



**Policy Number: 409 – Bicycle Patrol**  
**Effective Date: June 7, 2021**  
**Revision Date: June 7, 2021**  
**Approved By: Brandon Gatlin, Chief of Police**

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## **409.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy establishes guidelines for the Montana State University Billings Police Department (Department) to safely and effectively use bicycle patrol for the purpose of enhancing patrol efforts in our community.

## **409.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of this Department that patrol bicycles may be used for regular patrol duty, traffic enforcement, parking control or special events. The use of the patrol bicycle will emphasize officer mobility, Department visibility and enhance community engagement opportunities.

## **409.3 OPERATIONS**

Bicycle patrol has been shown to be an effective way to increase officer visibility in congested areas, and the quiet operation of the patrol bicycle can facilitate a tactical approach to crimes in progress. Patrol bicycles may be deployed to any area, at any hour 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 Sergeant.

## **409.4 SELECTION FOR CERTIFICATION**

Interested non-probationary officers shall submit a training request to the Patrol Sergeant. A copy will be forwarded to the Assistant Chief for approval.

Interested officers 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.

### **409.4.1 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Officers should operate the bicycle in compliance with the vehicle code under normal operation, unless their duties require otherwise (§ 61-8-107, MCA).

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

Officers are exempt from the rules of the road under the following conditions (§ 61-8-107, MCA):

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

### **409.5 PATROL BICYCLE**

Bicycle patrol officers will have access to a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle, attached gear bag, and a charger.

Patrol bicycles should be primarily black or white in color with a “Police” decal affixed to each side of the crossbar or the bicycle’s gear bag. Every patrol bicycle shall be equipped with:

- a. A front headlight emitting a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet or a lamp with equal intensity and visibility affixed to officer’s helmet (§ 61-8-102, MCA).
- b. Front and rear reflectors.
- c. A rear rack and/or gear bag sufficient to carry all necessary equipment to handle routine patrol calls, including report writing, parking enforcement, citations, security lock, and high-visibility vest.

Patrol bicycles shall be properly secured when not in the officer’s immediate presence.

#### **409.5.1 TRANSPORTING THE PATROL BICYCLE**

The patrol bicycle should be transported in a manner that minimizes possible component damage. Transportation of the patrol bicycle in a trunk or on a law enforcement vehicle push-bumper is discouraged.

#### **409.5.2 MAINTENANCE**

Bicycle patrol officers shall conduct an inspection of the patrol bicycle and equipment prior to use to ensure 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).

Officers shall not modify the patrol bicycle or remove, modify or add components to the patrol bicycle except with the express approval of the Patrol Sergeant, or in the event of an emergency.

If a needed repair is beyond the ability of the bicycle patrol officer, a repair request should be forwarded to the Patrol sergeant for repair by a technician approved by the Department.

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

## **409.6 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

Officers shall wear uniforms and safety equipment in accordance with Department Uniform Policy.

The uniform consists of the standard short-sleeve uniform shirt, or other Department-approved shirt, with Montana State University Billings Police Department badge and patches, and Department-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 patrol officers 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, Department-approved helmet, a radio and microphone, riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

Officers are responsible for obtaining the necessary forms, citation books and other Department equipment needed while on bicycle patrol.

## **409.7 TRAINING**

Officers must complete an initial Department-approved bicycle patrol training course prior to assignment to bicycle patrol. Thereafter, bicycle patrol officers should receive periodic in-service training to improve skills and refresh safety, health and operational procedures. The initial training shall minimally include:

- a. Bicycle patrol strategies.
- b. Bicycle safety and accident prevention.
- c. Operational tactics and techniques using bicycles.

Bicycle patrol officers may be required to train and qualify with their duty and secondary firearms while wearing bicycle safety equipment, including helmet and riding gloves.