

## Bicycle Patrol

### 427.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office to safely and effectively use bicycles for the purpose of enhancing field patrol efforts in the community.

### 427.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office that bicycles may be used for regular patrol duty, community policing, traffic enforcement, parking control or special events. The use of the bicycles will emphasize deputy mobility and office visibility in the community.

### 427.3 OPERATIONS

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

Requests for specific deployment using bicycles shall be coordinated through the Community Policing Unit of the Special Operations Division. The Special Operations Division Commander will take weather and safety into consideration when approving requests for the use of bicycles.

### 427.4 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

- (a) In response to an emergency call
- (b) In the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law
- (c) In response to a fire alarm, but not while returning

### 427.5 BICYCLE UNIT COORDINATOR

The bicycle unit coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Special Operations Division Division Commander or the authorized designee.

The coordinator may appoint a senior bicycle unit deputy or other designee to assist in the coordination of bicycle unit deputies and their activities.

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

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

### **427.6 PATROL BICYCLE**

Bicycle unit deputies will have available to them a specially marked and equipped bicycle and attached gear bag.

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

- (a) Front and rear reflectors, or headlight and taillight.
- (b) A siren and horn.
- (c) A water bottle holder.
- (d) A steady or flashing blue and red warning light that is visible from the front, sides or rear of the bicycle.
- (e) 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.
- (f) A gear bag that shall include a first-aid kit, tire pump, repair tool, tire tube, three tire levers, inner tube patch kit, security lock, high-visibility vest and equipment information and use manuals. These items are to remain with/on the patrol bicycle at all times.

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

#### **427.6.1 TRANSPORTING THE PATROL BICYCLE**

The 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.

#### **427.6.2 MAINTENANCE**

- (a) Bicycle unit deputies shall conduct an inspection of the bicycle and equipment prior to use to ensure proper working order of the equipment.
- (b) Deputies are responsible for the routine care and maintenance of their assigned equipment (e.g., tire pressure, chain lubrication, overall cleaning).

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- (c) Deputies shall not modify the bicycle or remove, modify or add components to the bicycle except with the express approval of the bicycle unit coordinator, or in the event of an emergency.
- (d) If a needed repair is beyond the ability of the bicycle unit deputy, a repair work order will be completed and forwarded to the coordinator for repair by a technician approved by the Office.
- (e) At the end of a bicycle assignment, the bicycle shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty.

For procedures related to Maintenance, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Pre-Ride Bicycle Inspection](#)

#### **427.7 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

Deputies shall wear uniforms and safety equipment in accordance with the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy. Deputies who wear the bicycle uniform for their shift will be required to ride a bicycle during that shift and have a bicycle available on their vehicle.

The uniform consists of the standard short-sleeve uniform shirt or other office-approved shirt, with St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office badge and patches, and office-approved bicycle patrol pants or shorts. Optional attire may include, but is not limited to, a jacket in colder weather and turtleneck shirts or sweaters when worn under the uniform shirt.

Bicycle unit deputies 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, office-approved ballistic vest, helmet, a radio headset and microphone, riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

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

#### **427.8 TRAINING**

Deputies must complete an initial office-approved bicycle-training course prior to using a department-owned bicycle. 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

Bicycle unit deputies will be required to train and qualify with their duty and secondary firearms while wearing bicycle safety equipment, including the helmet and riding gloves.