

Model Policy

		<i>Effective Date</i> August 2004	<i>Number</i>
<i>Subject</i> Bicycle Patrol			
<i>Reference</i>		<i>Special Instructions</i>	
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Reevaluation Date</i>		<i>No. Pages</i> 3

I. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to provide guidance on the use, utility, and deployment of police bicycles and the general management of police bicycle operations.

II. POLICY

Bicycle patrol officers are an important component of this department's strategy for accomplishing its enforcement objectives due to their mobility and stealth as well as their ability to facilitate a variety of law enforcement and crime prevention operations. They are also advantageous in community policing efforts because they are generally perceived as less authoritarian than officers in police motor vehicles.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Deployment

Police bicycles are intended for and authorized to conduct the following primary deployment functions:

1. Police cyclists may be dispatched or may initiate response to all calls for service in which their response time is comparable to that of a motorized patrol vehicle, unless otherwise indicated by this policy.
2. Police cyclists should not normally be dispatched or initiate response to incidents in which their reduced emergency equipment capabilities (such as emergency warning devices) may present service problems or dangers. These include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Traffic accidents in which a vehicle is not moveable.
 - b. High-risk felony motor vehicle stops.
 - c. Situations in which the lack of cover typically afforded by a motor vehicle would be

deleterious. Response to such situations may be permitted where exigent circumstances exist and motorized units are not readily available, or as backup where patrol vehicles are already on the scene.

3. Police cyclists may be used for targeted patrol operations based on specific crimes, geographic areas, or crime targets.
4. Police cyclists may be given preference where appropriate in response to the following:
 - a. Off-road emergencies, to include search and rescue, enforcement, and preventive patrol as required on trails designated for horses or walking, hiking, and biking.
 - b. Medical emergencies, if officers are properly equipped and trained, and if their proximity or response time to the incident may be advantageous.
 - c. Urban incidents in which the volume of vehicle or pedestrian traffic may inhibit the response of police motor vehicles.
 - d. Special events, such as parades, festivals, fairs, sporting, and other indoor and outdoor events.
 - e. Demonstrations, for monitoring and controlling crowds.
 - f. Disaster situations in which movement by conventional motorized emergency response vehicles is limited or impossible.
5. Police cyclists may initiate traffic stops, giving particular attention to motorist and officer safety.
 - a. Physical contact with a moving vehicle is not authorized unless exigent or related emergency circumstances dictate.
 - b. Whenever possible, drivers should be instructed to move out of the traffic lane for the duration of the stop.

- c. Police bicycles should be kept out of traffic.
 - d. Officers are encouraged to use other available cover.
 - e. Marked patrol units should be requested where appropriate to provide emergency lighting and cover from traffic.
6. Prior to initiating bicycle patrol, officers shall inspect their equipment to ensure that it is in proper working order. If a problem is discovered that the officer cannot fix, notice shall be given to the shift supervisor, who will forward it to a bicycle mechanic. The officer may take another bicycle for duty.
 7. Police cyclists and supervisors shall exercise discretion in determining whether or not to use a bicycle on patrol when excessively high or low temperatures or other weather conditions may make the use of bicycles inadvisable or hazardous.
 8. While patrolling at night, unless employing stealth, police cyclists should use the legally mandated lights and reflective equipment.
 9. While patrolling on sidewalks, police cyclists must be alert to pedestrians, recognizing that they have the right-of-way. Whenever possible, officers should give an audible warning of their approach from the rear, and maintain reasonable speeds and caution on sidewalks.
 10. When possible, police cyclists shall notify communications of all potential enforcement contacts, to include their exact location.
 11. In arrest situations, police cyclists shall request a motorized transport unit for the prisoner.
 - a. A police cyclist shall not secure a prisoner to an object and leave him or her unattended, unless an emergency exists that requires immediate action by the police cyclist.
 - b. The police cyclist shall respond to the appropriate facility to process the arrestee at the earliest convenience or in accordance with this department's normal procedure.
 12. During plainclothes operations, police cyclists shall
 - a. wear helmets and protective eyewear;
 - b. carry at least the minimum equipment required by the plain clothes assignment;
 - c. use only bicycles approved by a certified mechanic authorized by this department.
 13. When leaving bicycles unattended, officers shall, whenever possible, do the following:
 - a. Secure their bicycles with a locking device. Police cyclists are not expected to secure bicycles when the situation does not allow, as in a foot pursuit.
 - b. Secure the frame of the bicycle to an immovable stationary object.
 - c. Take all reasonable precautions to ensure

that the bicycle does not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

- d. Remove and carry with them such easily removed items as the rack bag, helmet, computer, and seat.

14. If minor damage is sustained during the shift, the police cyclist shall notify the shift supervisor by the end of the shift. If substantial damage to the bike or injury to the officer or a civilian is sustained, the officer shall immediately notify the shift supervisor.

15. When not in use, all police bicycle equipment shall be stored and locked in the designated area.

B. Personnel Selection

Candidates must undergo the following screening exams:

1. Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q)* as set forth by the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology <http://www.csep.ca/pdfs/par-q.pdf>
2. Three-minute step test*, administered by a qualified fitness professional authorized by this department
3. Medical exam
4. Orthopedic exam with emphasis on back and knees
5. A cycling-specific physical fitness test using recovery heart rate, administered by a qualified fitness professional authorized by this department

**If the officer answers "yes" to any questions on the PAR-Q or fails the three-minute step test, he or she must pass a medically supervised cardiovascular stress test.*

C. Training

1. Initial training: Selected officers must attend and pass a nationally recognized and standardized basic police cycling course (minimum 32 hours of training)
2. In-service training:
 - a. Documented, periodic training of at least one full day per year, refresher to advanced, as determined by the unit supervisor
 - b. Firearms qualification, in full bicycle patrol uniform, at least once per year
 - c. Bicycle-specific firearms training, in full bicycle patrol uniform, at least once per year
 - d. Successful completion of the cycling-specific physical fitness test using recovery heart rate, administered by a qualified fitness professional authorized by this agency, or successful completion of the three mile bicycle time trial (must be completed in 12:30)

D. Supervisory Responsibilities

Bicycle Unit Supervisor shall ensure the following:

1. Prior to riding a bicycle in an official capacity, candidates selected for duty with the bike unit

attend the standard basic course. Reasonable accommodations should be made where possible when dealing with scheduling conflicts; however, all newly selected police cyclists shall attend the class within six months of selection.

2. All officers who conduct bike patrol attend at least one full-day refresher training class, preferably at the start of the cycling season.
3. All officers who conduct bike patrol qualify with their firearm and attend bicycle-specific firearms training, both in full bicycle gear, at least once per year.
4. Specialty training is authorized in accordance with the department selection application policy.
5. Advanced training is authorized on a case-by-case basis.
6. Cyclists ride the minimum number of hours each year, as established by this policy.
7. Newly selected officers are provided with the uniforms and equipment specified by the department, preferably prior to the start of the basic class.
8. Cyclists wear the proper uniform.
9. Cyclists properly care for their equipment.
10. Sufficient cleaning and maintenance supplies are available.
11. A written inventory of all departmental equipment, including bicycle serial numbers, is maintained.
12. Bicycles are stored properly when not in use.
13. The bicycle storage area is kept orderly and reasonably clean, and all specified tools are kept locked up when not in use.
14. All maintenance and damage reports are assigned to a certified bicycle mechanic within one week of notification, and the bicycles are repaired in a reasonable amount of time.
15. Equipment is properly replaced when it is damaged beyond repair.
16. Disciplinary action is initiated if it is deemed that negligence was involved in damage to equipment.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2000-DD-VX-0020 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office of Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice or the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Every effort has been made by the IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center staff and advisory board to ensure that this model policy incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. However, law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that no "model" policy can meet all the needs of any given law enforcement agency. Each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of federal court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions, and collective bargaining agreements that must be considered. In addition, the formulation of specific agency policies must take into account local political and community perspectives and customs, prerogatives and demands; often divergent law enforcement strategies and philosophies; and the impact of varied agency resource capabilities, among other factors.

© Copyright 2004. International Association of Chiefs of Police, Alexandria, Virginia U.S.A. All rights reserved under both international and Pan-American copyright conventions. No reproduction of any part of this material may be made without prior written consent of the copyright holder.