**Sample Policy - Bicycle Patrol**

The materials provided in this correspondence are for general informational and educational purposes only and are not intended to be and should not be considered legal advice or opinions. Prior to making any policy or rule changes seek the advice of your municipal attorney.

1. **PURPOSE:**

 The purpose of this order is to provide guidelines for managing the use of police bicycles for full time

 police officers. The ABC Police Department recognizes the importance of bicycle patrols within our community and feels that this unit should be utilized to its fullest potential in order to provide our residents a safer community.

1. **POLICY:**

 It is the policy of the ABC Police Department to provide quality responses to a wide variety of

 issues. Bicycle patrol is a tool, which may be used to address special problems and concerns

 within this community.

1. **DEPLOYMENT:**

 Bicycle patrol officers will operate in support of community needs using their assets of personal contact, mobility and stealth. They may be assigned to patrol neighborhoods, high crime areas, special events, and areas with limited access such as apartment complexes, neighboring parks, and to conduct or augment special enforcement operations.

1. **HOURS OF OPERATION:**

 Bicycle patrol officers may be used twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year depending upon the nature and scope of community problems and needs.

1. **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

 A. Uniformed bicycle patrol officers will, at all times, wear a regulation ANSI approved bicycle helmet to protect the officer from injury, bicycling gloves to protect hands in case of falls, and protective eyewear that is ANSI approved.

 B. Bicycle officers shall obey traffic laws pertaining to the operation of bicycles, except as provided for elsewhere in this order.

 C. New Jersey Vehicle code makes no provisions for bicycles as “authorized emergency vehicles.” Bicycles responding to emergency calls or in pursuit of violators may, however, direct traffic to facilitate the performance of these duties.

 D. Bicycle officers shall not hold onto nor allow themselves to be towed by any motor vehicle.

 E. Uniform bicycles officers shall operate their bicycles on the street to the greatest extent possible in accordance with provisions of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Code. Officers may ride their bicycles on sidewalks taking care not to unnecessarily startle or frighten pedestrians or violate the right of way of pedestrians and other vehicles. Whenever riding on the sidewalk, officers shall do so at reduced speed unless a situation such as pursuit of a violator or response to an emergency call justifies a greater speed.

 F. Uniformed bicycle patrol officers shall be familiar with all New Jersey vehicle codes and local ordinances effecting the operation and ownership of bicycles.

 G. Uniformed bicycle patrol officers shall at all times strive to set a positive example for the public and especially our youth by demonstrating bicycle safety at all levels.

 H. Some circumstances or operational needs may require bicycle patrol officers to be assigned in a plain clothes capacity. In these situations, bicycle patrol officers shall follow the provisions of this policy unless directed otherwise by ABC.

**VI. ELIGIBILITY:**

 A.Officers wishing to perform bicycle patrol activities must meet the following basic requirements:

1. One year police patrol experience.

 2. Have demonstrated good work habits and demonstrated to be self-motivated.

 3. Be recommended by their supervisor.

 4. Able to complete a department approved bicycle patrol training program.

 5**.** Must be physically fit and in good health and not suffer from serious medical problems.

**VII. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT:**

A.Due to the nature of bicycle equipment and the evolving concept of bicyclepatrol, bicycles and uniforms used by the unit are specially designed and subject to ongoing development and improvement. They may be changed or modified as necessary by the Chief of Police.

 B. General Qualifications for Police Bicycles

 1. Twenty-one speed mountain bikes with having oversized or adequate

 tubing with a minimum of Shimano DX or equivalent components. Bicycles will have swept forks, adequate reflectors and a light for rear visibility. Each bicycle will be provided a front headlight system and it may be used at the officer’s discretion. Each bicycle will be equipped with a trunk bag and rack, a locking device, kick stand, bar ends, and audible warning device.

 2. Some Police bicycles may also be equipped with an electric battery powered motorized

 drive wheel.

 C. Equipment Difficulties

 Any difficulties with the bicycle will be detailed in a memo through the chain of command to ABC and will include date, time, bicycle number and a brief description of the problem

 encountered. Also include if the bicycle has been repaired or if it is in need of repair, along with

 if it is in or out of service.

 D. Care and Use of Equipment

 1. Bike officers are to properly care for, clean and maintain all bicycle patrol related equipment. Bike officers are to report any lost, damaged or missing equipment on a memo through the chain of command to ABC or in accordance with

 (Repair/Maintenance Policy if applicable).

 Any equipment that is used from another bicycle is to be returned at the conclusion of the Watch or detail. This shall also be noted in the comment section on the Bicycle Patrol Daily Sign Out Log.

 E. Approved Uniforms / Equipment

 The designated bicycle uniform/equipment shall be worn when assigned to bicycle duties. In some cases, plain clothes may be worn by bicycle patrol officers if authorized by ABC.

F. Uniform of the Day:

 Officers shall at their discretion select the uniform of the day, which must be in accordance with approved uniforms and equipment. Should more than one officer be riding during the same shift, then all officers must be the same in appearance. All uniforms will be clean, neat and in good condition.

 G. Body Armor:

 Officers will wear their issued body armor while on bicycle patrol.

**VIII. BICYCLE OFFICER DUTIES**

A. The bicycle officer shall:

 1. Respond to calls in their area of assignment.

 2. Be responsible for the maintenance of their police bicycle and all issued equipment, including the proper laundering of bicycle uniforms.

 3. Maintain a level of physical fitness that will enable the officer to perform their duties.

 4. Provide special assistance or availability for demonstrations to other officers within the department upon their request.

 5. Monitor patterns of criminal activity in their assigned area and utilize proactive measures to combat it.

 6. Have the ability to speak in public for various community events and demonstrations regarding bicycle patrol and the topic of bike safety.

**IX. VEHICULAR PURSUIT**

 While a bicycle is in no way faster than a vehicle, there are circumstances where the bicycle will be an effective tool in assisting patrol units. Bicycle officers should attempt to maintain a visual on the subject vehicle for as long as possible to give responding patrol units information before their arrival. Under no circumstances are bicycle officers to use their bicycles as blocking devices. Bicycle officers must exercise the same due care and caution as patrol vehicles in pursuit situations and further should consider the lack of protection a bicycle affords its rider as well as the lack of emergency warning devices to warn vehicles and pedestrians in the area.

**X. APPLICATION OF BICYCLE OFFICERS**

 While the uses of the bicycles are numerous, there may be circumstances where because of terrain, weather conditions or for officer safety reasons, their use may not be reasonable. The final decision on whether or not to use the bicycles will be the individual riders.

 However, where the rider’s decision is not to ride, the officer will properly notify their immediate supervisor as to the reason. At no time will an officer ride during heavy concentrations of ice.

 Bicycle officers are expected to make personal contact not only with “suspicious persons,” but also with residents and businesses of their areas of patrol to learn about their concerns.

**XI. DISPOSITION OF UNSERVICEABLE BICYCLES**

 When a bicycle is no longer serviceable, it may be maintained as a parts bicycle. If a bicycle is to be disposed of, the Chief of Police will be advised for appropriate disposal or sale. Documentation of this will be maintained.

**XII. BICYCLE RECORDS**

 A. Bicycle Patrol Daily Sign-Out Log

 1. Each time an officer rides on bicycle patrol, they will sign their bicycle out at the start of their Watch or detail on the Bicycle Patrol Daily Sign-Out Log.

**XIII. BICYCLE MAINTENANCE**

 A. There will be a file on each police bicycle. The file will contain all warranty information and repair records. A maintenance log will document any problems encountered and repairs and parts replaced. Flat tires, where there is no other damage, need not be included.

 B. The ABC shall ensure that each bicycle will have a complete tune-up annually, at a minimum, to

 insure proper operation and improve longevity.

 C. Each officer will be responsible for conducting a pre-ride safety check of his or her assigned bicycle. This safety check will determine if a bicycle is suitable for duty. If a bicycle is deemed not suitable for duty, the issue will be reported via a memo to ABC or in accordance with

 (Repair/Maintenance Policy if applicable).

**XIV. ASSIGNMENT**

 Officers selected for the bicycle patrol are assigned on a volunteer basis as long as they meet the necessary requirements. Officers can be removed from the bicycle patrol if they fail to adhere to this policy or at any time at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

