



GENERAL ORDER OPS-17 BICYCLE PATROLS

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 13, 2020

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. BIKE PROGRAM COORDINATOR
- III. SELECTION
- IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING
- V. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- VI. USE AND DEPLOYMENT
- VII. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT
- VIII. MAINTENANCE
- IX. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS
- X. CANCELLATION

I. POLICY

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall use bicycle patrols to enhance the community oriented policing philosophy of the HCPD, to provide an alternative to the traditional motorized patrol, and to enhance access to areas off road such as parks and foot and bike paths.

II. BIKE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

- A. The overall operation of the HCPD Bike Program will be coordinated by the Pathway Patrol Section Supervisor, herein referred to as the Bike Program Coordinator (BPC).
- B. The BPC is responsible for:
 - 1. Supervising the selection of Bike Officers;
 - 2. Working with the Animal Control Supervisor to coordinate the Howard County Animal Control (HCAC) Bike Program;
 - 3. Supervising the training of Bike Officers and Animal Control (AC) Bike Officers;
 - 4. Scheduling assignments and special events for Bike Officers;
 - 5. Coordinating periodic training for Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers; and
 - 6. The selection and purchasing of bicycles and bicycle equipment.
- C. The BPC shall maintain a list of authorized Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers. The list will be updated as necessary and forwarded to each Patrol District and the Animal Control Supervisor, who shall maintain a current copy of the list.

III. SELECTION

- A. Members assigned as Bike Officers shall be selected consistent with General Order ADM-21, Transfer Policy.
- B. AC Bike Officers shall be selected by the Animal Control Supervisor.
- C. All bike Officers must meet the following additional qualifications:

1. Hold the rank of Police Officer, Police Officer First Class, or Police Corporal, or, for the AC Bike Program, Animal Control Officer;
2. Have successfully completed the probationary period;
3. Demonstrate excellence in self-initiated patrol enforcement;
4. Have an above average cardiovascular fitness level; and
5. Have the physical stamina and agility to operate a mountain bike in a patrol environment.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING¹

- A. Prior to operating in a patrol capacity as a Bike Officer or AC Bike Officer, selected members must attend and successfully pass a thirty-two (32) hour basic certified police cyclist training course sanctioned by a nationally recognized police cyclist organization, such as The International Police Mountain Bike Association, and taught by a certified instructor.
 1. Initial training shall be done at an HCPD-approved location determined by the BPC and subject to the approval of the Deputy Chief of Police for Operations Command.
 2. The lead instructor of the bicycle training course will determine successful completion of basic bicycle training.
- B. Initial training courses shall incorporate blocks of instruction on the following topics, at a minimum:
 1. Physical cycling skills;
 2. Health and fitness;
 3. Maintenance;
 4. Obstacle detection and hazard avoidance;
 5. Patrol Operations;
 6. Night Operations;
 7. Community policing;
 8. Uniforms and equipment; and
 9. Local and state bicycling laws.
- C. All Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers shall complete biennial in-service training emphasizing HCPD procedures and the practical aspects of police cyclist operations. Officers who have obtained certification as bike officers but who are not currently designated as such may attend this training with supervisory approval.

V. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Supervision and Reporting
 1. The direct day-to-day supervision of each Bike Officer is the responsibility of his assigned squad supervisor or Watch Commander.

¹ CALEA 41.1.3 b

2. Bike Officers assigned as Neighborhood Community Resource Officers will report to their respective Supervisor.
3. AC Bike Officers will report to the Animal Control Supervisor.
- B. Bike Officers shall function as an integrated part of the Operations Command while maintaining their regularly assigned patrol duties. AC Bike Officers shall function as an integrated part of the field operations of Animal Control while maintaining their normally assigned duties.
- C. Operations Command Bike Officers shall receive a permanent bicycle assignment. Bike Officers shall not use another officer's assigned bike or remove equipment from another officer's bike without permission of the BPC.
- D. Bike Officers shall be used to provide high visibility patrol operations in areas not normally accessible by a police or Animal Control vehicle to include footpaths, retail centers, and residential settings. The use of Bike Officers for the following types of calls and events should be considered due to the specialized nature of the assignment.
 1. Crimes in progress where the use of a bike would be beneficial in conducting searches for victims and or the apprehension of suspects;
 2. Lost or missing persons of a critical nature;
 3. Bicycle safety programs;
 4. Community policing events and details; and
 5. Special events such as parades, athletic events, concerts, firework displays, and similar types of events where crowd control is an issue.
- E. Bike Officers shall fulfill a community relations and preventive patrol function by working to resolve community problems in a directed patrol area and to diminish criminal conduct in these areas. AC Bike Officers shall work to resolve community complaints of violations of the Howard County Code governing animals.
- F. All Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers shall notify Communications when they begin and end a bicycle patrol.
- G. Bike Officers shall be accountable for all dispatched calls for service in their assigned area unless specifically exempted by the area supervisor or Watch Commander.
- H. Bike Officers shall record and report their daily bike activity on their monthly activity report.
 1. HCPD Form 2014, HCPD Bike Patrol Activity, shall be completed and submitted to the BPC on a monthly basis.
 2. AC Bike Officers shall complete HCPD Form 2014 and submit it to the Animal Control Supervisor on a monthly basis.
- I. Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that their assigned bike and related equipment are maintained in a clean, professional manner and in good working order consistent with this Order and General Order ADM-48, Line Inspections and Equipment Protocols.

VI. USE AND DEPLOYMENT²

- A. Authority for the use or deployment of the Bike Officer may come from either a supervisor or the Watch Commander in those situations where a bicycle patrol would prove to be expedient to an investigation.
 - 1. Bike Officers may deploy their bicycle at any time during their work shift in the furtherance of police related tasks.
 - 2. AC Bike Officers may deploy the bike at any time during their work shift in the furtherance of animal control-related tasks.
- B. Bike and AC Bike Officers should consider the following when deciding whether to deploy or not:
 - 1. Sufficient staffing in the beat area;
 - 2. Increased response time to calls for service;
 - 3. Temperature and weather factors such as high winds and precipitation; and
 - 4. Surface conditions as a result of weather and other hazards.
- C. Bike Officers may respond to assist other jurisdictions when requested with the authorization of the Watch Commander.
- D. Bike Officers may operate in a covert assignment, such as surveillance or decoy operations, with supervisory approval.
 - 1. Officers involved in these types of operations shall ensure that the bicycle used, if not the officer's assigned bike, is in good working order and properly equipped for the assignment.
 - 2. Plainclothes attire is acceptable in these circumstances.

VII. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Bike Officers shall wear the issued bike patrol uniform in accordance with General Order ADM-13, Uniform and Professional Appearance. AC Bike Officers shall wear the issued Animal Control Officer uniform.
- B. The bicycle uniform may only be worn when subject to deploying the bicycle, i.e. when the patrol vehicle is equipped with the bicycle and the officer intends to utilize it during his shift.
- C. As required by Howard County, sway devices shall be used whenever a bicycle is mounted on the back of a patrol car.
- D. HCPD bicycles shall be equipped with a derailleur gearing system, toe clips, and the following:³
 - 1. Cable bicycle lock;
 - 2. Rear rack and pack;
 - 3. Front mounting headlight;

² CALEA 41.1.3 a

³ CALEA 41.1.3d

4. Flashing rear taillight;
 5. Audible bell;
 6. First aid kit;
 7. Bicycle repair kit to include spare inner tube;
 8. Air pump; and
 9. Water bottle.
 10. AC bike patrols shall also carry a rack pack with citations, warnings, impounds, leashes, Official Notices, and HCAC summary Animal Control Laws.
- E. The Deputy District Commander of the Bike Officer's assignment and the Animal Control Supervisor shall coordinate with the Commander of the Management Services Bureau to ensure that an approved bicycle receiver hitch is mounted to the officer's assigned vehicle.
- F. Bike and AC Bike Officers shall use the issued cable lock to secure the HCPD bicycle to their vehicle or another fixed object when the bike is left unattended. All other related equipment such as the bike rack bag is vulnerable to theft and shall be secured at all times, i.e. locked in the truck of the vehicle, brought into a police facility, brought into the officer's home, etc., unless prevented by exigent circumstances.
- G. Bikes shall not be left on the vehicle:
1. During inclement weather when riding the bike is dangerous, i.e. snow, heavy rain, etc., or
 2. When the officer is not working or does not intend to deploy the bicycle during the shift.

VIII. MAINTENANCE⁴

- A. Bike and AC Bike Officers shall inspect their assigned bike to ensure it is in a safe operational condition prior to a bicycle patrol. The inspection should include:
1. Proper tire pressure and condition. A floor air pump shall be maintained in both district stations and all satellite offices for the use of bike officers.
 2. Proper front shock pressure.
 3. Proper front and rear brake operation.
 4. Proper operation of crank, chain, and derailleur system.
 5. All quick releases are secure.
- B. Any defects in or damage to the bike will be immediately reported as specified in General Order ADM-48, Care and Maintenance of Equipment.
- C. Bike and AC Bike Officers shall ensure that their assigned bicycle is maintained in a clean and serviceable condition at all times. Any problems or deficiencies with the bicycle shall be addressed prior to deployment either by the Bike Officer himself or at an authorized repair facility if approved by the BPC.

⁴ CALEA 41.1.3 c

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1. Road grime and dirt should be removed from the bicycle prior to and upon completion of any deployment.
 2. Officers are responsible for minor repairs, i.e. flat tire, and ensuring the routine maintenance of their assigned bicycle, i.e. proper tire pressure, lubrication, barrel adjustment for brakes, etc. Officers are prohibited from performing repairs on the bicycle that are outside of their scope of expertise and training.
 3. Any repair performed at a repair facility must be pre-approved by the BPC.
 - a. The initiating officer shall obtain a copy of the invoice from the facility upon completion of the repair and shall forward it to the BPC and the Budget Fiscal Section within 48 hours. The BPC shall maintain copies of the repair invoices in a separate file for a period of three (3) years.
 - b. The repair invoice shall include the following information:
 - i. Reason for repair;
 - ii. Name of the repair facility;
 - iii. Any cost;
 - iv. Initiating officer's name and four-digit ID number;
 - v. Bicycle number; and
 - vi. Date of repair.
- D. The BPC shall ensure that all HCPD bicycles currently assigned to active Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers receive an annual Preventive Maintenance (PM) at an authorized repair facility.
1. A record of the annual PM will be maintained in a file by the BPC for a period of three (3) years.
 2. Reserve bicycles do not require the annual PM, however they will receive PM prior to being assigned to a new Bike Officer.
- E. Monthly Inspections
1. Squad Sergeants shall conduct documented monthly inspections of HCPD bicycles assigned to Bike Officers under their command using HCPD Form 1009, Bike Inspection. Supervisors shall also conduct an inspection of the vehicle bicycle rack, if one is mounted, to ensure it is secure.
 - a. These inspections should be performed in conjunction with the monthly inspection of the officer's police vehicle as outlined in General Order ADM-23, Departmental Vehicle Policy.
 - b. A copy of the completed Form 1009 shall be emailed to the BPC.
 - c. The BPC may perform random inspections of HCPD bicycles assigned to Bike Officers.
 2. The Animal Control Supervisor shall conduct documented monthly inspections of HCPD bikes assigned to AC Bike Officers using HCPD Form 1009, as well as an inspection of the bike rack, if one is mounted, to ensure it is secure.

- a. These inspections should be performed in conjunction with the monthly inspection of the animal control officer's vehicle.
- b. A copy of the completed Form 1009 shall be emailed to the BPC.

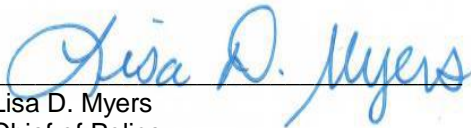
IX. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers shall wear the following equipment whenever the bicycle is ridden:
 1. Approved helmet with chinstrap engaged;
 2. Riding Gloves; and
 3. Protective eyewear, which may include the officer's prescription glasses or sunglasses.
- B. Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers shall be mindful of pedestrian traffic and be alert for unpredictable actions of the public while operating their bicycles.
- C. Bike Officers and AC Bike Officers operating an HCPD bicycle shall obey all appropriate state and local laws governing bicycle operation.
- D. AC Bike Officers shall not attempt to ride the bicycle and control an animal at the same time, unless exigent circumstances exist.
- E. No one except certified HCPD Bike Officers, AC Bike Officers, and trainers may operate an HCPD bicycle.
- F. Motor vehicle collisions involving HCPD bicycles shall be handled in the same manner as any other HCPD motor vehicle collision.
- G. Incidents or collisions that result in damage to the bicycle or other property, public or private, will be documented by sending a memorandum with the supervisor's endorsement to the appropriate District Commander or HCAC Supervisor, flat tires excluded.
 1. A copy of the memorandum shall be forwarded to the BPC when there is damage to the bike.
 2. Operators must also comply with current damage and loss reporting procedures consistent with General Order ADM-48, Care and Maintenance of Equipment.
- H. If the bike is on the vehicle when a motor vehicle collision occurs and the bike or rack is damaged the bike and rack shall be left on the car when the vehicle is towed to the repair facility, and the BPC shall be notified.
- I. Whenever a Bike Officer or AC Bike Officer receives an injury as a result of riding the bicycle, his supervisor shall be notified immediately and the Howard County Employee Incident/Injury Report Form, Form RM-1, will be completed consistent with Howard County Policy.

X. CANCELLATIONS

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order OPS-17, Police Bicycle Patrols, dated October 30, 2012, and SOP AC-16, Animal Control Bicycle Patrols, dated April 20, 2012.

AUTHORITY:



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Chief of Police