


NORTHAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT		
Administration & Operations Manual		
Policy: Police Bike Patrol Unit		AOM: O-204
Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards Referenced: [33.6.1], [41.1.3.d], [41.1.3.b&c], [41.1.3]		Issuing Authority <hr/> Jody Kasper Chief of Police
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I. Introductory Discussion

A. The Bicycle Patrol Unit was established to provide increased mobility to police beat officers assigned to downtown and other urban or congested patrol areas. The use of a bicycle on patrol facilitates a more effective patrol of the business district allows the officer the element of surprise in certain enforcement and tactical situations, and assists in the community relations role of the officer.

II. Establishment and Objectives

A. The Bicycle Patrol Unit is a component of the patrol function and is under the general supervision of the Operations Division Commander. All Bicycle Patrol Officers shall be directly responsible to their Patrol Supervisor and Officer-in-Charge (OIC).

- B. The objective of the Bicycle Patrol Unit is to provide a patrol unit in the urban areas that is highly mobile, yet openly accessible to the public. [41.1.3,a]
 - 1. Bicycle officers shall be assigned primarily to the downtown area during regular shift patrol duty and other areas on an as needed basis.

III. Assignment [33.6.1] [41.1.3,c]

- A. Assignment to the Bicycle Patrol Unit is voluntary. Only those officers who have met the selection requirements, who have been assigned to the unit, and who have received required training shall be authorized to ride police bicycles. [33.6.1] [41.1.3,c]

B. Selection Procedures

- 1. Officers wishing to be assigned to Bicycle Patrol must put in a request to the Chief of Police each year.
- 2. The following will be considered when reviewing prospective applicants:
 - a. Physical fitness;
 - b. Exceptional interpersonal skills; and
 - c. Assertive, pro-active police officers knowledgeable of and committed to the philosophy of community policing.
- 3. Assignment to the unit shall meet the approval of the Chief of Police.

C. Additional Requirements

- 1. Officers assigned to the unit shall be required to:
 - a. Complete a designated Bicycle Patrol Training Course prior to assuming status as a Bicycle Patrol Officer. That training course shall be one of the following, dependent upon availability: COBWEB, IPMBA, or the MPTC Police Mountain Bicycle Training Course.
 - b. Commit to a two year obligation unless reassigned.

IV. Guidelines for the Utilization of Bicycle Patrol Personnel

[41.1.3, a & b]

A. Limitations of Usage

- 1. Bicycle Patrol Units shall generally be limited to the months of April to November, but supervisor discretion is allowed.
- 2. Bicycle Unit officers can be assigned to all shifts, however, the hours of assignment shall be determined by the Operations Division Commander to meet the needs of the department.

3. Bicycle patrols shall not be utilized when the OIC determines that the weather, staffing levels, or other conditions are such that the use of a bicycle patrol would be unsafe or ineffective.

B. Duties of the Patrol Supervisor and OIC

1. The OIC shall be responsible for assigning the bicycle patrol officer(s) to a specific beat assignment, or may authorize the utilization of the bicycle officer(s) for directed patrols as appropriate to the function of the unit.
 - a. It is generally expected that bicycle patrol officers who are pre-assigned to work bicycle patrol, be utilized for that purpose. However, the Patrol Supervisor or OIC of the Shift can, for a legitimate reason, reassign them to other duties.
2. The responsibilities of the Patrol Supervisor (or the OIC if there is no Patrol Supervisor) with respect to bicycle patrol personnel, are as follows:
 - a. They should assign bicycle patrol officers to designated Downtown Business District Areas, unless it is determined that assignment to a specific designated patrol area is necessary.
 - b. Whenever possible, they should assign bike patrol officers to make at least one check of the City's bike path during their tour of duty.
 - c. When there are two bicycle officers working at the same time, the Patrol Supervisor should normally assign them to separate patrol areas in order to maximize their utility. This does not however, preclude them from working as a team from time to time to accomplish certain objectives.
 - d. The supervisors of the shifts to which they are assigned will evaluate bicycle patrol officers.

C. Duties & Responsibilities for Bike Patrol Officers

1. Bicycle Patrol Officers shall:
 - a. Carry out all those duties and responsibilities provided under the department's descriptions for a "Patrol Officer."
 - b. Properly care for and maintain all specialized equipment and assigned work areas, and properly secure equipment when unattended.
 - c. Be properly uniformed and care for and maintain all specialized uniform components. When two or more bicycle officers are working together, they shall dress uniformly to maintain a professional appearance.
 - d. Wear and/or use all prescribed safety equipment when riding their bicycle.
 - e. Keep, at all times, a full regular uniform in their locker in order to be able to work reassignments on short notice.
 - f. Not leave their assigned patrol areas without authorization from a supervisor or the desk officer.

- g. Observe all laws, ordinances and rules of etiquette pertaining to the riding of bicycles, and show courtesy to all pedestrians and vehicle traffic when not responding to a call for service or engaging in a police action.
- h. Be aware of their high visibility status and will consistently operate the bicycle in a manner that promotes others to safely operate bicycles.
- i. Not leave their bicycles in the station hallway. Instead, bicycles should be left in the designated area.
- j. Bicycle officers are encouraged to dismount from their bicycle when **making contact with suspects or in other situations when the bicycle** may be detrimental to the mobility and safety of the officer.

2. Handling Detainees

- a. Whenever a bicycle patrol officer makes an arrest, they shall request that a cruiser be dispatched to transport the detainee to the station. All detainees shall be transported to the station via cruisers.

V. Equipment [41.1.3,d]

A. Officers assigned to the unit shall be equipped with the following specialized equipment:

1. Approved bicycle helmet.
2. All other department issued or authorized weapons and uniforms for members of the Bicycle Patrol Unit.

B. The Patrol Bicycle shall be equipped with the following equipment:

1. Black rack and rack bag with reflective “police” lettering.
2. Handcuffs or other locking device to lock the bicycle.
3. Patrol forms/paperwork
4. Water bottle and holder.
5. Headlights

VI. Bicycle/Equipment Maintenance [41.1.3]

A. Officers assigned to a bicycle shall be responsible for inspecting that bicycle at the beginning of their assignment. The officer shall ensure that all needed repairs or equipment is taken care of in a timely manner. All safety related discrepancies shall be corrected prior to use of the bicycle.

1. **Minor Repairs**: Any repairs that can be taken care of internally without the services of a repair shop or the purchase of equipment, shall be completed by the Bike Patrol Officer prior to use.
2. **Major Repairs**: All repairs to patrol bicycles that require the services of a repair shop or the purchase of equipment must be approved by the Captain of Operations. Receipts from such repairs or purchases shall be forwarded to the Operations Division Commander.