

Patrol Car “Must-Have” Tools

The idea that technology can revolutionize the way law enforcement manages data, resources, and helps to enforce the law has fascinated us for many years – as such, many have speculated what that future will look like for law enforcement.

It is undeniable that technology will play a crucial role in the future of law enforcement, but what other tools are essential now?

A significant number of 21st Century police officers live and work in his/her patrol car; as such, reliance on technology as well as other tools to accomplish tasks is a must. More importantly, tech, tools and other systems must be integrated/versatile, portable, and extremely rugged.

Here is a short list of “toolkit” essentials to consider for your cruiser:

1. **Knife/Multi-tool** – The first essential item for the patrol car and a favorite for many in first responder roles, having a knife or multi-tool can literally be a life-saver in a tough situation. Even if you carry one on your belt/in your boot, a back-up blade or tool in your vehicle could come in handy and is a solid investment.
2. **Flashlight** – Though the standard issue torch may work just fine (for many reasons other than its lumens), newer flashlights have some unique features: variable output levels, tactical settings, rechargeable batteries, weapon mounts, and even toothed/crenelated bezels as a last line of defense.
3. **PC/Tablet** – Not all departments have adopted tablets or vehicle-mounted PCs, but those who have benefit from a variety of apps and a level of integration never before possible. Tablets and PCs can be paired with Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems, electronic citation software, enhanced Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, and much more.
4. **First Aid Kit** – This one makes the list for pretty obvious reasons. Include the life-saving essentials (AED, gloves, tourniquet, etc.), but get creative with your kit by adding some non-traditional supplies such as duct tape, glow-sticks, tampons and towels for gunshot wounds and trauma, and other items. You never know what will come in handy!\



5. **Smartphone** – The jury may still be out for BYOD (“bring your own device”), but there is a percentage of officers who use their personal devices for informational purposes every day. Some practical uses for a smartphone include: intelligence gathering, photo/video, calculator, social networking, and other applications. These devices are enhancing capabilities in new and innovative ways.
6. **Citation Management System** – At one point or another, you’re going to issue a citation. Many municipalities are utilizing driver’s license barcode scanning technology. Citation management has improved to save time and minimize hassle with traffic stops across the country – this leads to increased situational awareness, improved legibility/usability of citations and reports, and, as a result, improves officer safety.
7. **Pen & Paper** – Not very “high tech,” we know, but this really does make the list as an essential tool. The uses are endless and the pen/paper approach will always be there.