



University of Wisconsin–Madison Police

Policy: 41.6

SUBJECT: MOUNTED POLICE UNIT

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POLICY:

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Mounted Police Unit has been established to provide assistance at sports events, demonstrations and other special events and to assist in areas that are hard to reach by car.

DEFINITIONS:

“Mounted” police are police officers who patrol on horseback.

PROCEDURE:

41.6.1 ADMINISTRATION

The following shall govern procedures for the administration of the Mounted Police Unit:

- A. Mounted officers will be responsible for their horses; officers agree to be responsible for the care and maintenance of the police mount. The University does not assume the financial burden for daily care and maintenance of the police horses and does not reimburse the individual officers for off duty expenses.
- B. For regular patrol assignments, the first and last hours will be used for preparation prior to transportation of the horses and after leaving the duty location. For special assignments, additional hours may be allowed.
- C. Full liability insurance is provided by University Risk Management for the officers and horses while performing police functions on or off University property. Injury insurance for the police horses is provided by University Risk Management with established deductible to be paid by the Department for injuries incurred by the horse while on duty or in transport to and from duty. Mortality insurance for a fatal on-duty injury to the police horse is also provided by the University and is calculated by determining the estimated value of the horse, considering both replacement value and training expenses.
- D. The Unit Coordinator must approve all tack, horse and rider equipment before use for training or duty assignments. Horses, tack, and equipment, personally owned and owned by the Department, are covered for theft during duty times. Tack and equipment are also covered for damage.
- E. Mounted officers will use discretion regarding their mount's suitability for any and all assignments.
- F. It is the responsibility of the Coordinator to schedule officers for riding assignments in cooperation with the individual patrol supervisors. The patrol shift O.I.C. will change those assignments only when staffing requires.
- G. It is the duty of the Coordinator to ensure that each officer has exhibited a satisfactory level of proficiency with his or her horse in mounted police training before allowing him or her to work in the field.
- H. It is the duty of the Coordinator to see that all events and activities of the Unit are recorded annually.
- I. The Coordinator’s supervisor is the commander of the Mounted Unit. The Unit Commander must approve hours and events to be worked by the unit prior to the event. Each year the Commander and coordinator should establish a training plan for the unit.

41.6.2 PERSONNEL SELECTION & TRAINING

The following shall govern required qualifications and training for mounted officers:

- A. Each mounted officer must own or have unlimited access to a suitable horse. A general knowledge of horses is expected, including horse anatomy, proper grooming, care, feeding, and first aid for the horse; knowledge of saddling, bridling, and the use and care of all necessary tack and equipment; horse health and safety; safe ground handling and trailering procedures; and a comprehensive understanding of horsemanship and horse psychology.
- B. Officers may not assume mounted duty status until their Department probationary period is concluded.
- C. For new members, a minimum of five lessons with a Department-approved riding instructor will be required before approval to join the unit is granted. Each member must complete 40 hours of training with a certified mounted police instructor before working duty assignments. Each rider must successfully complete a Department approved 40-hour mounted school or its equivalent, preferably with the horse intended for police use. Each new rider and horse must be assigned with an experienced mounted officer for the first five mounted assignments. Upon completion of those assignments, the Coordinator will evaluate the horse and rider's ability to work alone.
- D. Each current mounted officer will attend at least five (5) in-service training sessions annually with the interdepartmental Mounted Police Team, to obtain and maintain the skills necessary for effective mounted policing. This training will include horsemanship and riding, formation riding, riding with common obstacles, hazards, and sensory disturbances, arrest, search, and stabilization procedures, crowd control tactical formations, and any other necessary training.
- E. The Mounted Unit Coordinator shall maintain a listing of rider qualifications that must be completed satisfactorily prior to working duty assignments.

41.6.3 HORSE QUALIFICATIONS

The following outlines qualifications for Unit horses:

- A. Horses must be friendly, manageable, well trained and even tempered with a happy, willing attitude. Any inclination to bite, strike, or kick will disqualify a horse from duty assignments until or unless the problem can be completely rectified.
- B. Final approval of any horse regarding size, color, sex, age, temperament and training is at the discretion of the Coordinator. The decision to remove a horse and rider from the field may be made by the Department Coordinator at any time.
- C. The Mounted Unit Coordinator shall maintain a list of sensory obstacles the horse must satisfactorily demonstrate prior to working duty assignments.

41.6.4 CONDUCT

The following rules of conduct will be observed in all duty situations, with the exception of training exercises:

- A. Horses will not be allowed to move faster than a trot on pavement, blacktop, concrete or any hard surface, unless there is a duty-related reason for faster speed.
- B. Horses on duty are not to be ridden by unauthorized people.
- C. Riding double is prohibited.

41.6.5 HORSE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The following shall govern procedures involving the care and maintenance of equines:

- A. Police horses must be serviceably sound and healthy.
- B. Riders are expected to know their horse and terminate a ride if there is any indication of poor condition or signs of possible illness. A horse may also be removed from duty at the discretion of the Coordinator.
- C. The Mounted Unit will not be expected to work in extremely cold, windy, icy, or extremely hot or stormy conditions, as these may pose a particular safety concern for the horse and rider.

- D. Resting pulse and respiratory rates are to be established for each horse. Anytime respiratory or heart rates exceed the resting rate by more than 80%, the horse must be allowed a break. If these rates do not return to normal with rest, the horse will be removed from the field.
- E. A negative Coggins Test for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) is required annually and prior to training or working with other horses.