

Patrol Use of Bicycles

426.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the Easton Police Department to safely and effectively use bicycles for the purpose of enhancing field patrol efforts by the patrol division in the community.

426.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Easton Police Department that bicycles may be used for regular patrol duty, traffic enforcement, parking control or special events. The use of the bicycle will emphasize officer mobility and department visibility in the community.

426.3 OPERATIONS

Bicycle patrol has been shown to be an effective way to increase officer visibility in congested areas, and the quiet operation of the patrol bicycle can facilitate a tactical approach to crimes in progress. Patrol may deploy officers on bicycles to any area, at any hour of the day or night, according to department needs and as staffing levels allow.

Requests for specific deployment of patrol officers on bicycles shall be coordinated through the Patrol Commander and the Shift Supervisor.

426.4 SELECTION

Interested officers shall submit a training request to attend an approved bike school to their Shift Supervisor. Once approved by the Shift Supervisor, the training request form will be forwarded to the officers Division Commander, Training Commander and the Deputy Chief for final approval.

Interested officers shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

- (a) Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance.
- (b) Special skills or training as it pertains to the assignment.
- (c) Good physical condition.
- (d) Willingness to perform duties using the bicycle as a mode of transportation.

426.5 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Officers should operate the bicycle in compliance with Maryland traffic laws under normal operation, unless their duties require otherwise (Md. Code TR § 21-1202.)

Officers may operate the bicycle without lighting equipment during hours of darkness only when it reasonably appears necessary for officer safety or tactical considerations. Officers must use caution and care when operating bicycles without lighting equipment or when they are operating in violation of the rules of the road.

Officers are exempt from the rules of the road, while using audible and visual signals, under the following conditions (Md. Code TR § 21-106):

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- (a) In response to an emergency call.
- (b) In the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law.

426.6 BICYCLE PATROL SUPERVISOR

The responsibilities of the Bicycle Patrol Unit Supervisor regarding bicycle operations by the Patrol Division include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Inspecting and maintaining an inventory of patrol bicycles and program equipment.
- (b) Inspecting and documenting, no less than every three months, that bicycles which are not in active service are in serviceable condition.
- (c) Scheduling maintenance and repairs.

426.7 PATROL BICYCLE

officers will use a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle.

Patrol bicycles shall be primarily black or white in color with a "Police" decal affixed to each side of the crossbar or the bicycle's gear bag. Every patrol bicycle shall be equipped with:

- (a) Front and rear reflectors.
- (b) A siren and horn.
- (c) A steady or flashing blue and red warning light that is visible from the front and rear of the bicycle.
- (d) A rear rack and/or gear bag sufficient to carry all necessary equipment to handle routine patrol calls, including report writing, vehicle storage and citations.
- (e) Toe Clips

Patrol bicycles shall be properly secured when not in the officer's immediate presence.

426.7.1 TRANSPORTING THE PATROL BICYCLE

The patrol bicycle should be transported using a vehicle bicycle rack or Truck 121. Due to possible component damage, transportation of the patrol bicycle in a trunk is discouraged.

426.7.2 MAINTENANCE

- (a) officers shall conduct an inspection of the patrol bicycle and equipment prior to use to ensure proper working order of the equipment.
- (b) Officers are responsible for the routine care and maintenance of the bicycle during their use (e.g., tire pressure, chain lubrication, overall cleaning.)
 - 1. Each patrol bicycle will have scheduled maintenance yearly to be performed by a repair shop or technician approved by the Department.
- (c) Officers shall not modify the patrol bicycle or remove, modify or add components to the patrol bicycle except with the express approval of the bicycle patrol supervisor, or in the event of an emergency.

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- (d) If a needed repair is beyond the ability of the bicycle patrol officer, a repair work order will be completed and forwarded to the bicycle patrol supervisor for repair by a technician approved by the Department.
- (e) Patrol bicycle batteries shall be charged at the end of each tour of duty.
- (f) At the end of a patrol bicycle assignment, the bicycle shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty.

426.8 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Officers shall wear uniforms and safety equipment in accordance with the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy.

The uniform consists of the standard short-sleeve uniform shirt or other department-approved shirt, with Easton Police Department badge and patches, and department-approved bicycle patrol pants or shorts. Optional attire may include, but is not limited to, a jacket in colder weather and turtleneck shirts worn under the uniform shirt.

Officers riding a bicycle for patrol purposes shall carry the same equipment on their duty belts as they would on regular patrol assignments. Assignment-specific safety equipment should include, but is not limited to, department-approved helmet, riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

Officers will be responsible for obtaining the necessary forms, citation books and other department equipment needed while on bicycle patrol.

426.9 TRAINING

Officers must complete an initial department-approved bicycle-training course prior to riding a bicycle on patrol. The initial training shall minimally include the following:

- (a) Bicycle patrol strategies.
- (b) Bicycle safety and accident prevention.
- (c) Operational tactics and techniques using bicycles.