



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 6-12

Effective: 10/5/17 Review Due: 10/05/18 Replaces:xx/xx/xx

6-12 Horse Mounted Unit

6-12-1 Purpose

Special Services Bureau Horse Mounted Unit will provide support and assistance to the department by conducting proactive patrols, crowd control, community outreach, searches, and crime prevention.

6-12-2 Policy

Horse Mounted Unit officers will conduct crime prevention initiatives in uniform while on horseback in high crime areas. The Horse Mounted Unit is an effective tool to present a positive, professional image of the Albuquerque Police Department. The Horse Mounted Unit will attend static demonstrations and special events to provide a positive image of the Albuquerque Police Department.

6-12-3 Procedures

A. Personnel

1. Commander

The Special Services Bureau Commander will have overall command of the Horse Mounted Unit.

1. Lieutenant

The Open Space Section Lieutenant will have command of the Horse Mounted Unit.

2. Horse Mounted Unit Sergeant

The Horse Mounted Sergeant will directly supervise the unit and will be responsible to the Open Space Section Lieutenant. Due to the capabilities, limitations, and safety concerns of the horses, only the aforementioned supervisors will direct the activities of the Horse Mounted Unit.



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3. Sergeant will perform the following functions:

- a. Report directly to the Horse Mounted Lieutenant.
- b. Shall develop tact plans and maintain a service request log.
- c. Shall assign officers to horses according to compatibility of horse and rider.
- d. Shall assign officers to areas and determine hours according to directions of the Section Lieutenant.
- e. Ensure that assigned officers are knowledgeable in the proper care of assigned horses and equipment.
- f. Ensure that all assigned officers are capable of controlling the horses in accordance with proper leg aids and reining techniques.
- g. Ensure that officers are properly trained in the following:
 - i. Loading, transporting, and unhitching of horse trailer
 - ii. The proper hitching and unhitching of horse trailer
 - iii. Crowd control maneuvers and formations on horseback
 - iv. Knowledge of the capabilities of the individual horses and the unit
 - v. The knowledge to take command of the unit in an emergency situation
- h. Ensure the tack is in good repair and condition.
- i. Ensure the unit has adequate supplies.
- j. Inspect horses for illness, lameness, and their ability to perform their expected duties.
- k. Ensure that all horses are properly trained to do side passes, back, and turn on the fore/hind, and determine when the horse is ready for street work.
- l. Ensure that the police horses are not ridden by any person not authorized by the section sergeant.
- m. Ensure horses are fed properly to maintain their health and weight according to the individual's needs.
- n. Ensure the horses are groomed before the tour duty.
- o. Ensure the horses are shod properly according to their individual needs.
- p. Be responsible for officer performance evaluations to include minimum performance measures and goals.
- q. Be responsible for the monthly report.

4. Horse Mounted Unit Officers

Unit Officers will perform the following functions:

- a. Report directly to the Horse Mounted Sergeant.
- b. Familiarize themselves and adhere to the Horse Mounted Unit Training Manual.



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- c. Properly groom and maintain horses.
- d. Properly tack horses and care for the tack.
- e. Recognize health, injury, and shoeing needs of the unit horses.
- f. Ride and control their horse in both common and unusual situations.
- g. Recognize abilities and shortcomings of individual horses.
- h. Maintain the unit horses to the proper degree of training needed for police work.
- i. Maintain themselves, horse and equipment in exemplary conditions at all times.
- j. Load, transport, and unload horses.
- k. Officers may correct a horse's undesired behavior only to the degree required to achieve the objective. Excessive and/or unnecessary discipline, determined by the unit supervisor or trainers, will not be tolerated and will be means for removal from the horse mounted unit.
- l. Due caution will be exercised when securing and leaving a horse unattended.
- m. The officer will evaluate every situation, considering the safety of the public, the officer, and the horse.
- n. Officers will not allow feeding of the horses by the public.
- o. Unit officers will familiarize themselves with all of the horses in the unit and maintain proficiency in the control of all the horse.
- p. The utilization of a mounting block or other raised platform is the preferred method of mounting. However, all Unit officers and collateral riders must be able to mount from the ground without assistance. The inability to do so will be immediate removal from participating in that specific event, and may be subject to removal from the unit. All Unit officers and collateral riders must be able to mount in full riot gear. The inability to do so will be immediate removal from participating in that specific event, and may be subject to removal from the unit.
- q. Unit Officers will ensure that unauthorized persons will not mount, ride, feed, or train horses assigned to the unit.
- r. When training new and/or veteran horses, officers will train all horses alike in the event another unit officer must ride a different horse.
- s. As a requirement of the unit, officers must be willing to ride any and all of the horses assigned to the unit for either training purposes or duty use.
- t. Due to liability and health concerns of both the officers and horse, there will be no off-duty riding of police horses unless otherwise directed by the Horse Mounted Sergeant.
- u. Maintain a duty/training log, including rider, mount and type of event or training.



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B. Horse Mounted Unit Rules and Responsibilities

The duties of the Horse Mounted Unit can be divided into two primary functions; crime prevention and public relations/ community outreach. Any other function as deemed necessary by the Open Space Lieutenant or Horse Mounted Sergeant as it relates to the mission of the Section.

1. Crime Prevention

Horse Mounted Unit officers will conduct crime prevention initiatives in uniform while on horseback in high crime areas. The Horse Mounted Unit is a citywide unit and will assist Field Services and any other specialized unit in effectively controlling crime in all area commands, open space areas and the Bosque. Area Commanders and/or Watch Commanders should contact the Open Space Section Lieutenant or the Horse Mounted Sergeant to request the use of the horses within their respective area command

2. Public Relations and Community Outreach

The Horse Mounted Unit is an effective tool to present a positive, professional image of the Albuquerque Police Department. The Horse Mounted Unit will attend static demos and special events to provide a positive image of the Albuquerque Police Department.

3. Crowd Control

The Horse Mounted Unit is used for crowd control in civil disturbances, parades, marches, demonstrations, visits of dignitaries and any other events such as the State Fair and Balloon Fiesta where crowd control is necessary.

4. Searches

The Horse Mounted Unit will assist Field Services, or any other unit within the department, which includes APD Search and Rescue to search for missing children, lost persons, wanted subjects, and escapees. The horses are especially effective in searching wide open areas and areas where motorized vehicles cannot enter. Open Space and Search and Rescue supervisors should make every attempt to contact the Open Space Section Lieutenant or the Horse Mounted Sergeant to request the use of horses in the open space areas or along the river for any type of search. The Horse Mounted Unit will make every attempt to work in concert with the Air Support Unit to maximize efficiency in these types of situations.



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5. Traffic Control

The Horse Mounted Unit can assist in the movement and direction of traffic at major events. This service will only be conducted upon authorization of the Open Space Section Lieutenant or the Horse Mounted Sergeant.

6. Assist Field Services Bureau

The Horse Mounted Unit will assist Field Services Bureau with calls for service during Mounted Tactical Operation Plans.

7. Assisting Other Agencies

The Horse Mounted Unit will assist other agencies upon the approval and authority of the Open Space Division Special Services Bureau Commander, or his/her designee.

8. Static Demos and Special Events

The Horse Mounted Unit will attend static demos and special events to provide a positive image of the Albuquerque Police Department.

9. Breed of Horses

Based on experience of the Unit Officers, it has been determined that draft type horses are better suited for the rigors of police work. The Horse Mounted Unit will continue using draft horses or draft cross breeds. The Special Services Bureau Commander or Open Space Lieutenant, on a case-by-case basis, may authorize another breed of horse.

10. Donation of Horses to the Unit

The Horse Mounted Unit can accept a horse from a private source upon authorization of the Special Services Bureau Commander or Lieutenant. The horse will be taken and evaluated for a minimum of ninety days (by APD Mounted Unit Trainer and Unit Members) for potential duty use. This includes, but is not limited to, physical well-being, demeanor, and estimation in time required to train the horse for police work, as well as a vet check. The donated horse's care, during the evaluation period will be funded under the current stable contract providing it does not require an additional expense based on the current contract parameters.



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If the horse has been determined to be an asset to the unit, the Horse Mounted Sergeant will have the private citizen read and sign the proper form(s) to indicate the horse will be retained as a donation to the Horse Mounted Unit. The horse's name will be added to the unit inventory. A copy of this form(s) will be given to the citizen and one will be kept on file. If, during the evaluation period, it is determined the horse is not compatible with police work, it will be returned to the original owner.

11. Retiring of Horses

Upon recommendation of the unit veterinarian and/or Trainer, the Special Services Bureau Commander and /or Lieutenant will make the determination to retire a police horse. The City Rules and Regulations will be adhered to and any decision regarding this situation will not be subject to grievance for any reason.

12. Horse Mounted Unit On-Call Status

The officers assigned to the Horse Mounted Unit may be placed in on call status for situations requiring a horse response. If the officer(s) of the Horse Mounted Unit should be placed in an on-call status they will be available by phone at all times and will be compensated per APOA contract. The Horse Mounted Lieutenant or Sergeant will be contacted to authorize the use of the horses.

C. Horse Mounted Unit Training

1. Trainer and Assistant Trainer

A HMU trainer is a horse professional. The trainer must be familiar with all areas of the equestrian profession. Due to the specific nature of the Mounted Unit, the HMU trainer and assistant trainer should be fully commissioned and sworn officers. The HMU trainers will be responsible for training both riders and mounts in the different techniques used by the unit. They must be knowledgeable and have experience in training new mounts, as well as be able to remedially train existing Mounts. The trainers must be able to mount and ride all department horses through the testing qualifications successfully. Each mount will be ridden through the testing qualifications by the trainers and the assistant trainer annually. This assures that when officer testing occurs, all mounts have successfully passed prior to the officers testing. HMU trainers should be certified by an outside entity as a Police Mounted Instructor.



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2. Weekly Syllabus of Training Posted

A syllabus of all weekly training will be put out a minimum of two days in advance of the scheduled training date. Distribution will be in email format to all HMU officers and collateral riders.

D. Use of the Bokken Baton

Due to the height and position of the mounted rider, normal collapsible ASPs would not be effective as an intermediate use of force tool. It is imperative that the rider be able to maintain control of his mount for the protection and safety of the Officer, Citizens, and offender. The Bokken was adopted as the primary intermediate use of force tool for mounted unit. The Bokken is a 48" tool that is easily manipulated with one hand. The length gives the rider the ability to dislodge subjects who have grasped the reins and or halter of the mount. All level II riders will be trained in the use of the Bokken. The strike areas for the Bokken are the same areas that have been approved for the ASP.

1. Officers Responsibilities

In the event the use of the Bokken is necessitated, the Horse Mounted officer will, if feasible, give verbal commands to the suspect(s) to stop their actions. If immediate compliance is not gained or if the situation requires an immediate response, the Horse Mounted Officer may employ the Bokken to stop the subject's actions. The striking areas for the Bokken will be the same as for the ASP. Officers will use the Bokken techniques that are taught during the Horse Mounted Level two riding class. Once the situation is de-escalated, the Horse Mounted Sergeant will be immediately advised regarding deployment of the Bokken.

2. Supervisors Responsibilities

The supervisor will follow the current Use of Force reporting responsibilities as outlined in [SOP 2-54](#).

E. Horse Mounted Unit Equipment

1. Equipment provided by the department:

- a. Horse trailer



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- b. Bridle
 - c. Saddle bags
 - d. Western saddle
 - e. Halters
 - f. Saddle pads
 - g. Grooming box
 - h. Horse reflective equipment
 - i. Bit (tack)
 - j. Lead ropes
 - k. Four-wheel drive trucks
 - l. Bokken baton
 - m. Hoof picks
 - n. Horse riot face shields
 - o. Mounted officer riot helmet with face shields
 - p. Tactical vest for call-outs
 - q. Lobster legs
 - r. Padded chest protectors
 - s. Tactical earpieces for department radios
 - t. Ballistic plate carriers
2. Equipment officers must buy:
- a. Horse mounted uniform
 - b. Black uniform shirt
 - c. Black wrangler pants (plain)
 - d. Black western hat
 - e. Black western style boots that must have riding sole and heel
 - f. Spurs
3. Equipment officers may buy:
- a. Black duster (water proof, if desired)
 - b. Up-graded spurs which must be approved by the HMU Sergeant
 - c. Chaps
 - d. Yellow slicker
 - e. Water proof hat cover
 - f. Hard shell protection gloves black leather slicker/duster
 - i. Hard shelled gloves will be only those issued and/or approved by the HMU unit supervisor. Because hands are essential for control of the horse and for the safety of the rider and civilians during ERT activations, hard shell



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gloves are only to be worn in conjunction with full riot gear. The guidelines set forth by the ERT Lieutenant for ERT members shall be adhered to at all times when hard shell gloves are worn for ERT type call outs.

F. Horse Mounted Unit Testing

All HMU officers and collateral riders will take an annual riding testing. Testing will be conducted in April. This will be done to ensure the standards and skills are maintained throughout the unit. There will be a minimum of two reviewers for the test and witnessed by the unit supervisor. All records of the annual testing will be kept by the Open Space Lieutenant. The same standards will be met when taking the Level I or Level II riding test. Officers who do not pass testing, will have 90 days to re-test and pass. Riders who fail to pass the test within 90 days will be immediately removed from the unit or collateral program.

G. Horse Mounted Unit Uniforms and Patch

1. Cross Swords

- a. The Unit Cross Swords shall consist of the double swords with a Horse Head Emblem in the Center with the letters "APD" hanging underneath.
- b. The Unit Cross Swords shall be awarded only to permanent riders in the unit after a period of one year of service when deemed appropriate by the unit supervisor. Officers must have been certified to ride full time, attended all associated events, day to day activities, field patrol, and participated in a full Balloon Fiesta and State Fair.

2. Unit Patch and Badge

- a. The HMU Unit Badge is a round five-point gold and silver star with the designation of Albuquerque Police Department across the top, Horse Mounted Unit across the bottom. The city seal in centered in the badge. This badge will only be worn during HMU functions with the HMU uniform.
- b. Unit Patch: Upon completion of the Level 1 Collateral Rider Program, the HMU Supervisor shall have the discretion to issue the HMU Patch to individual Officers to wear only while associated with the Horse Mounted Unit, and collateral program. The APD field services badge and hat badge will be



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utilized with the HMU uniform. Level 2 riders will adhere to the same provisions as level 1 in regard to wearing of the HMU unit patch.

- c. Unit Badge: Upon completion of the Level 2 Collateral Rider Program, 2 years' consistent service in the collateral rider program, completing at least one full Balloon Fiesta, one State Fair, plus various events throughout the year, the Unit Supervisors can, at his/her discretion, authorize and issue the Round Five Star HMU Badge and Hat Badge to be worn by a collateral rider. The badges will only be worn while performing the duties and activities associated with the Horse Mounted Unit. At no time will this badge be worn while on their regular duty assignment.

H. Horse Mounted Unit Collateral Rider Program

1. The purpose of the Collateral Rider Program is to supplement the personnel levels in the Mounted Unit. Additionally, this program affords interested APD officers the opportunity to learn equitation, equine care, and mounted police tactics. In order to be accepted into the Collateral Rider Program, the below minimum qualifications must be met by all riders:
 - a. Officers must be off probation.
 - b. Officers must be in good standing with the department.
 - c. Officers must be on some type of duty status when attending training or an event, such as but not limited to, adjusted, comp time or overtime.
 - d. Officers must be willing to purchase necessary riding gear as well as a summer and winter uniform to match the rest of the HMU officers.
 - i. Collateral Riders will not wear the HMU Unit Patch until they successfully complete the HMU (Level I) Riding Test and are authorized by the Section Lieutenant or Horse Mounted Sergeant.
 - e. Officers must attend and successfully pass the APD Basic Mounted School (Level I)
 - f. Officers in the Collateral Rider Program will also be required to have forty (40) hours of evaluation, to include training and events. This will enable the Section Lieutenant, and the Horse Mounted Sergeant to evaluate the rider's horsemanship knowledge, skills, and abilities, ensuring they meet APD HMU standards, before being accepted into the program.
 - g. The Collateral Rider Program will utilize horses owned and trained by APD HMU.
 - h. The Collateral Rider Program will utilize tack provided by the APD HMU.
 - i. Once the training is completed, Collateral Riders will attend a minimum of 8 (eight) hours of training per month in order to maintain proficiency. Failure to



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maintain this training will remove that Collateral Rider from the rotation for that month.

- j. Collateral Riders will be utilized in the event there is an ERT callout on an "as needed" basis.
- k. Overtime or comp time for special events will be approved by the HMU Sergeant.
- l. Collateral Riders will be required to pass the HMU Level II Riding Proficiency Test annually, conducted in April.
- m. Collateral Riders should look within their own area commands to utilize the HMU for tact plan operations and submit the plan to their Section Lieutenant and HMU Sergeant for approval. The Collateral Rider will participate in this operation.
- n. The Horse Mounted Sergeant will make the ultimate determination whether or not a particular rider is suitable for the Collateral Rider Program. This will not be grievable since the Collateral Program is a secondary duty above and beyond their primary assignment.
- o. Collateral Riders will be classified as Level I and Level II.
- p. Collateral Riders should not be on call for any other unit. This will be at the discretion of the HMU Sergeant and Lieutenant.

2. Level I Riders

Level I riding school will include, but is not limited to:

- a. Basic riding
- b. Proper seat
- c. Proper use of hands
- d. Proper use of leg cues
- e. Ability to complete all of the standard patterns and obstacles utilized by the mounted unit
- f. Truck and trailering course
- g. Will be utilized only at low stress static events.
- h. Must have completed and passed the Level I basic rider class.
- i. Will not be utilized unless an experienced permanent Mounted Officer can be present.
- j. Once a Rider has passed the Level 1 training program, the riders are required to complete 12 Level 1 events/patrols per calendar year starting January 1st, and maintain their minimum monthly training requirement. Failure to participate in the minimum amount of events will result in removal from the program.



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3. Level II Riders

Level II riding school will include, but not limited to:

- a. Duress training
- b. Tactics and officer safety from the mount
- c. Mounted firearms qualification
- d. Once a rider has passed the Level 2 training program there will be an OJT period consisting of a period of six months. The OJT period will consist of a minimum of 12 events/patrols with a minimum of 4 hours per ride.
- e. Level 2 riders shall complete a minimum of 24 events per calendar year starting January 1st; 18 will be Level 2 events/patrols, and maintain their minimum monthly training requirement. Failure to participate in the minimum amount of events will result in removal from the program.
- f. Can be utilized for patrol, search and rescue, and all other mounted unit duties.
- g. Must have completed the Level II Mounted unit riding class, and passed the level II riding exam.