crisis, mitigating urban technological risks and fighting fires. BSPP relies on a network of 8,500 firefighters, 74 emergency centers, two CBRN sites and three nautical emergency centers. BSPP has about 1,300 vehicles and other mobile equipment such as fire trucks, helicopters, ambulances, cars, motorcycles and small boats.

¹⁶ <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/la-vie-du-ministere/gendinfo-352-en-ligne>

¹⁷ Most recent year for which the information is available from pompiers.fr

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The *Bataillon des Marins-pompiers de Marseille* (BMPM) is a unit of the French Navy. Its mission is to help the population by fighting fires in the Marseille region, including the port and the airport. BMPM also takes part in various missions abroad when decided by the MoI. In order to complete its missions, BMPM relies on 2,400 people, both civilian and uniformed personnel; 423 vehicles (ambulances and specialized vehicles); 16 nautical vehicles; different suits based on the type of fire (mountain, urban, nautical); masks and other equipment.

LA SÉCURITÉ CIVILE (SC)

SC is an agency of the MoI. Its mission is to warn people when there is an imminent danger or threat, or to help them evacuate a particular area in case of danger. SC is operational when firefighters can no longer face a major threat by themselves. SC can operate anywhere in the world and in the most difficult situations. It pulls resources from firefighters and all other national entities that can assist both in France and abroad in order to assist during a crisis. SC has 2,500 employees and relies on 250,000 volunteers. It uses a mix of air, sea and land equipment to carry its missions. It has 26 planes and 39 helicopters, ambulances, fire trucks, communication/command trucks and specialized vehicles¹⁸.

SAMU: SERVICE D'AIDE MÉDICALE URGENTE



SAMU is France's central hub for emergency medical services. Anyone in France can reach SAMU by dialing 15 (free of charge), and talk to representatives from a team of physicians and assistants. These representatives will analyze the severity of the situation, provide medical advice, and depending on how critical the situation is, will dispatch the most appropriate mobile care resource. In France, only about 65% of calls to SAMU result in an ambulance response.

Each Department in France oversees its own SAMU service, and all are operated by public hospitals that are supported by government funding. Using SAMU services is always free, but there will be a co-pay for hospital care (approximately 20% of hospital costs for the first month). Abuse of SAMU services is illegal.

EMERGENCY VEHICLES: The type of vehicle SAMU deploys can vary based upon their assessment of the situation.

Private Ambulances: These are provided by private companies, and are primarily used in non-emergency situations or for prolonged health issues such as kidney dialysis. According to French law, other cars must "facilitate" their passage, but they are not given strict priority in the same way as American ambulances. SAMU can also deploy private ambulances to assist in more serious emergency situations, and these vehicles are called *Ambulances de Secours et de Soins d'Urgence* (ASSU).

VSAV AND VPS (véhicule de secours et d'assistance aux victimes ; véhicules de premiers secours) : These are fire department services deployed by SAMU. They provide rescue assistance and first aid, and their primary duty is to bring rescue workers and equipment to the scene. In serious emergencies, they are usually accompanied by a SMUR unit (see below).

SMUR Units: SMUR stands for *Service Mobile d'Urgence et Reanimations*, and these units act as mobile hospitals. Unlike the United States, where emergency vehicles are staffed by paramedics and emergency medical technicians and the goal is to get the patient to the hospital in as little time as possible, SMUR units provide a much higher level of care on scene. These vehicles bring in a qualified physician, along with other lower level medical personnel.

Police Vehicles: As police vehicles are the only vehicles with priority according to the rules of the road, they will frequently be dispatched as well to accompany SMUR units and facilitate their passage.

Conclusion

The French law enforcement and first responder network is a unique and complex system. The market in France is extremely fragmented and competitive, and it is very important to work with a local partner or through a local sales office, which many U.S. firms choose to establish. Some kind of local presence becomes essential when working

¹⁸ <http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministere/La-Securite-civile/Nos-missions/La-protection-des-personnes-des-biens-et-de-l-environnement/Les-moyens-aeriens-de-la-securite-civile>

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with government ministries or responding to public tenders, which is how procurements are generally made in this sector.

European Union (EU) regulations and standards require product compliance with the [“CE” mark certification](#). The “CE” mark is a passport that allows manufacturers to move industrial products freely within the EU market and attest to the conformity of safety, performance, compatibility, and other requirements determined by the EU authorities.

More information on norms and standards can be obtained from the following organization:

AFNOR - Association Française de Normalisation

11, rue Francis de Pressensé
93571 La Plaine Saint-Denis Cedex
Tel: +33 1 41 62 80 00; Fax: +33 1 49 17 90 00
<http://www.afnor.org/en>

TRADE SHOWS

ExpoProtection
November 4-6, 2014 – Paris, France
<http://www.expoprotection.com>

Milipol
November 2015 - Paris, France
<http://www.milipol.com/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The U.S. Commercial Service in Paris, France can be contacted via e-mail at: Cara.Boulesteix@trade.gov;
Phone: (33-1) 43 12 70 79; Fax: (33-1) 43 12 70 50 or visit our website: www.buyusa.gov/france.

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