

Public Safety

Cost to Replace a State Trooper/Deputy Fire Marshal

Replacing an Alaska State Trooper or a Deputy Fire Marshal can be both time consuming and expensive. There are a variety of costs that contribute to the cost of turnover for Public Safety, including direct costs such as background checks, uniforms and accessories, safety gear, equipment, psychological assessments, medical assessments, overtime, training academy, advanced field training and field visits, administrative costs, and initial and rural relocation; and indirect costs such as quality of public safety service, trooper productivity, and accumulated knowledge and skills.

Quantifying turnover, or the cost to replace a trooper or deputy fire marshal, is extremely complex. Every time an incumbent departs from their position the cost to the Department of Public Safety is likely to be one to five times the salary of the employee.¹

Below are turnover calculations for a single employee that departs public safety. These costs were calculated using statewide average of all budgeted FY2023 salaries for State Trooper, Sergeant, and Deputy Fire Marshal job classes including base salary, benefits, premium pay, and cost of living adjustments excluding State Trooper Recruits.

State Trooper and Sergeant Average Annual Salary	Cost @ 1x Annual Salary	Cost @ 2x Annual Salary	Cost @3x Annual Salary *	Cost @ 4x Annual Salary	Cost @ 5x Annual Salary
\$ 225.1	\$ 225.1	\$ 450.2	\$ 675.3	\$ 900.4	\$ 1,125.5

Deputy Fire Marshal Average Annual Salary ²	Cost @ 1x Annual Salary	Cost @ 2x Annual Salary	Cost @3x Annual Salary *	Cost @ 4x Annual Salary	Cost @ 5x Annual Salary
\$ 182.5	\$ 182.5	\$ 365.0	\$ 547.5	\$ 730.0	\$ 912.5

(\$ in thousands)

*The department believes that the cost of trooper and fire marshal turnover would likely land at the three-year mark due to the extensive amount of time it takes to recruit and train new staff. The onboarding and training of new staff is contingent on the start dates of two training academies per year, and after the academy, usually new hire take time to move their families to either Soldotna, the Mat-Su Region, or Fairbanks to participate in advanced field training. Upon completion of field training, moving costs are paid by the department for troopers and their families to get to their new duty stations. In addition, the cost to move household goods to outlying areas of Alaska can exceed \$60.0 per move.

It can take over two years from the departure of an employee to the point that a newly hired employee is prepared for full duty, and it would take three to five years for full proficiency and productivity. Until a new employee can reach full proficiency, it takes a significant amount of overtime for tenured staff to ensure quality and timely public safety services.

¹ [Reducing police turnover: Recommendations for the law enforcement agency - Susan Hilal, Bryan Litsey, 2020 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

² The base salary for the Deputy Fire Marshal will increase in FY2024 due to a recent classification study.