

Bicycle Patrol Unit

451.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Vancouver Police Department has established the Bicycle Patrol Unit (BPU) for the purpose of enhancing patrol efforts in the community. Bicycle patrol has been shown to be an effective way to increase officer visibility in congested areas and their quiet operation can provide a tactical approach to crimes in progress. Bike officers are responsible for patrol issues, problem solving, protecting life and property through the enforcement of laws and ordinances, responding to patrol calls for service, preventing, detecting and investigating crimes, issuing civil infractions and decreasing crime and increasing livability. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the safe and effective operation of the patrol bicycle.

The Bike Unit will be expected to make an impact on crime and livability related issues and crimes. The Bike Unit will perform expected patrol duties (i.e. basic patrol, respond to 911 calls for service, make field contacts, take enforcement action, and make arrests). Because patrolling by bicycle has proven to be an effective way of increasing officer visibility in congested areas such as public parks, waterfront neighborhoods and business districts, the Bike Unit will be expected to patrol in these areas and will comply with RCW 46.61.035(4).

451.2 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 Department needs and as staffing levels allow.

Requests for specific deployment of bicycle patrol officers shall be coordinated through the Patrol Division.

451.3 TRAINING

Participants in the program must complete an initial Department approved bicycle-training course before or after acceptance into the program. Bicycle patrol officers will receive ongoing training throughout the year to improve skills and refresh safety, health and operational procedures. The initial training shall minimally include the following:

- (a) Bicycle patrol strategies.
- (b) Bicycle safety and accident prevention.
- (c) Bicycle handling
- (d) Bicycle maintenance

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451.4 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Officers shall wear the Department-approved uniform and safety equipment while operating the department bicycle. Safety equipment includes Department-approved helmet, riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

451.5 CARE AND USE OF PATROL BICYCLES

Officers will be assigned a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle. Bicycles are considered vehicles and therefore are subject to all laws, regulations, and privileges applicable to other vehicles operated upon the highway (RCW 46.04.670).

Every bicycle shall be equipped with front lights and rear reflectors or lights, and brakes satisfying the requirements of RCW 46.61.780. Bicycles utilized for uniformed bicycle patrol shall be equipped with a rear rack and/or saddle bags sufficient to carry all necessary equipment to handle routine patrol calls. Each bicycle gear bag shall include a first aid kit, tire pump, repair tool, tire tube, and security lock. These items are to remain with/on the bicycle at all times.

RCW 46.37.190(3) Vehicles operated by public agencies whose law enforcement duties include the authority to stop and detain motor vehicles on the public highways of the state may be equipped with a siren and lights of a color and type designated by the state patrol for that purpose.

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 District 1 Lieutenant for review and approval. Repairs shall be conducted by an approved technician. If necessary, the bike will be tagged for repair and removed from service until needed repairs are completed.

Each bicycle will have scheduled maintenance twice yearly; to be performed by a Department certified/approved bike mechanic. Officers shall not modify the patrol bicycle, remove, modify or add components except with the expressed prior approval of the District 1 Lieutenant, or in the event of an emergency. At the end of bicycle assignment, the bicycle shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty. Bicycles will not be taken home without the prior approval of the District 1 Lieutenant.

Vehicle bicycle racks are available should the officer need to transport the patrol bicycle. Due to possible component damage, transportation of the patrol bicycle in a trunk or on a patrol car push-bumper is discouraged. Bicycles shall be properly secured when not in the officer's immediate presence.

451.6 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

Officers must operate the bicycle in compliance with applicable codes 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/or tactical considerations. Officers must use caution and care when operating the bicycle without lighting equipment.