
Mounted Unit

321.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Mounted Unit (MU) is to augment and support field deployments to enhance public safety and promote positive relationships with the community. MU officers will serve in this capacity as a collateral assignment.

321.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Members of the MU will use their specialized training and equipment to provide support as requested in the following areas:

- (a) Enhancement/supplement patrols of the Great Park or Open Space
- (b) Search and rescue operations in locations not easily accessible
- (c) Support of community events to promote positive relationships

321.3 PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) Division Commander - The Operations Commander will provide executive oversight of the MU.
- (b) Lieutenant - The assigned lieutenant will be the MU Commander. The duties of the MU Commander will include but not be limited to: Personnel selections, budgetary issues, community relations and liaison with other management personnel relative to the MU.
- (c) Sergeant - The assigned sergeant(s) will supervise day to day unit operations and training. This will be a collateral assignment. The sergeant's duties will include but not be limited to: Organizing and overseeing training, review and approval of operational plans, supervision of deployments, and other duties as assigned.
- (d) Police Officer - The MU Officer, regardless of rank, shall be responsible for routine exercising of the horse, care and cleaning of the horse and care and cleaning of all related equipment. They will also be responsible for attending department sanctioned training, consistent with best practices and POST standards. MU officers must also maintain their skill level, as defined by POST standards and this policy.

All assigned MU officers are responsible for notifying their unit chain of command of any and all problems related to the horse and equipment or deployment staffing conflicts.

321.4 ADMINISTRATION

Assignment to the MU:

- (a) Qualified reserve or regular officers of any rank may be selected and assigned to the MU.
- (b) The MU is a collateral duty assignment.
- (c) The following tasks will not be compensated when performed during periods that are not authorized deployments or training days:

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1. Regular care and cleaning of the horse and equipment
2. Riding the horse to maintain adequate fitness levels for the horse and rider
3. Feeding the horse

321.5 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS CRITERIA FOR MOUNTED UNIT MEMBERS

- (a) The candidate must demonstrate basic equitation skills as follows:
 1. Properly saddle and bridle the horse and inspect the equipment.
 2. Lead the horse at the walk and the trot.
 3. Mount the horse properly.
 4. Ride the horse around the arena at the walk, trot, and lope on command while posting/trotting.
 5. Ride the horse to the middle of the arena and stop smartly from the walk, trot, and lope.
 6. Walk forward and back through an "L" pattern.
 7. Hold the horse in place and perform a 360-degree turn to the right, stop and perform a 360-degree turn to the left.
 8. Lead the horse and correctly tie it to a rail.
- (b) Each horse and rider, prior to appointment, must pass a pre-assignment riding examination to determine suitability for training and field deployment operations by a certified mounted instructor. The examination will include, but not be limited to, exposing the horse to the following:
 1. Walking a gauntlet with noises of all sorts
 2. Sign waving
 3. Flag waving
 4. Balloons in the air and popping
 5. Plastic and/or cloth overhead obstacles
 6. Plastic tarp crossing
 7. Firing of handgun blanks
 8. Code three vehicles
 9. Smoke grenades and flares
 10. Firecrackers
- (c) The assigned MU Officer will complete a mounted P.O.S.T. school as soon as practical

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321.6 HORSES

All horses assigned to the MU will be purchased or leased by an individual officer and maintained by that officer.

Horses selected shall satisfy the recognized criteria and standards as set forth by this manual, including but limited to certification by a Certified MU Instructor (Refer to §.10 - Horse Selection Procedure).

321.7 EQUIPMENT

- (a) MU members will have access to a horse trailer and tow vehicle.
- (b) The department will issue certain items of tack and equipment to officers assigned to the MU, as determined by the Chief of Police. MU personnel must provide, or have access to, a western style saddle (brown or black), halter and lead rope, bridal, other required tack and equipment, and all grooming equipment.
- (c) The uniform for the MU will be determined by the Chief of Police.
- (d) The cost of items mandated by the department, including specialized uniforms, headwear, footwear, and pants shall be borne by the department. Maintenance of such items shall be maintained by the officer.
- (e) All equipment will be approved by unit management prior to use.

321.8 TRAINING

- (a) Conducted twice a month and attended by all assigned officers to the MU. This will be a minimum of eight (8) hours held on each training day.
- (b) Each of the MU officers is responsible for informing their regular duty supervisor of any scheduling adjustments that need to be made. This will be done as soon as each MU officer is notified of the training date and time.
- (c) Failure to participate on scheduled training days may preclude the member from certification. Unjustified absences, failure to train, or failure to certify may result in disqualification from the MU.
- (d) Performance, training and deployment records of the horse and officer shall be maintained by the MU supervisor, as well as, all pertinent papers and veterinary records on the horse.

321.9 OPERATIONS

- (a) Deployment:
 - 1. All deployments in Irvine will be at the discretion of the Operations Commander, or their designee.
 - 2. All outside employment and mutual aid will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police, or their designee.

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3. An Officer in Charge (O.I.C.) will be designated for all deployments. The O.I.C. will report directly to the Incident Commander. The MU's mission will be carried out by the O.I.C. at the direction of the Incident Commander. While the Incident Commander will determine the overall mission, the MU O.I.C. will determine the means of carrying out said mission.
 4. MU officers should be deployed in teams of two to ensure the safety of officers and citizens. If an outside agency MU Officer is deployed in Irvine, an Irvine officer will be his/her partner whenever possible.
 5. MU officers will inform their regular duty supervisor of any scheduled deployments as soon as possible to determine if a scheduling conflict exists. If a conflict exists, the MU supervisor shall be informed by the officer immediately so the conflict can be resolved between the two supervisors.
- (b) Safety Rules:
1. MU officers should not position their horses within close proximity to a person who is sitting or lying on the ground.
 2. MU officers shall not allow the horse to be fed by any member of the public.
 3. MU officers should not run the horse at a full gallop unless there is an emergency situation that is ongoing and only after due regard is given for the safety of the horse, officer and the public.
 4. Only when the MU Officer has control of the horse and permission is given, will a community member be allowed to approach and touch the horse. The MU Officer will determine the number of persons who may safely touch or approach the horse.
 5. Horses are not to be left unattended while secured outside the trailer.
 6. Horses should not be allowed to graze while on-duty.
 7. Prisoners shall not be transported on horseback, or led via a rope or other type device.
- (c) Horse Nuisance:
1. MU officers will attempt to prevent the horse from defecating or urinating on the sidewalks or in a crosswalk. If the horse urinates, the MU officer, as soon as practical, will cover it with dirt or sand. If the horse defecates, the officer will pick it up and carry it away.
- (d) Reporting of an Injury to a Member of the Public:
1. All injuries to civilians will be reported to the MU Commander, via the chain of command. Risk Management in Human Resources shall also be notified. The appropriate reports will be made, in accordance with department policy.
- (e) Injury to On-duty Horse:
1. Should a horse be injured while on-duty, the MU officer will determine the need for medical treatment. If possible and needed, the horse will be transported to

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a large animal veterinarian or hospital. If the horse cannot be transported, a veterinarian will be called and asked to respond to the scene.

2. A field supervisor and the MU chain-of-command shall be notified immediately of any moderate or major injury(s) sustained by a horse while on-duty. If the injury requires immediate medical attention, a veterinarian may be called. A written account of the incident will be submitted to the Chief of Police.
3. Payment for veterinarian services for on-duty horses will be provided by the department in the amount up to \$5,000.00, with exceptions based on extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police or his or her designee will review and approve submitted requests for payment of veterinarian services reports if determined such services and corresponding injury was sustained as a result of or in connection with the use of the horse for the City's MU. Reported veterinarian services for on-duty horses must be made when the injury first becomes known to be considered for payment. Payment for injuries that are not reported and off-duty injuries will be the responsibility of the officer. Preventative veterinarian services shall not be the responsibility of the department.

(f) Unavailability for Duty:

1. In the event that a horse or MU officer is unable to work due to injury, illness, or other circumstances, the MU officer will notify the MU supervisor. In the event of a scheduled deployment, the MU officer will also contact other members of the MU for proper coverage.

(g) Unauthorized Persons Riding Police Horses:

1. Members of the public shall not be allowed to sit or ride on the police horse during deployments. Police officers who are not part of the MU will not be allowed to ride the police horse.

(h) Grooming:

1. Prior to all deployments, all horses shall either be bathed or thoroughly brushed. The horse shall be properly trimmed; including the bridle path, face, ears, and legs. The length of the mane and tail are optional. The mane and tail will not be matted or tangled and free of hay and bedding materials.

321.10 HORSE SELECTION PROCEDURES

(a) Disposition:

1. All horses selected must be calm, gentle and free of vicious habits or traits that might present a danger to the rider, other horses, and the public. They must not be hard to catch when turned out, nor balk, rear, or shy away when groomed or saddled. The horse must be quiet and not object to being rubbed or petted by strangers. The horse should be comfortable with most types of general noises and objects.

(b) Health:

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1. A basic veterinary health check by a competent equine veterinarian is required to ensure all horses selected are sound, and that they are free of any physical impairment that would prevent them from completing their objectives. Such examination must be completed every two years. A copy of the veterinarian's statement of soundness for mounted duty must be provided to the Unit Supervisor and maintained in the primary rider's/owner's file. The examinations will be paid for by the police department.
- (c) Color:
1. There are no color restrictions of the selected horse.
- (d) Appearance:
1. The overall appearance of the horse selected will reflect the highest standard of professionalism represented by the Irvine Police Department.
- (e) Breed:
1. There are no restrictions regarding the breed of the horse selected.
- (f) Gender:
1. Only geldings and mares will be allowed selection to the MU. There shall not be any stallions.
- (g) Size:
1. A minimum of 14 hands with the weight proportionate to the height.