

Bicycle Patrol

426.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the Plymouth Township Police Department to safely and effectively use bicycle patrol for the purpose of enhancing field patrol efforts in the community.

426.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Plymouth Township Police Department that patrol bicycles may be used for limited patrol duty, parking control or special events. The use of the patrol 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 bicycles may be deployed during daylight hours to any area, according to department needs and as staffing levels allow, exceptions to the daylight hours may be made for community events occurring in well-lit areas.

Requests for specific deployment of bicycle patrol officers shall be coordinated through the bicycle patrol coordinator or the Patrol Lieutenant.

426.4 SELECTION

Officers who are off of probation may submit interest in posted bicycle patrol assignment opportunities to their assigned patrol supervisor. A copy will be forwarded to the Patrol Lieutenant.

Interested officers will be evaluated according to 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
- (e) A current need or opening in the unit

426.4.1 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Officers should operate the bicycle in compliance with the vehicle code under normal operation, unless their duties require otherwise (75 Pa.C.S. § 102; 75 Pa.C.S. § 3105).

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 and must operate according to the rules of the road.

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426.5 BICYCLE PATROL COORDINATOR

The senior bicycle patrol officer will serve as the bicycle patrol coordinator.

The responsibilities of the coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Organizing bicycle patrol training.
- (b) Inspecting and maintaining an inventory of patrol bicycles and program equipment.
- (c) Inspecting, no less than every three months, bicycles that are not in active service and documenting that they are in serviceable condition.
- (d) Scheduling maintenance and repairs.
- (e) Evaluating the performance of bicycle patrol officers.
- (f) Coordinating activities with the Patrol Division.
- (g) Other activities as required to maintain the efficient operation of bicycle patrol.

426.6 PATROL BICYCLE

Bicycle patrol officers will be assigned a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle.

Patrol bicycles shall have a "Police" decal affixed to each side of the crossbar or the bicycle's gear bag.

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

426.6.1 TRANSPORTING THE PATROL BICYCLE

The patrol bicycle should be transported using a vehicle bicycle rack. Due to possible component damage, transportation of the patrol bicycle in a trunk or on a law enforcement vehicle push-bumper is discouraged.

426.6.2 MAINTENANCE

- (a) Bicycle patrol 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 their assigned equipment (e.g., tire pressure, chain lubrication, overall cleaning).
 - 1. Each patrol bicycle will have scheduled maintenance annually to be performed by a repair shop or technician approved by the Department.
- (c) Absent an exigency, officers shall not modify the patrol bicycle or remove, modify or add components to the patrol bicycle except with the express approval of the Patrol Lieutenant.
- (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 coordinator for repair by a technician approved by the Department.
- (e) At the end of a patrol bicycle assignment, the bicycle shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty.

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426.7 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

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

Bicycle patrol officers shall carry the same equipment on their duty belts as they would on regular patrol assignments. Assignment-specific safety equipment may include, but is not limited to, department-approved helmet, a radio (e.g. a headset & microphone if available), riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

426.8 TRAINING

Officers must complete an initial department-approved bicycle-training course prior to assignment to bicycle patrol. Thereafter, bicycle patrol officers should receive periodic in-service training to improve skills and refresh safety, health and operational procedures. The initial training shall minimally include:

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

Bicycle patrol officers may be required to train and qualify with their duty firearm while wearing bicycle safety equipment, including the helmet and riding gloves.