

Broken Radios, Faded Uniforms, and Low Pay: Officer Describes Growing Crisis Inside VIPD

From scorching hot stations and faded uniforms to radios that fail in the field, a VIPD officer paints a troubling picture of life on the force—and says overtime isn't a luxury, but a necessity to survive on base pay that starts at \$19 an hour.

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As the police union and VIPD officers face the threat of an [injunction from the court](#) barring them from engaging in coordinated job action, one officer has reached out to the Consortium to explain why their cohort is feeling so frustrated.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the officer says the stresses and demands of the job, combined with sub-par working conditions and pay, have contributed to the demoralization of the

department's most junior ranks.

“We are working in deplorable conditions,” the officer said. “Some days I wonder if anyone is about to blow in the station because we are under tension and stress!”

Certain police stations lack lockers, and some stations, cooling systems have failed. “We have not had a/c in months and I do not know when they are planning to fix it,” the officer said. “Every shift has to come into a hot room fighting for two Home Depot fans to keep cool.” Additionally, the lack of funds for uniform purchases have led to officers being forced to continue wearing clothing lost past its prime, “uniforms that are literally turning white and purple due to the fact that we are always in the sun and we have not gotten a uniform check to assist us,” the officer lamented.

The issues are not limited to mere complaints about comfort, however. Officer safety is a major concern. A poor-quality radio communication system leaves officers “asking 911 dispatch to repeat and repeat and we cannot hear anything or it simply cuts off.” The officer says that the lack of suitable equipment leaves them vulnerable to harm as well, however the details of those vulnerabilities have been omitted by the Consortium in an effort to preserve operational security for the VIPD. “We are in dire need of help and we constantly put in grievances but nothing has been resolved,” the officer said.

Among the grievances are the lack of support for dealing with mentally ill members of the public. The officer complained that other agencies are failing in their duties, leaving the bulk of the burden on police.

Police officers have been heavily criticized in the public for seemingly earning substantial additional income through overtime, despite the modest \$19/hour starting salary. However, that's not by choice, said the frustrated officer. “The base pay is at its all time low therefore the officers have to kill out themselves to take home something good to sustain their families,” they complained. The reduction to 10-hour shifts from 12-hour shifts have led to “more work, less pay” for officers, they allege. “We are not raising the standards to competitively attract the community to apply to the job,” they argue, which left the VIPD chronically understaffed and forces up the overtime bill. Adding insult to injury, “civilians who are inside the station are making more than an officer – that is total craziness,” the aggrieved officer declared.

Chronic understaffing leads to sub-optimal – or sometimes dangerously low – coverage, the officer claims. Despite seeing this, “The supervisor would sit in the office knowing it is one police officer on the road and would not assist,” the officer claims. “Everybody in the top rank is turning a blind eye to what we go through.”

“The morale of this police department is very poor. This is a cry of outrage and frustration,” they said. Having the VIPD join the lawsuit seeking to force them back to work felt like a slap in the face. “Instead of meeting to [pursue] an agreement, there goes the department suing the union. It's a circus in this department,” the concerned officer said.

When asked to respond to the officer's claims, the VIPD stated it was not in a position to comment at this time.