

Bicycle Patrol Unit

423.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The California Department of State Hospitals (DSH) has established the Bicycle Patrol Unit (BPU) for the purpose of enhancing patrol efforts in DSH facilities and the community. Bicycle patrol has been shown to be an effective way to increase officer integration into the therapeutic community, establishing a positive presence for patients, and rapid response when necessary. It is also an effective way to increase officer visibility in congested areas and their quiet operation can provide a tactical approach to crimes in progress. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the safe and effective operation of the patrol bicycle.

423.2 POLICY

Patrol bicycles may be used for regular patrol duty, traffic enforcement, parking control, or special events. The use of the patrol bicycle will emphasize their mobility and visibility to the community.

Bicycles may be deployed to any area at all hours of the day or night, according to DSH needs and as staffing levels allow.

Requests for specific deployment of bicycle patrol officers shall be coordinated through the BPU supervisor or the Watch Commander.

423.3 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn employees, who are off probation, shall submit a letter of interest to the Hospital Police Chief via their chain of command, when a vacancy is identified. Interested employees 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.
- (e) Have a record of good attendance.

423.3.1 BPU SUPERVISOR

The BPU supervisor will be selected from the rank of sergeant by the Operations Watch Commander or his/her designee.

The BPU supervisor shall have responsibility for the following:

- (a) Organizing bicycle patrol training.
- (b) Inspecting and maintaining inventory of patrol bicycles and program equipment.
- (c) Scheduling maintenance and repairs.
- (d) Training and mentoring of bicycle officers.
- (e) Providing observations of the bicycle officer's performance to the employee's assigned supervisor for consideration in preparation of the annual performance evaluation.
- (f) Coordinating activities with the Operations Divisions.
- (g) Other activities as required to maintain the efficient operation of the BPU.

423.4 TRAINING

Participants in the program must complete an initial DSH approved bicycle-training course after acceptance into the program. Thereafter bicycle patrol officers should receive monthly in-service training to improve skills and refresh safety, health and operational procedures. The initial training shall minimally include the following:

- Bicycle patrol strategies.
- Bicycle safety and accident prevention.
- Operational tactics using bicycles.

423.5 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Officers shall wear the Office of Protective Services (OPS)-approved uniform and safety equipment while operating the OPS bicycle. Safety equipment includes OPS-approved helmet, riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

The bicycle patrol unit uniform consists of the standard short-sleeve uniform shirt or other OPS- approved shirt with OPS cloth badge and patches, and OPS-approved bicycle patrol pants or shorts.

Optional equipment includes a radio head set and microphone.

Bicycle patrol officers shall carry the same equipment on the bicycle patrol duty belt as they would on a regular patrol assignment. Officers will be responsible for obtaining the necessary forms, citation books and other OPS equipment needed while on bicycle patrol.

423.6 CARE AND USE OF PATROL BICYCLES

Officers will be assigned a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle, including an attached gear bag.

Bicycles utilized for uniformed bicycle patrol shall be primarily black or white in with a "POLICE" decal affixed to each side of the crossbar or the bike's saddlebag. Every such bicycle shall be equipped with front and rear reflectors front lights and a siren/horn satisfying the requirements of Vehicle Code section 2800.1, subdivision (b).

Bicycles utilized for uniformed bicycle patrol shall be equipped with a rear rack and/or saddle bag(s) sufficient to carry all necessary equipment to handle routine patrol calls including report writing, vehicle storage and citations.

Each bicycle gear bag shall include a first aid kit, tire pump, repair tool, tire tube, security lock, equipment information and use manuals. These items are to remain with/on the bicycle at all times.

Each bicycle shall be equipped with a steady or flashing blue warning light that is visible from the front, sides, or rear of the bicycle. (Veh. Code, § 21201.3.)

Bicycle officers shall conduct an inspection of the bicycle and equipment prior to use to insure proper working order of the equipment. Officers are responsible for the routine care and maintenance of their assigned equipment (e.g., tire pressure, chain lubrication, overall cleaning).

If a needed repair is beyond the ability of the bicycle officer, a repair work order will be completed and forwarded to the BPU supervisor for repair by an approved technician.

Each bicycle will have scheduled maintenance twice yearly to be performed by an OPS-approved repair shop/technician.

At the end of a bicycle assignment, the bicycle shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty.

Officers shall not modify the patrol bicycle, remove, modify or add components except with the expressed approval of the BPU supervisor, or in the event of an emergency.

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

423.7 OFFICER_DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITY

Officers must operate the bicycle in compliance with the vehicle code under normal operation. Officers may operate the bicycle without lighting equipment during hours of darkness when such operation reasonably appears necessary for officer safety and tactical considerations. Officers must use caution and care when operating the bicycle without lighting equipment.

Officers are exempt from the rules of the road under the following conditions (Veh. Code, § 21200(b)(1).):

- (a) In response to an emergency call.
- (b) While engaged in rescue operations.
- (c) In the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law.