Mounted Enforcement Unit

346.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the administration, selection, and operation of the Santa Monica Police Department Enforcement Unit.

346.2 POLICY

The Santa Monica Police Department (MEU) is to supplement the Patrol Operations Division. In addition, the MEU may also assist in special events, parades, rallies, crowd control, dignitary protection and directed patrol.

346.3 DEFINITIONS

Mounted Enforcement Officer - A sworn peace officer assigned to the Mounted Unit who works with or works seated atop a trained police horse.

Police Horse or Mount - A horse trained, certified and used for various policing activities under the control of a mounted police officer.

346.4 ADMINISTRATION

346.4.1 ORGANIZATION

The Mounted Enforcement Unit (MEU) is assigned to the Office of the Chief of Police and is under the supervision of the Community Affairs Sergeant. The Executive Officer/Chiefs Adjutant oversees the MEU, which consists of one sergeant, one lead full-time mounted training officer, and two full-time mounted officers.

346.4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Executive Officer/Chiefs Adjutant shall:
    (a) Be responsible for the overall management of the Mounted Enforcement Unit in the areas of staffing, personnel selections, budget, and liaison with other divisions.
2. Community Affairs Unit Sergeant shall:
    (a) Be responsible for the direct supervision of the MEU officers.
    (b) Review all operational plans and logistics for the assignments of personnel and resources.
    (c) Handle requests for MEU assistance and forward to the lieutenant for final approval.
    (d) Be responsible for scheduling monthly training, unit assignments and maintaining unit records.
    (e) Regularly inspect horses, vehicles, trailers and the stable facility.

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(f) Assign each MEU officer a primary and alternative horse.

(g) Maintain liaison with allied agencies.

3. Lead Training Mounted Enforcement Officer shall:

(a) Coordinate in-service training as needed, develop and implement a monthly mounted training program, and prepare training evaluations.

(b) Perform horse care, inspect and observe the horses for physical and behavioral signs of illness, injury, and maintain the overall health of the horse.

(c) Maintain the horses' feeding supplies, health and first aid supplies, and conduct regular inventories for the ordering of these supplies.

4. Mounted Enforcement Unit Officer shall:

(a) Be required to perform the duties of a patrol officer with added duties of mounted patrol.

(b) Make every effort to provide high visibility service during the house of increased public exposure, i.e. rush hours, lunchtimes, etc.

(c) Support critical incidents where crowd control is needed or provide support for a Mobile Field Force activation.

(d) Provide assistance to special events, searches for missing adults or children in limited access areas and conducting mounted demonstrations throughout the City.

(e) Be responsible for maintaining their mount in a readied condition to be assigned as needed.

(f) Officers are responsible for the daily care and grooming of the horses. They are responsible for the care of all unit equipment including tack and vehicles.

346.5 SELECTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

When vacancies exist in the Mounted Enforcement Unit, the MEU lieutenant will determine if a new list of applicants is needed to prepare for future openings. An interdepartmental memorandum will be posted to announce the vacancy.

Personnel requesting assignment to the Mounted Enforcement Unit should submit a memorandum of interest through their chain of command. An oral interview board will interview the applicants. The interview board should consist of the MEU lieutenant or designee, MEU sergeant and MEU lead training officer. The Chief of Police, or designee, will make the final selections.

346.5.1 QUALIFICATIONS

1. Mounted Enforcement Unit Lead Training Officer shall:

(a) Be a full-time MEU Officer.

(b) Meet overall standards or higher on his or her most recent performance evaluation.

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(c) Maintain physical fitness standards.

{d) Agree and understand work hours are subject to frequent changes in accordance with the Department's mission.

(e) Successfully complete the Basic, Advanced, and Instructor POST- certified Mounted Patrol Academy classes.

(f) Be interviewed and selected at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

2. Mounted Enforcement Unit Officer shall:

(a) Be a full-time sworn officer who has completed probation.

(b) Meet overall standards or higher on his or her most recent performance evaluation.

(c) Maintain physical fitness standards.

(d) Agree and understand work hours are subject to frequent changes in accordance with the Department's mission.

(e) Successfully complete the interdepartmental training school and Basic Post-certified Mounted Patrol Academy.

346.6 POLICE HORSE SELECTION

346.6.1 DEFINITION

Broke Horse - A well-trained, obedient horse which is safe to ride.

Cribbing - Involves a horse grasping a solid object such as the stall door, or fence rail with its teeth.

Gelded - A castrated horse.

346.6.2 POLICE HORSE SELECTION

Replacement horses for the MEU come from donations and purchases. Suitable horses will be accepted by the Santa Monica Police Department on a thirty-day trial as agreed upon by the Chief of Police or his/her designee and the owner. If during the thirty days the horse is deemed unacceptable, the horse will be transported back to the owner's facility. The City of Santa Monica reserves the right to accept or reject any horse during the evaluation period.

The MEU's supervisor and lead training officer will evaluate and select the police horses considering the following criteria:

1. **Size** - The horse must be a minimum of 15.0 hands or taller and weight must be proportionate to size.
2. **Conformation** - Any abnormal deviation in the structure or function of the horse may constitute unsoundness. Horses with faulty conformation are always subject to be unsound and may not be selected. Minor blemishes are acceptable if it does not represent physical impairment and limit the free movements of the horse. Examples of blemishes are unsightly scars, rope burns, brands, etc.

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3. **Bone Structure** - A horse should be well-balanced, muscular, long-legged, have good stamina, have good carriage, good feet and straight, well muscled back. This all provides for a well-rounded police mount.
4. **Breed** - All breeds can be considered providing the criteria are met.
5. **Age** - Horses will be selected between the ages of six and thirteen years. Exceptions may be considered, provided the horse is above average in conformation, conditioning, and training.
6. **Color** - Preferred color for a police horse is bay, buckskin, black, sorrel or chestnut. This is for uniformity and ease of grooming.
7. **Disposition** - Police horses must be gentle and free of vicious habits such as biting, kicking or striking with their front feet. They must not object to handling, saddling or grooming. They must be quiet and not object to being petted by children or adults. Horses with stable vices such as cribbing, halter pulling or bolting will be carefully evaluated. The horse' performance during trailering/hauling will also be considered during evaluation.
8. **Gender** - This MEU uses gelded horses. Mares and stallions are generally not used.
9. **Broke** - Horses will be broke under saddle and bridle and demonstrate the ability to neck reign. Advanced schooling is desirable, provided extreme gaits are not evident.

346.7 OPERATIONS

346.7.1 GUIDELINES FOR DEPLOYMENT

The Mounted Enforcement Unit's primary responsibility is to supplement patrol operations and to provide high visibility patrol of downtown Santa Monica, Montana Avenue/Main Street business corridors, and limited access areas within the city parks.

The Executive Officer/Chiefs Adjutant or designee, will approve the following MEU deployments:

(a) Special events, parades, rallies, searches, demonstrations, and other designated assignments

(b) Crowd control at critical incidents

(c) Search of lost persons in limited access areas

(d) Mutual aid requests

346.7.2 DEPLOYMENT

1. When deployed, Mounted Unit Officers will be under the control of the Watch Commander or Incident Commander, and shall:
    (a) Adhere to Department policy and procedures (even when operating with another agency).
    (b) Practice safe horsemanship at all times, considering the safety of the public, the officer, and the mount.

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(c) Be appropriately equipped. Riders shall carry a mounted horse baton and utilize reflective leg wraps during hours of darkness.

{d) Be responsible for the police horse and its actions. The rider will maintain control over his/her horse at all times.

2. Hours of operation (shift assignment)

(a) Duty hours shall consist of preparation time, transportation time, saddle time and break time (feeding the horses).

3. Preparation Time

(a) Consists of, but not limited to, washing, brushing, and trimming horses. Additionally, time shall be allowed for selecting the equipment of the day and loading equipment into the trailer, and other miscellaneous needs.

346.7.3 SAFETY GUIDELINES

(a) Police horses should not be taken inside buildings, including parking structures, unless an emergency situation exists.

(b) A police horse should never be left unattended except during an emergency.

(c) No person shall tease or agitate a police horse or allow others to do so, except during authorized training sessions, per Penal Code section 600.

(d) Petting of police horses is allowed at the discretion of the rider and should be limited to the horses' shoulder area. Petting of horses' face should be avoided to prevent biting.

(e) Civilians will not be permitted to mount a horse at any time.

(f) Citizens will not feed horses in the field.

346.8 ACCIDENTS INVOLVING MEU OFFICERS

While on-duty, MEU officers shall notify the MEU supervisor (or if unit supervisor is unavailable, a field supervisor) immediately if their police horse is involved in any of the following:

(a) Accident involving a vehicle in motion.

(b) Accident involving damage to property other than City-owned property.

(c) Any accident or property damage which may result in civil litigation against the City.

The involved MEU officer will complete the appropriate report and forward to the MEU supervisor.

346.9 INJURIES INVOLVING POLICE HORSE

346.9.1 INJURIES TO CITIZENS

If a civilian sustains an injury, no matter how minor, from the actions of a police horse, the MEU supervisor will be notified immediately. If the MEU supervisor is unavailable, then a field supervisor will be notified. The supervisor will respond to the scene and ensure appropriate medical attention is provided. Once medical attention has been provided, the supervisor will investigate the incident

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and photograph all injuries. The MEU lieutenant will be notified as soon as practical and advised of the situation.

An Injury Report (3.15.1) will be written by the rider/officer and forwarded with any supervisor's investigation to the MEU lieutenant and Risk Management. The injured party will also be advised to contact Risk Management.

In the event of a serious injury or death, the Watch Commander shall be notified, as soon as practical, to make the appropriate notifications to the MEU lieutenant, Operations Division Commander, Risk Management, and any other notifications required under the Notifications Matrix.

346.9.2 INJURIES TO NON-MEU OFFICER

If a non-MEU officer is injured by a police horse, the MEU supervisor will be notified immediately and respond to the scene. If the MEU Supervisor is unavailable, a field supervisor shall be notified to respond to the scene. Additionally, the injured officer's officer's supervisor shall also be notified.

The MEU supervisor will ensure appropriate medical attention has been provided and will complete all necessary City of Santa Monica medical forms. The MEU supervisor will thoroughly investigate the incident and photograph all injuries. As soon as practical, the MEU lieutenant shall be notified. THe rider/officer will complete an interdeparment memorandum as soon as possible. This memorandum shall include accurate details from the circumstances leading up to the event through event stabilization.

In the event of a serious injury or death, the Watch Commander shall be notified as soon as practical to make all appropriate notifications to the MEU lieutenant, Operations Division Commander, Risk Management, and any other notifications required under the Notification Matrix.

346.9.3 INJURIES TO MEU OFFICER

If a MEU officer is injured, immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of the officer, horse and citizens. If the MEU officer suffers a minor injury but is still able to ride and control the horse, he/she should return to the stables immediately and secure their horse. The MEU supervisor shall be notified. If immediate first aid is not required the incident should be documented.

If the MEU officer is seriously injured and unable to maintain control of their horse, another MEU officer or supervisor should be called to the scene. They will take control of the horse and see that it is properly secured at the police stables. First aid will be administered and proper documentation of the incidents and injuries.

If a MEU officer is incapacitated, his/her horse will most likely be nearby. Once the MEU officer has been cared for, the horse should be secured as previously outlined to prevent injuries to the horse or citizens.

346.9.4 INJURIES/DEATH TO HORSE

If a police horse appears ill, or injured, the MEU lead training officer and MEU sergeant shall be notified. Immediate first aid should be performed by the MEU officer. The MEU lead training

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officer will make a determination as to the condition of the horse and extent of injuries. If the injury appears to be minor, the MEU officer should immediately return the horse to the stables for evaluation. If the MEU officer is unsure of the extent of injury or if the injury is serious, the MEU officer should call for assistance and a horse trailer will be brought to the scene to transport the horse to the stables.

Once the extent of the injury is known, it shall be up to the MEU lead training officer (or the MEU sergeant in their absence) to determine if the veterinarian is to be called or consulted. If the injury will obviously need medical attention and the above persons are not immediately available, the MEU officer should notify the veterinarian to respond.

If the horse is severely wounded MEU officers shall immediately contact the MEU lead training Officer, the MEU sergeant and the veterinarian. In the event of a fatal injury, animal removal arrangements may be made through the Los Angeles County Animal Control.

If the death or serious injury to the horse was caused by criminal activity, an investigation will be conducted to seek prosecution against the suspect. If the horse dies, the MEU sergeant will request a necropsy and the postmortem report will be forwarded to the MEU lieutenant and investigative sergeant for dissemination.

346.10 TRAINING

(a) In order to qualify for the MEU, officers who are selected must successfully complete the interdepartmental training school and Basic POST Mounted course. This is to ensure the officer has the minimum necessary skills/abilities to ensure the best possible performance in consideration of the officer and public safety

(b) The lead training MEU Officer and/or MEU supervisor are responsible for updating the MEU Manual.

(c) Additional training may be assigned by the supervisor to prepare for a specific event or to correct performance.

(d) If an officer is inactive for any reason for a period of twelve (12) months or longer, the officer will be re-certified prior to returning to field duty. The re-certification will be conducted by the MEU supervisor and/or MEU lead training officer.

(e) The lead training MEU officer and MEU supervisor will evaluate officers who have not trained within a 90-day period. Depending on their evaluation, the officer may be inactive until attending the next scheduled training session.

(f) No person shall work or train a police horse without prior approval of the MEU supervisor or designee.

(g) MEU officers shall attend a scheduled training day at least once a month. Training days that are missed shall be pre-approved with the MEU supervisor.

(h) The lead training MEU officer shall be responsible for the initial evaluation and the continuous training of the officers and mounts assigned to the Mounted Enforcement Unit. The lead MEU officer shall plan and organize training in conjunction with the

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MEU supervisor. All officer/mount evaluations shall be directed to the MEU supervisor for retention in the Mounted Enforcement Unit training file.

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