

## Downtown Services Unit

### 427.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Santa Monica Police Department has established the Downtown Services Unit for the purpose of enhancing patrol efforts in the community. Utilizing bicycles, electric bicycles, and electric scooters to patrol congested areas is an effective way to increase officer visibility and their quiet operation can provide a tactical approach to crimes in progress. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the safe and effective operation of the patrol bicycle, electric bicycle and electric scooter.

### 427.2 POLICY

Patrol bicycles, electric bicycles, and electric scooters may be used for regular patrol duty, traffic enforcement, parking control, or special events. The use of bicycles and scooters will emphasize their mobility and visibility to the community.

Bicycles and scooters 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 Downtown Service Unit officers shall be coordinated through the Downtown Services Section Commander.

Requests for using and deploying patrol bicycles, electric bicycles, or electric scooters shall be coordinated through the Downtown Services Section Commander or designee.

### 427.3 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn personnel, who are off probation, shall submit a memorandum of interest to their appropriate Division Commander. A copy will be forwarded to the Downtown Services Section Commander. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral board will consist of the Downtown Services Section Commander or his/her designee and any other designees selected by the Downtown Services Section Commander. Interested personnel 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.

#### 427.3.1 DOWNTOWN SERVICES UNIT SUPERVISOR

The Downtown Services Unit supervisor will be selected from the rank of sergeant by the Patrol Operations Division Commander or his/her designee.

The Downtown Services Unit supervisor and/or designee shall have responsibility for the following:

- (a) Organizing bicycle, electric bicycle and electric scooter patrol training.

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- (b) Inspecting and maintaining inventory of patrol bicycles, electric bicycles, electric scooters, and program equipment.
- (c) Scheduling maintenance and repairs.
- (d) Evaluating performance of Downtown Service Unit officers.
- (e) Coordinating activities with the Patrol Operations Division.
- (f) Other activities as required to maintain the efficient operation of the Downtown Services Unit.

#### **427.4 TRAINING**

Participants in the program must complete an initial Department approved bicycle-training course after acceptance into the program. Thereafter, Downtown Services Unit officers should receive annual in-service training to improve skills and refresh safety, health and operational procedures. The initial training shall minimally include the following:

- Bicycle patrol strategies.
- Bicycle safety and accident prevention.
- Operational tactics using bicycles.

Downtown Service Unit officers will be required to qualify with their duty firearm while wearing bicycle safety equipment including the helmet and riding gloves.

Upon completion of a Department-approved bicycle course, personnel desirous of using electronic bicycles (E-Bikes) must complete additional Department-approved training.

Personnel desirous of using the electric scooters must complete Department-approved training.

#### **427.5 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

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

The Downtown Services Unit uniform consists of the standard short-sleeve uniform shirt or other Department-approved shirt with Department badge and patches, and Department-approved bicycle patrol pants or shorts.

Optional equipment includes a radio head set and microphone, and jackets in colder weather. Turtleneck shirts or sweaters are permitted when worn under the uniform shirt.

Downtown Services Unit officers shall carry the same equipment on the bicycle patrol duty belt as they would on a regular patrol assignment, regardless if they will be using a patrol bicycle, electric bicycle or electric scooter.

Officers will be responsible for obtaining the necessary forms, citation books and other department equipment needed while on patrolling on a bicycle, electric bicycle, or electric scooter.

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#### **427.6 CARE AND USE OF PATROL BICYCLES/ELECTRIC BICYCLES**

Officers will be assigned a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle, attached gear bag, two batteries and a charger.

Bicycles utilized for uniformed bicycle patrol shall be primarily black or white in with a "POLICE" decal affixed to each side of the crossbar or the bike's saddlebag. Every such bicycle shall be equipped with front and rear reflectors front lights and a siren/horn satisfying the requirements of Vehicle Code §2800.1(b).

Bicycles utilized for uniformed bicycle patrol shall be equipped with a rear rack and/or saddle bag(s) sufficient to carry all necessary equipment to handle routine patrol calls including report writing, vehicle storage and citations.

Each bicycle gear bag should include a first aid kit, tire pump, repair tool, tire tube, security lock, equipment information and use manuals. These items are to remain with/on the bicycle at all times.

Each bicycle shall be equipped with a steady or flashing blue warning light that is visible from the front, sides, or rear of the bicycle. (Vehicle Code § 21201.3)

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 program supervisor for repair by an approved technician.

Each bicycle will have scheduled maintenance annually to be performed by a Department approved repair shop/technician.

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

Officers shall not modify the patrol bicycle, remove, modify or add components except with the expressed approval of the Downtown Services Unit supervisor, or in the event of an emergency.

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.

#### **427.7 CARE AND USE OF ELECTRIC SCOOTERS**

Electric scooters utilized for uniformed patrol shall be primarily black or white in color with a "POLICE" decal affixed to the front of the scooter. Every scooter shall be equipped with front and rear reflectors, front lights and a siren/horn.

Each scooter shall be equipped with a steady or flashing red, white and blue warning light that is visible from the front, sides, and rear of the scooter.

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If a needed repair is beyond the ability of the officer, a repair work order will be completed and forwarded to the program supervisor for repair by an approved technician.

Each scooter will have scheduled maintenance annually to be performed by a Department approved repair shop/technician.

At the end of the officer's assignment, the scooter shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty.

Scooters shall be properly secured when not in the officer's immediate presence.

#### **427.8 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY**

Officers must operate the bicycles and scooters in compliance with the vehicle code under normal operation. Officers may operate the bicycles and scooters without lighting equipment during hours of darkness when such operation reasonably appears necessary for officer safety and tactical considerations. Officers must use caution and care when operating the bicycle without lighting equipment.

Officers are exempt from the rules of the road under the following conditions (Vehicle Code § 21200(b)(1)):

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

In accordance with Santa Monica Municipal Code § 3.12.600(h), Public safety personnel may operate a bicycle, electric bicycle, electric personal assistive mobility device, electrically motorized board, low-speed vehicle, motorized scooter, or other vehicle at any place in the City in the performance of their duties.