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# University of Wisconsin–Madison Police

**Policy: 41.7**

**SUBJECT: POLICE MOTORCYCLE UNIT**

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## **POLICY:**

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Police Department Motorcycle Unit shall be utilized during special events, special assignments and/or patrol operations.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

“Pursuit” is an active attempt by a law enforcement officer in a vehicle to apprehend one or more occupants of another moving motor vehicle, where the driver of the fleeing vehicle is aware of the attempt and is resisting apprehension.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **41.7.1 ADMINISTRATION OF MOTORCYCLE UNIT**

The following shall govern procedures for the administration of the Department Motorcycle Unit:

- A. The Motorcycle Unit will be staffed by personnel who are endorsed, trained, equipped and physically able to operate Department-supplied motorcycles. Until approved training has been completed, unit personnel will generally be restricted from motorcycle patrol enforcement.
- B. Non-Motorcycle Unit personnel with proper motorcycle endorsement and prior riding experience, may on occasion, assist the unit with non-patrol and non-enforcement duties such as special assignments and maintenance as approved by the Unit Commander.
- C. A lieutenant will serve as the Unit Commander. The Unit Commander will oversee all aspects of the Unit and will designate the Unit Coordinator. The Unit Coordinator is responsible for assigning training and special details and ensuring maintenance is up-to-date.

### **41.7.2 PERSONNEL SELECTION**

The following shall govern personnel selection for the Department Motorcycle Unit:

- A. When a vacancy exists, officers that are interested in being selected for the unit should forward a letter to the Unit Coordinator detailing their experience, qualifications and interest in the position.
- B. The selection process will include an oral interview by the Commander, Coordinator, and one other Department member. The interview will include, but not be limited to information and questions in the following areas:
  - 1. Applicants will be informed of the expectations of the Unit and asked to describe how they will meet these expectations.
  - 2. Applicants will be asked to tell why they are interested in being a unit member and what qualifications they will bring to the program.
  - 3. The training provided to unit members will be described and applicants will have an opportunity to ask questions.
- C. Final selection will be made by the Unit Coordinator and Unit Commander.
- D. Selected Motorcycle Unit candidates must successfully complete a Department certified qualification course before they become members of the Unit.

- E. Motorcycle Unit members must successfully complete any required in-service in order to retain full riding status.
- F. Officers assigned to the Motorcycle Unit are required to commit to the Unit for a minimum of three years. The Department will not differentiate unit members when considering shift changes, special assignments and/or promotional opportunities.

#### **41.7.3 OPERATION OF MOTORCYCLE UNIT**

The following shall govern procedures for requesting the Department Motorcycle Unit:

- A. Any requests for use of the Unit should be directed to the Unit Coordinator. Department needs and use of the Unit should always take precedent over outside requests.
- B. Transportation of passengers on Department motorcycles is prohibited.
- C. If a motorcycle is left unattended, then the ignition, fork and storage areas should always be locked.
- D. In an effort to minimize risk of a crash, the unit should not operate during periods of inclement weather.
- E. Due to the unstable nature of motorcycles on unpaved surfaces, extreme care should be taken when operating or parking the motorcycle when not on a hard surface.
- F. During unit operations, status and location changes will be updated by the motor officer through the on-board mobile computer terminal or by the law enforcement dispatcher.
- G. Deployment of motorcycles for patrol use must be consistent with Department need. There must be a sufficient number of police squads on patrol.

#### **41.7.4 UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT**

The following shall govern equipment and maintenance for Department Motorcycle Unit officers:

- A. The following safety equipment shall be worn at all times while the motorcycle is in operation:
  - 1. Helmet
  - 2. Boots
  - 3. Full fingered gloves
  - 4. Eye protection (not provided by the Department)
- B. The following safety equipment shall be worn when appropriate while the motorcycle is in operation:
  - 1. Rain suit
  - 2. Motorcycle riding breeches
  - 3. Motorcycle jacket
- C. Personnel assigned to the unit must provide their own protective eyewear that must be worn at all times that the motorcycle is in operation. Eye protection worn at night must not be tinted.
- D. Regular maintenance and safety inspections are critical to the safe operation of the unit's motorcycles and should be performed according to the manufacturer's recommendations and specifications.
- E. In addition to normal uniform items issued to sworn personnel, unit personnel may wear an approved motorcycle pin on their uniform.

#### **41.7.5 MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE**

The following shall govern procedures for motorcycle maintenance:

- A. One officer assigned to the unit will be designated as responsible for the overall maintenance of the Department motorcycles.
- B. Any person operating Department motorcycles are responsible for checking the following on a daily basis when the unit is in operation:

1. Tire pressure and inspect tires for damage.
  2. Oil level (with side stand down).
  3. Inspect and check for operation of all lamps, flashers, horn, siren and both front and rear brakes.
  4. Suspension pressure per manufacturer's recommendations.
- C. Unit personnel are responsible for maintaining the motorcycles in a clean condition according to the manufacturer's specifications.

#### **41.7.6 PURSUITS**

In addition to Emergency Vehicle Operations directives, the following shall govern procedures for the use of Department motorcycle pursuits:

- A. Motorcycles are not well suited for police pursuits due to risk of injury or death to the motorcycle operator. In addition to the Department emergency vehicle operation directives, the following applies to the Department Motorcycle Unit: the only authorized pursuit is one involving a violent suspect.
- B. When it becomes evident that a pursuit not meeting this criterion has begun, the operator has the following options:
  1. Abandon the pursuit.
  2. Discontinue the pursuit and maintain a safe following distance under non-emergency operating conditions while maintaining visual contact.
  3. Turn all pursuit responsibilities over to other police units.