SAPOL Police Emergency Communications Operator (PECO) - Frequently Asked Questions

We kindly ask that you **review the below information before contacting us or applying** as the document may be able to answer some of your questions regarding information on the role, eligibility and the selection process, as well as the offer and acceptance process.

About the Role

1. What does a Police Emergency Communications Operator do?

   A PECO responds to both emergency and non-emergency calls to the South Australia Police Call Centre. This includes Triple Zero (000), the Police Assistance Line (131 444), and Crime Stoppers SA. Consultants support vulnerable South Australians during times of high stress and serve as the first point of contact during critical situations.

   To achieve the best outcomes for callers, supported by police supervisors, you will use assertive communication and problem-solving skills to guide conversations and determine the most appropriate response pathway.

2. Am I a good fit for this role?

   Staff consistently report a strong sense of purpose, knowing that every call contributes directly to the safety and wellbeing of South Australians. While the role is highly rewarding, it also requires:

   - The ability to remain calm, in control, and empathetic with distressed callers
   - Excellent keyboard and computer skills
   - Strong communication and call handling abilities
   - Strong attention to detail
   - High emotional intelligence and self-awareness
   - Resilience to move from one challenging call to the next without knowing the outcome of previous incidents
   - Ability to receive constructive feedback and use it as part of ongoing learning and development

3. Do I need a qualification before I start?

   No. SAPOL provides full-time paid training. However, if you hold a bachelor's degree or higher (must be from an Australian university), please submit your parchment along with your application as you may not be required to attend the TAFE Testing.

4. Where are the positions located?

   These positions are based at SAPOL Headquarters, 100 Angas Street, Adelaide SA 5000.

5. Can I work from home?

   No. Due to the nature of the role, this is to be performed onsite only.

6. How does rostering work?

   We use a preference-based rostering system, where employees nominate the hours, they are available to work. For full-time employees, every effort is made to align rostered shifts with nominated preferences. However, there may be occasions where operational requirements necessitate shifts outside of these preferences. Full-time employees are also required to complete seven-night shifts within an eight-week period. Casual employees are not required to work outside their stated availability however, as shift allocation is based on operational demand, available shifts may not always align with preferred times, which can result in fewer shifts being offered than requested. Preferences are required 5 weeks in advance with shifts published 3 weeks in advance.

7. Do I make decisions about how callers are managed over the phone?
   The role involves exercising judgement when managing callers over the phone, ensuring calls are handled appropriately in line with SAPOL policy and procedures.

8. What does the initial training include?
   - Five weeks of full-time, Monday-Friday classroom training
   - Post-training, a consolidation period of 10 supervised shifts over 2-weeks across the roster must be complete
   - Training will be facilitated in our CBD locations (Angas Street and Carrington Street)

9. Is this paid training?
   Yes, all training is paid for by SAPOL.

10. What happens if I need to take leave during this training period?
    Training is fast-paced, and absences create significant learning gaps. **Programs cannot be altered**. If you have pre-booked leave, please advise the Selection Panel at interview – we may be able to defer you to the next course.

11. What happens if I do not pass the required training?
    You will receive support throughout training. However, if you do not meet the required standards, you will not be offered employment. We encourage all applicants to read the Position Information Document (PID) to ensure the role aligns with your capabilities.

12. What is the difference between a "000 Call Taker" and a SAPOL Police Emergency Communications Operator?
    - **000 Call Taker (Telstra):** When you call triple zero (000), a Telstra operator is the first point of contact. They are responsible for initially getting information about the emergency and then transferring the call to the correct emergency service.
    - **SAPOL PECO:** These are the operators who are specifically trained to handle police-related emergency and non-emergency situations. The SAPOL operator will handle police-specific information and dispatch duties.

Eligibility and Selection Process

1. What does a Police Emergency Communications Operator do?
   This ASO3 role may be available in casual, part-time, or full-time term contracts depending on current business needs. Successful candidates may be recruited for the next available training course or, they will be placed into a 12-month candidate pool where they may be selected for an upcoming training course.

2. I am on a Visa; can I still apply?
   All applicants must hold a current Australian work eligibility status and will be subject to a criminal history check.

3. What are the pre-employment and selection criteria for the role?
   You will be required to complete the following components as part of the selection process:
   - **Skills and aptitude assessment (TAFE Test)** – evaluates literacy, numeracy, and typing ability (minimum 30 wpm at 95% accuracy)
   - **Psychometric assessment** – an online evaluation of cognitive and personality attributes.
   - **Interview** – conducted in person on site, providing an opportunity to demonstrate your suitability, experience, and interpersonal skills against the Position Information Description.
   - **Medical examination** – A sight and hearing assessment completed in person rather internally by SAPOL, or through an external provider, fully funded by SAPOL. If any further assessments are recommended beyond this, they will be at your own cost should you choose to proceed.
   - **Psychologist appointment** – candidates may be required to meet with a psychologist. This is funded by SAPOL.
   - **Reference and work history checks** – two professional contacts are required as referees, including one being a current or most recent supervisor.

- **Probity checks** – candidates will be subject to a range of in-depth relevant screening including background and criminal history checks.
- **Selection** – the final stage, where the Selection Advisory Committee and SAPOL HR Operations and Partnering review all assessment results to determine overall suitability and make recommendations.

4. What documentation will I need to include in my application?
   You will need to include:
   - A **cover letter** (maximum two pages) introducing yourself and demonstrating how your skills and experience align with the role (recommended to use the PID and application guidelines for reference)
   - Your updated **resume** outlining all employment history
   - A completed **pre-employment declaration** (ensuring correct one is used from advertisement attachments)
   - Relevant **certificates** (Bachelor level or higher, if applicable)

5. How long might I have to wait between each stage of the process?
   There may be periods when you may not hear from the SAPOL Recruitment Team. This does not indicate that you are unsuccessful; it means the selection process is still in progress and your application remains active. You will be contacted when a decision is made, or further action is required. Please ensure you check your emails regularly, as the process can move quickly and you may need to book into scheduled activities.

6. Equity and Diversity
   As SA Police, we pride ourselves on fostering a culture of openness and organisational learning, with high-performance teamwork, personal ethics and accountability. We're committed to establishing a fair, flexible and safe workplace for all our staff. This means we support inclusive work practices an have zero-tolerance policy for any forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying. We have diversity and inclusion representatives throughout our organisation, who proactively support these commitments. LGBTIQA + Liaison Officers (LLO) are also stationed at all Districts/Local Service Areas to support the local LGBTIQ community and ensure fair and equal access to policing services.

Offers and Acceptance

1. How will I receive my offer?
   All correspondence will be via email and occasionally via phone call (private number). We ask that you check your email on a regular basis to ensure you don't miss any communications.

2. When am I likely to receive an offer if I am successful?
   Candidates who complete all stages and are recommended will be placed in a pool. You will be notified of outcomes at each stage. This process may take some time as the full selection process must be complete before offers are made.

3. If I receive an offer but don't respond by the due date indicated in the email, will SAPOL accept a late response?
   SAPOL cannot accept late responses. The offer will be withdrawn and offered to another applicant.

4. I have accepted an offer of employment however I will now be unavailable to commence, what do I do?
   Notify the SAPOL Recruitment Team as soon as possible so the position can be offered to another candidate.

5. If I am unsuccessful, will I be able to obtain feedback on the outcome of the selection process?
   For candidates who have attended a testing or interview, we will endeavour to give you as much feedback as possible if requested, however please be aware that feedback is limited and general in nature due to service level agreements with external suppliers.

6. If I am unsuccessful, how long do I need to wait until I can re-apply?
   If engaged, you are eligible to re-apply 12 months from the point of non-progress, or when the advert is re-opened.