



HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATIONS POLICY

Bicycle Patrol Program

Distribution:	All Employees	Policy Number:	OPS 0205
Responsible Unit:	Police Services Bureau – Bike Patrol Coord.	Rescinds:	N/A
Orig. Issued Date:	06/01/18	Revision #:	1
Latest Revision Date:		Latest Revision Date:	01/05/26
Required 3-Year Review Completed:		Next Review Due:	01/30/29

1. Purpose

To enhance the community-oriented policing philosophy of the Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) and to provide an alternative to the traditional motorized patrol.

2. Policy

Bicycle patrol deputies provide a highly visible law enforcement presence in targeted locations with the goal of reducing crime, cultivating community resources designed to address quality of life issues, and developing solutions to public safety concerns.

3. Procedures

A. Bicycle Program Coordinator

1. The overall operation of the HCSO Bicycle Patrol Program (BPP) will be coordinated by the Bicycle Patrol Program Coordinator (BPPC).
2. The BPPC is responsible for the administrative tasks associated with the BPP including, but not limited to:
 - a. Scheduling initial training, remedial training, and refresher training;
 - b. Choosing equipment for the program;
 - c. selection and purchasing of bicycles and bicycle equipment; and
 - d. ensuring the selection and training of deputies for the BPP.
3. The BPPC will consult with the HCSO Training Director to ensure that training is approved by the Maryland Police Training Standards Commission (MPTSC).
4. The BPPC will maintain a list of current authorized bike patrol deputies.
5. The BPPC will be appointed by the Chief, Police Services Bureau.

B. Precinct / Division Coordinators

1. A Division Commander with BPP trained deputies will, after consultation with the BPPC, designate a coordinator for his respective Precinct/Division.
2. The BPPC will also serve as the coordinator for the Precinct / Division to which he is assigned.
3. Precinct Coordinators and the BPPC must be bicycle trained deputies.

C. Selection of BPP Deputies

1. An employee requesting to be considered for the BPP will submit a letter of request via HCSO Memorandum (SO-212) to his respective assignment lieutenant for approval.
2. Employees assigned as BPP deputies must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Hold the rank of sergeant or below;
 - b. Have demonstrated excellence in self-initiated patrol enforcement;
 - c. Have the physical stamina and agility to operate a mountain bike in a patrol environment; and
 - d. Have successfully completed the probationary period.
 - i. An Agency employee who has not yet successfully completed a probationary period may become a member of the BPP under the following conditions:
 - (a) A written recommendation by the BPPC through the chain of command via Memorandum (SO-212) to the employee's division commander explaining why a waiver of 3(C)(2)(d) is requested;
 - (b) A written recommendation from the employee's Lieutenant through the chain of command via Memorandum (SO-212) to the division commander explaining why a waiver of 3(C)(2)(d) is requested; and
 - (c) Written approval by the employee's division commander.
3. The names of the employees meeting the above criteria will be selected for the BPP by the respective coordinators for the program, after consultation with the respective assignment lieutenants.

D. Training

1. Initial training will be completed at a HCSO approved location determined by the BPPC.
2. The BPPC will determine the lead instructor for the class.
3. The lead instructor of the bicycle-training course will determine successful completion of basic bicycle training.
4. Prior to operating in a patrol capacity as BPP deputies, all selected members must attend and successfully pass a certified cyclist-training course taught by a certified instructor.

5. The HCSO BPP course will be a 24-hour basic police cyclist course sanctioned by the MPTSC.
6. At a minimum, the initial training course will incorporate blocks of instruction on the following topics:
 - a. Physical cycling skills;
 - b. Health and fitness;
 - c. Maintenance;
 - d. Obstacle detection and hazard avoidance;
 - e. Patrol operations;
 - f. Night operations;
 - g. Community policing;
 - h. Uniforms and equipment; and
 - i. Local and state bicycling laws

E. Duties and Responsibilities

1. The direct day-to-day supervision of each BPP deputy is the responsibility of his assigned squad supervisor or Watch Commander.
2. A BPP deputy assigned to other than Northern and Southern Precinct will report to his respective Supervisor/Division Commander.
3. BPP deputies operating a HCSO bicycle will obey all appropriate state and local laws governing bicycle operation, except in exigent circumstances.
4. BPP deputies will maintain normally assigned patrol duties.
5. BPP deputies will receive a permanent bicycle assignment for use while on the BPP, if one is available; however, bicycles are assigned to a precinct and not to an individual will remain that way and not be taken to a new assignment.
6. BPP deputies not assigned a take-home bicycle, who utilize a pool bicycle, must have the bicycle attached to the vehicle for the duration of the shift if in BPP uniform.
7. Bicycle patrols not cleared by a disposition code for a call for service will be cleared with a code of "BP1."
8. BPP deputies will generally be used to provide high visibility patrol operations in areas not normally accessible by a police vehicle to include footpaths, retail centers, and residential settings.
9. If weather permits, BPP deputies should be utilized as often as possible.

10. The number of deputies that may be active at any one time on any one shift will be at the discretion of the respective division commander.
11. The use of BPP deputies for the following types of calls and events should be considered due to the specialized nature of the assignment:
 - a. Crimes in progress where the use of a bike would be beneficial in conducting searches for victims and or the apprehension of suspects;
 - b. Lost or missing persons of a critical nature;
 - c. Bicycle safety programs;
 - d. Community policing events and details;
 - e. Special events such as parades, athletic events, concerts, firework displays, and similar types of events where crowd control is an issue; and
 - f. To 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.
12. A deputy assigned to the BPP will notify Harford County Division of Emergency Services (DES) Dispatch when he begins and ends a bicycle patrol.
13. BPP deputies are accountable for all dispatched calls for service in their assigned area, unless specifically exempted by a supervisor or watch commander.
14. BPP deputies will ride in pairs when practical.
15. BPP deputies must ride in pairs when riding in a designated high crime area.

F. Use and Deployment

1. BPP deputies may deploy their bicycle at any time during their work shift in the furtherance of law enforcement related tasks.
2. BPP deputies should consider the following when deciding whether to deploy or not:
 - a. Sufficient staffing in sector or post;
 - b. Increased response time to calls for service;
 - c. Surface conditions as a result of weather and other hazards; and
 - d. Temperature and weather factors such as high winds and precipitation.
3. BPP deputies may respond to assist other jurisdictions in Harford County when requested, with the authorization of a supervisor.

G. Uniforms and Equipment

1. If it is obvious that due to weather conditions (i.e. precipitation, temperature, etc.) that the BPP deputy will be unable to ride, then the bicycle uniform is not authorized to be worn.
2. The bicycle uniform (PER 0701 – Uniform appearance - Class E) may only be worn when deploying the bicycle (i.e. when patrol vehicle is equipped with bicycle).
3. HCSO bicycles will be equipped with a derailleur gearing system, toe clips, and the following:
 - a. Cable bicycle lock;
 - b. Rear rack and pack;
 - c. Front mounting headlight;
 - d. Reflector;
 - e. Audible bell;
 - f. First aid kit;
 - g. Bicycle repair kit to include spare inner tube;
 - h. Air pump; and
 - i. Water bottle.
4. The appropriate Watch Commander to where the BPP deputy is assigned will coordinate with the BPPC and the quartermaster to ensure that an approved bicycle receiver hitch is mounted to the deputy's assigned vehicle.
5. BPP deputies will secure their HCSO bicycle with the issued cable lock to their vehicle or other fixed object when left unattended.
6. BPP deputies are 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 policy.
7. BPP deputies will secure the assigned bicycle overnight and will not leave it attached to the patrol vehicle unless the vehicle is secured in an enclosed garage.
8. Deputies in bicycle uniform must ride the bicycle a minimum of 45 minutes per day unless extreme call volume prevents this.

H. Maintenance

1. BPP deputies, prior to a bicycle patrol, will inspect their assigned bike to ensure it is in a safe operational condition. Any defects or damage will be immediately reported.
2. The inspection should include the following:
 - a. Proper tire pressure and condition;

- b. Proper front shock pressure;
 - c. Proper front and rear brake operation;
 - d. Proper operation of crank, chain, and derailleur system; and
 - e. All quick releases are secure.
3. BPP deputies will ensure that their assigned bicycle is maintained in a clean and serviceable condition, at all times.
 4. Any problems or deficiencies with the deputy's bicycle will be addressed prior to deployment.
 5. Deputies 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).
 6. Deputies are prohibited from performing repairs on the bicycle which are outside of their scope of expertise and training.
 7. Any repair performed at a repair facility must be pre-approved by the BPPC.
 8. The BPPC will ensure that all HCSO bicycles currently assigned to active BPP deputies receive an annual Preventive Maintenance (PM) inspection yearly.
 - a. If any repairs or maintenance cannot be completed by HCSO personnel, it will be taken to an authorized facility.
 - b. Prior to utilizing an authorized facility, the requesting deputy will obtain permission from the BPPC.
 - c. Damage to the bicycle be documented according to policy ADM 0705 Lost Damaged Equipment.
- I. Safety Considerations
1. BPP deputies will wear the following protective equipment whenever the bicycle is ridden:
 - a. Approved helmet with chinstrap engaged;
 - b. Riding Gloves (optional); and
 - c. Protective eyewear (optional but may include officer's prescription glasses or sunglasses).
 2. While in public, BPP deputies will be mindful of pedestrian traffic and should be alert for unpredictable actions of the public while operating their bicycles.
 3. No one except certified BPP deputies and trainers may operate a HCSO bicycle.
 4. Whenever a BPP deputy receives an injury as a result of riding the bicycle, his supervisor will be notified immediately and proper procedures for an employee injury will be followed.

5. Incidents or collisions that result in damage to the bicycle or other property (Public or Private) will be documented by per policy ADM 0705 Lost Damaged Equipment.
6. Motor vehicle collisions involving HCSO bicycles will be handled in the same manner as any other HCSO motor vehicle collision (ADM 0602).

4. Summary of Changes

- A. On 01/05/25 the Agency 3-year policy review was conducted, and the following edit was made:
 1. Under Section 3.D.5, Training: changed the duration of the HCSO BPP basic police cyclist course sanctioned by the MPTSC from 30 hours to 24 hours.

Approved

JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 1-15-26