1-56 HORSE MOUNTED UNIT

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

2-1 Uniforms (Formerly 2-06)
2-35 Emergency Response Team (Formerly 2-29)
2-52 Use of Force: General (Formerly 3-45)
2-54 Intermediate Weapon Systems
2-56 Use of Force: Reporting by Department Personnel
2-57 Use of Force: Review and Investigation by Department Personnel

B. Form(s)

PD 3021 Donated Horse Agreement
PD 3022 Horse Release Agreement

C. Other Resource(s)

City of Albuquerque and Albuquerque Police Officers' Association Collective Bargaining Agreement

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

1-56-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is for the Special Operations Bureau's Horse Mounted Unit (HMU) to provide support and assistance to the Albuquerque Police Department (Department) by attending community, City-sponsored, and special events to project a positive, professional image of the Department, along with supporting the Department by conducting proactive patrols, crowd control, and crime prevention initiatives.

1-56-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department for the HMU to conduct proactive patrols, crowd control, searches, and crime prevention initiatives in high-crime areas while on horseback, and to perform community outreach while on horseback.

N/A

1-56-3 Definitions

A. Bokken Baton

A forty-eight (48") wooden tool that gives the rider the ability to dislodge individuals who have grasped the reins and or halter of the mount (horse). It is a primary

intermediate use of force tool for mounted units. Due to the height and position of the mounted rider, normal expandable batons would not be effective as an intermediate use of force tool.

B. Collateral Rider

The collateral rider supplements personnel levels in the HMU. This role allows sworn personnel the opportunity to learn equitation, equine care, and mounted police tactics.

C. Rein Strike

The hanging, loose leather portion of the rein that is used as an impact weapon.

1-56-4 General Rules

7 A. The duties of the HMU are divided into several primary functions. The Special Services Section Lieutenant or HMU Sergeant may assign other functions.

1. Crime Prevention

a. The HMU is a City-wide unit and shall assist the Field Services Bureau (FSB) and any other specialized unit in effectively controlling crime in all area commands and open space areas as authorized by the HMU Sergeant.
b. HMU sworn personnel shall conduct crime prevention initiatives in high-crime areas while on horseback as authorized by the HMU Sergeant.
c. Area commanders and/or lieutenants shall contact the Special Services Section Lieutenant or the HMU Sergeant to request the use of the HMU within their respective area command.

2. Public Relations and Community Outreach

a. The HMU presents a positive, professional image of the Department by attending community, City-sponsored, and special events.

3. Crowd Control

a. The HMU may engage in crowd control in civil disturbances, parades, marches, demonstrations, visits by dignitaries, and any other events where crowd control is necessary, such as the New Mexico State Fair and the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta as authorized by the HMU Sergeant.
b. The HMU may be utilized consistent with SOP Emergency Response Team (ERT).

4. Searches

a. The HMU shall assist FSB, or any other unit within the Department, to search for missing children, lost persons, wanted subjects, and escapees as authorized by the HMU Sergeant.
b. The HMU may search open space and areas not amenable to motorized vehicles as authorized by the HMU Sergeant.
c. Search and Rescue supervisors shall make every attempt to contact the Special Services Section Lieutenant or the HMU Sergeant to request the HMU in the open space areas or along the river for any type of search as authorized by the HMU Sergeant.
d. The HMU shall make every attempt to work in concert with the Air Support Unit to maximize efficiency during search operations.

5. Traffic Control

N/A

a. The HMU may assist in the movement and direction of traffic at major events.
b. The Open Space Section Lieutenant or the HMU Sergeant shall authorize the HMU participating in traffic control.

6. FSB Assistance

a. The HMU shall assist FSB with calls for service during mounted tactical operation plans as authorized by the HMU Sergeant.

7. Assistance for Other Agencies

a. The HMU shall assist other agencies upon the approval and authority of the Open Space Section Lieutenant or their designee, the Special Operations Bureau Deputy Chief or their designee.

8. Community, City-Sponsored, and Special Events

a. Upon request, and with approval of the HMU Sergeant or their designee, the HMU may attend community, City-sponsored, and special events to project a positive, professional image of the Department.

B. Use of Force for the Horse Mounted Unit

1. HMU sworn personnel shall immediately report the following interactions between a horse and individual to the HMU Sergeant or their designee for investigation:

a. The horse biting an individual;
b. The horse stepping on an individual;
c. The horse's head making contact with an individual; and
d. The horse kicking an individual.

2. The HMU Sergeant shall determine whether the action was directed by HMU sworn personnel.

a. If the interaction was directed by HMU sworn personnel and caused injury or complaint of injury, it shall be investigated as a Level 2 use of force. The HMU Sergeant shall also determine whether a referral for potential criminal conduct is appropriate.
b. If the interaction was unintentional and not directed by HMU sworn personnel, it shall not be considered a use of force.
    i. The HMU Sergeant shall investigate the interaction for potential liability issues and to determine whether preventative measures must be taken.
    ii. The HMU officer shall strongly encourage the involved community member to stay at the scene to be evaluated by emergency medical services (EMS) personnel for possible injuries and to be photographed by a Crime Scene Specialist (CSS).
    iii. The witness HMU officer shall document the interaction in a Uniform Incident Report and shall forward the report to the City of Albuquerque Risk Management Division.

N/A

3. Use of the Bokken Baton

a. All uses of the Bokken Baton shall be consistent with SOP Use of Force: General and SOP Intermediate Weapons Systems.
b. All uses of the Bokken Baton shall be reported consistent with SOP Use of Force: Reporting by Department Personnel.
c. All uses of the Bokken Baton shall be investigated consistent with SOP Use of Force: Review and Investigation by Department Personnel.

N/A

4. Use of Rein Strikes

a. All uses of the Rein Strikes shall be consistent with SOP Use of Force: General and SOP Intermediate Weapons Systems.
b. All uses of the Rein Strikes shall be reported consistent with SOP Use of Force: Reporting by Department Personnel.
    i. Use of the Rein Strike on an individual's extremities shall be considered a Level 2 use of force and shall be investigated as a Level 2 use of force, consistent with SOP Use of Force: Review and Investigation by Department Personnel.
    ii. If the use of the Rein Strike results in, or could reasonably result in, serious physical injury, hospitalization, or death, it shall be investigated as a Level 3 use of force, consistent with SOP Use of Force: Review and Investigation by Department Personnel.

5. Use of Horse Maneuvers

a. All uses of Horse Maneuvers shall be consistent with SOP Use of Force: General.
    i. Crowd dispersal without contact shall not be considered a use of force or show of force.

ii. Crowd dispersal by making contact between the horse and individual that does not result in injury, a complaint of injury, or would not be reasonably expected to result in an injury is considered a low-level control tactic and not a use of force.

N/A

iii. All other contact between a horse and an individual shall be reported and investigated consistent with the levels of force defined in SOP Use of Force: Definitions.

C. Horse Mounted Unit On-Call Status

1. Sworn personnel assigned to the HMU may be placed in an on-call status for situations requiring an HMU response.

2. If HMU sworn personnel are placed in an on-call status, they shall be available by phone at all times and shall be compensated, consistent with the City of Albuquerque and Albuquerque Police Officers' Association Collective Bargaining Agreement.

3. The Open Space Section Lieutenant or HMU Sergeant shall be contacted to authorize an HMU response and place HMU personnel in an on-call status.

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1-56-5 Responsibilities

A. Deputy Chief

The Special Operations Bureau Deputy Chief shall have final command of the HMU.

B. Commander/Deputy Commander

The Special Services Division Commander/Deputy Commander shall have overall command of the HMU.

B. Lieutenant

The Special Services Section Lieutenant shall have on-scene command of the HMU.

C. Sergeant

1. The HMU Sergeant shall directly supervise the HMU and shall be responsible to the Special Services Section Lieutenant. Due to the capabilities, limitations, and safety concerns of the horses, only the aforementioned supervisors shall direct the activities of the HMU.

2. The HMU Sergeant shall:

a. Report directly to the Special Services Section Lieutenant;
b. Develop tactical plans and maintain a calendar of events;

c. Assign sworn personnel to horses according to compatibility of horse and rider;
d. Assign sworn personnel to areas and determine duty hours according to directions of the Special Services Section Lieutenant;
e. Ensure that assigned sworn personnel are knowledgeable in the proper care of assigned horses and equipment;
f. Ensure that all assigned sworn personnel are capable of controlling the horses in accordance with proper leg aids and reining techniques;
g. Ensure sworn personnel can perform crowd control maneuvers and formations on horseback;
h. Ensure that sworn personnel are trained in the proper, transporting, and unloading of horses in the trailer;
i. Ensue that sworn personnel are trained in the hitching and unhitching of the horse trailer;
j. Maintain knowledge of each horse's capabilities and the HMU;
k. Maintain the ability to take command of the HMU in an emergency situation;
l. Ensure the tack is in good repair and condition;
m. Ensure the HMU has adequate supplies;
n. Inspect horses for illness, lameness, and their ability to perform their expected duties;
o. 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;
p. Ensure that the police horses are not ridden by any person not authorized by the HMU Sergeant;
q. Ensure horses are fed properly to maintain their health and weight according to the individual horse's needs;
r. Ensure the horses are groomed before the tour duty;
s. Ensure the horses are shod properly according to their individual needs;
t. Conduct performance evaluations, including minimum performance measures and goals, consistent with SOP Employee Work Plan/Performance Evaluations;
u. Be responsible for providing a weekly activity report to indicate the total number of services the HMU provided (e.g., crowd control, proactive patrols, community events, City-sponsored events, and special events); and
v. Make the ultimate determination as to whether or not a particular rider is suitable to be a collateral rider.

D. Officer

1. The HMU officer shall:

a. Report directly to the HMU Sergeant;
b. Familiarize themselves with, and adhere to, the HMU Training Manual;
c. Properly groom and maintain horses;
d. Properly tack horses and care for the tack;
e. Recognize health, injury, and shoeing needs of the HMU horses;
f. Ride and control their horse in both common and unpredictable situations;
g. Recognize abilities and shortcomings of individual horses;
h. Maintain the HMU horses to the proper degree of training needed for policing;

i. Maintain physical fitness standards, consistent with SOP Physical Fitness Testing and Training;
j. Meet minimum uniform standards, consistent with SOP Uniforms;
k. Ensure horse and equipment are in serviceable conditions at all times;
l. Load, transport, and unload horses;
m. Correct a horse's undesired behavior but only to the degree required to achieve the objective;
5 i. Excessive or unnecessary discipline, as determined by the HMU Sergeant or Trainers, shall not be tolerated and shall be grounds for removal from the HMU.
7 n. Exercise due caution when securing and leaving a horse unattended;
o. Evaluate every situation, considering the safety of the public, the officer, and the horse;
p. Not allow the public to feed the horses;
q. Familiarize themselves with all of the horses in the HMU and maintain proficiency in the control of all the horses;
r. Be able to mount from the ground without assistance;
i. The inability to mount a horse from the ground may be grounds for immediate removal from participating in a specific event.
s. Be able to mount in full riot gear;
i. The inability to mount a horse while in full riot gear may grounds for immediate removal from participating in a specific event.
t. Ensure that unauthorized persons shall not mount, ride, or train horses assigned to the HMU;
u. Train all horses alike in the event another HMU officer rides an unfamiliar horse;
v. Be willing to ride any and all of the horses assigned to the HMU for either training purposes or duty-use;
5 w. Not engage in off-duty riding of police horses, unless otherwise directed by the HMU Sergeant; and
7 x. Maintain a duty/training log, including rider, mount, and type of event or training.

E. Collateral Rider

1. To be accepted as a collateral rider, the following minimum qualifications shall be met:

a. The collateral rider shall be off probation or have HMU Sergeant authorization if still on probation;
b. The collateral riders shall be in good standing with the Department; and
c. The collateral riders shall be in an on-duty status when attending training or an event, including, but not limited to, adjusted, compensatory time or overtime.

2. Collateral riders shall not wear the HMU patch until they successfully complete the HMU riding test and are authorized by the Open Space Section Lieutenant or HMU Sergeant, consistent SOP Uniforms.

3. Collateral riders shall attend and successfully pass the Department Mounted Operations School. They shall:

   a. Be able to mount from the ground without assistance; and
      i. The inability to mount a horse from the ground may be grounds for immediate removal from participating in a specific event;
   b. Be able to mount in full riot gear;
      i. The inability to mount a horse while in full riot gear may grounds for immediate removal from participating in a specific event.

4. Sworn personnel who work as a collateral rider shall also be required to have forty (40) hours of evaluation on equitation, to include training and events. This shall enable the Open Space Section Lieutenant, and the HMU Sergeant to evaluate the rider's horsemanship knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure they meet HMU standards, before being accepted into the program.

5. Once the training is completed, collateral riders shall attend a minimum of eight (8) hours of training per month in order to maintain proficiency. Failure to maintain this training shall result in the removal of the collateral rider from the rotation for that month.

6. Collateral riders shall be required to pass the annual HMU riding proficiency test that is typically conducted in April.

7. Collateral riders shall be utilized "as needed" in the event there is an ERT callout.

8. Overtime or compensatory time for special events shall be approved by the HMU Sergeant.

9. Collateral riders should look within their own area commands to utilize the HMU for tactical plan operations and submit the plan to their direct supervisor and HMU Sergeant for approval. The collateral rider shall participate in this operation.

10. Collateral riders generally should not be on call for any other unit. Exceptions to this requirement shall be at the discretion of the HMU Sergeant and Open Space Section Lieutenant.

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11. Collateral riders generally shall not use horses without the HMU Sergeant or a full-time HMU officer present; however, the HMU Sergeant may authorize exceptions.

12. The collateral rider shall only utilize horses owned and trained by the HMU.

13. The collateral rider shall utilize tack provided by HMU.

14. Collateral riders shall not be on HMU property without prior authorization from the HMU Sergeant.

15. Collateral riders shall adhere to the same responsibilities as described above for HMU sworn personnel.

N/A **1-56-6 Horse Mounted Operations Riding School**

A. Sworn personnel shall complete the Horse Mounted Operations Riding School, and shall pass the riding exam.

B. Horse Mounted Operations Riding School shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Basic riding;
2. Proper seat;
3. Proper use of hands;
4. Proper use of leg cues;
5. Ability to complete all of the standard patterns and obstacles utilized by HMU;
6. Truck and trailering course;
7. Duress training;
8. Mounted tactics and officer safety;
9. Mounted firearms qualification; and
10. Use of Bokken Baton techniques.

C. Once sworn personnel have completed the Horse Mounted Operations Riding School, sworn personnel shall undergo six (6) months of on-the-job-training (OJT).

1. The OJT period shall consist of a minimum of twelve (12) events/patrols with a minimum of four (4) hours per ride.
2. HMU personnel shall complete at least two (2) events a month, one (1) of which shall be the minimum monthly training requirement. Failure to participate in the minimum amount of events shall result in removal from the program.

6 **1-56-7 Training**

A. Trainer and Assistant Trainer

1. An HMU Trainer shall complete the minimum education requirements set forth by a nationally recognized Mounted Patrol Instructor program to become familiar with all areas of the equestrian profession.

2. The HMU Trainer shall:

    a. Train both riders and mounts in the different techniques used by HMU;
    b. Be knowledgeable and have experience in training new mounts and remedial training of existing mounts; and
    c. Successfully mount and ride all HMU horses through the testing qualifications.
        i. Each mount shall be ridden through the testing qualifications by the Trainer and the Assistant Trainer annually. This assures that when officer testing occurs, all mounts have successfully passed testing prior to the sworn personnel testing.

B. HMU personnel shall participate in the ERT major exercise, which consists of team building events. This training shall be conducted a minimum of once per year for all members of ERT and the HMU, consistent with SOP Emergency Response Team (ERT).

1. HMU personnel and ERT personnel shall train together when schedules allow, which may require HMU personnel to train with an individual ERT team.

2. HMU personnel and ERT personnel shall attempt to schedule training in advance to ensure HMU manning levels are adequate.

6 **1-56-8 Annual Riding Testing**

A. All riders take the annual riding testing conducted in April to ensure minimum standards and skills are maintained throughout the HMU.

B. A minimum of one reviewer and/or the HMU Sergeant are present during the test.

C. If during the test, the rider cannot perform a portion of the test, they shall be given remedial training and afforded two (2) additional attempts to perform the task. If the rider fails to complete the task, testing shall end for the day.

D. For each portion of the test, the rider is given the initial attempt and remedial training after each failed attempt for a total of three (3) attempts for both the left and right side of the horse.

E. If an issue with the horse occurs during the testing, then after two (2) failed attempts, the Trainer shall attempt the portion of the test during which the issue occurred to determine if the failure is a rider error or horse issue.

1. If the Trainer determines the testing issue is related to the horse, the rider may select a different horse to complete testing.

2. If the Trainer determines the testing issue is unrelated to the horse, the rider may make an additional attempt. If the rider has three (3) total unsuccessful attempts for the portion of the test, the rider shall be placed in an inactive status.

   a. A rider shall have one (1) attempt to retest within ninety (90) days. A rider who fails to pass the test within ninety (90) days shall be immediately removed from the HMU.

F. A rider who is unsuccessful after the three attempts for that portion of the test is placed in an inactive status.

5 G. A rider who is in an inactive status shall not deploy on patrol or call-outs.

N/A H. A rider who does not pass the test shall have ninety (90) days to re-test and pass.

I. A rider who fails to pass the test within ninety (90) days shall be immediately removed from the HMU.

J. The Open Space Section Lieutenant or their designee shall maintain all annual testing records.

N/A **1-56-9 Uniform and Equipment**

A. Uniform

1. HMU sworn personnel shall purchase the following as part of their HMU uniform, consistent with SOP Uniforms:

   a. Gloves: Hard-knuckled gloves. The gloves shall be issued and/or approved by the HMU Sergeant. Because hands are essential for control of the horse and for the safety of the rider and civilians during ERT activations, hard-knuckled gloves are only to be worn in conjunction with full riot gear.
   b. Hat: In the winter, a four-inch (4") brim, black felt cowboy hat with the Department-approved hat badge or HMU hat badge shall be worn; in the summer, a four-inch (4") brim straw hat. A baseball hat may be worn, at the discretion of the HMU Sergeant. The HMU Sergeant must approve all hats prior to going on-duty;
   c. Pants: Black Wrangler jeans while on horseback;
   d. Shirt: Black long or short sleeve polo-style shirt or duty style shirt with colored patches on both sleeves. Polo shirts shall have a cloth badge and name tag. Duty-style shirts shall have colored patches on the shoulders, an HMU or standard badge, and a name tag; and

e. Shoes: Cowboy boots with a heel and spur platform. They must be solid black or the design must be covered by the pant leg. Boots with a smooth sole are preferred; and
f. The Open Space Section uniform when designated by their lieutenant or their designee.

2. Collateral riders shall purchase necessary riding gear, as well as a uniform that matches the required HMU sworn personnel uniform.

3. Cross Swords Pin

a. The HMU Cross Swords pin shall consist of the double swords with a horse head emblem in the center with the letters “APD” underneath.
b. The pin shall be awarded to permanent HMU sworn personnel after a period of one (1) year of service or when deemed appropriate by the HMU Sergeant.
c. To qualify for the Cross Swords pin, sworn personnel shall have:
   i. Passed the annual riding test to ride;
   ii. Attended all associated events;
   iii. Participated in day-to-day activities, field patrol, riots/protests; and
   iv. Participated in a full Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta annual event, New Mexico State Fair annual event, Gathering of the Nations Pow Wow, and the City of Albuquerque’s Freedom Fourth and Twinkle Light Parade.
d. The HMU Cross Swords pin shall be awarded to collateral riders when the following activities are achieved which equal one year of work as a full time rider:
   i. Complete a two-week temporary duty (TDY) with the HMU, which may be consecutive or non-consecutive.
   ii. Complete five HMU tactical plans within the officer’s area command.
   iii. Fully complete the following annual events: the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, New Mexico State Fair, Gathering of the Nations Pow Wow, and the City of Albuquerque’s Freedom Fourth and Twinkle Light Parade.
   iv. Complete at least one-hundred (150) events, including the above-mentioned events and other annual events expected of a permanent rider.
   v. Shall have documented one-thousand and fifty (1,050) saddle hours.
   vi. Complete ten (10) days of the Department’s Christmas Holiday Tactical Plan.
   vii. Shall complete minimum monthly training hours and have passed the annual riding testing.
   viii. Shall have completed and successfully passed the Mounted Operations School.
   ix. Maintain updated HMU Activity Logs to track hours and events as found in the HMU’s SharePoint site.
e. There is no time limit to complete the above requirements although it is preferred that all requirements be completed within the first two (2) years of being a collateral rider.

4. Patch

   a. Upon completion of Horse Mounted Operations Riding School, the HMU Sergeant shall issue the HMU patch to sworn personnel.
   b. Sworn personnel shall only wear the HMU patch while associated with the HMU. The Department FSB badge and hat badge shall be utilized with the HMU uniform.

5. Badge

   a. The HMU badge is a round five-point gold and silver star with the designation of "Albuquerque Police Department" across the top and "Horse Mounted Unit" across the bottom.
   b. The City seal is centered on the badge.
   c. This badge shall only be worn during HMU functions with the HMU uniform.
   d. Upon completion of Mounted Operations School, two (2) years of consistent service as a collateral rider, completing at least one full Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, one New Mexico State Fair event, plus various events throughout the year, the unit supervisors can, at their discretion, authorize and issue the round five star HMU badge and hat badge to be worn by a collateral rider.
   e. The badge shall only be worn while performing the duties and activities associated with the HMU.
   f. At no time shall this badge be worn while on regular duty assignment.

B. Equipment

1. The following HMU equipment is provided by the Department:

   a. Horse trailer;
   b. Grooming box;
   c. Horse reflective equipment;
   d. Tack, including bridle, saddle bags, western saddle, halters, saddle pads, lead ropes, and reins;
   e. Four-wheel drive trucks;
   f. Bokken baton;
   g. Hoof picks;
   h. Horse riot face shields;
   i. Mounted officer riot helmet with face shields;
   j. Tactical vest for call-outs;
   k. Lobster legs;
   l. Padded chest protectors;
   m. Tactical earpieces for Department radios; and
   n. Ballistic plate carriers with lightweight rifle plates.

2. The following equipment, not provided at Department expense, is recommended but not required:

   a. Black duster (waterproof is preferred);
   b. Upgraded spurs, which shall be approved by the HMU Sergeant;
   c. Chaps;
   d. Yellow slicker; and
   e. Waterproof hat cover.

6 **1-59-10 Breed, Selection, and Disposition of Horses**

A. HMU shall use gelded, male draft horses or draft cross breeds due to their suitability for the rigors of police work.

   1. The Special Operations Bureau Commander or Special Services Section Lieutenant, on a case-by-case basis, may authorize another breed of horse.

B. HMU horses shall be a minimum of sixteen (16) hands.

C. Donation of Horses

   1. The HMU can accept a horse from a private source upon authorization of the Special Operations Bureau Commander or Open Space Section Lieutenant. The HMU Trainer and unit sworn personnel shall evaluate the horse for a minimum of ninety (90) days for potential duty use. This includes, but is not limited to:

      a. Physical well-being;
      b. Demeanor; and
      c. Estimation in time required to train the horse for police work, as well as a check-up with the Department's contracted veterinarian.

   2. During the evaluation period, the donated horse's care, shall be funded under the current stable contract, provided that such care does not result in an additional expense.

   3. During the evaluation period, if it is determined the horse is not compatible with police work, it shall be returned to the donor.

   4. If the horse is accepted for use by the HMU, the HMU Sergeant shall have the donor read and sign the Form Donated Horse Agreement to indicate the horse shall be retained as a donation to the HMU. The horse's name shall be added to the HMU inventory. A copy of this form(s) shall be given to the donor and one shall be kept on file.

D. Retiring of Horses

1. Upon recommendation of the contracted veterinarian and/or HMU Trainer, the Special Operations Bureau Commander and/or Lieutenant shall make the determination to retire an HMU horse.

2. The HMU Sergeant shall obtain a completed, signed Form Horse Release Agreement from the recipient of the HMU retired horse. The HMU Sergeant or their designee shall ensure that the recipient has adequate space and shelter for the HMU retired horse.

3. The HMU retains the agreement for a minimum of ten (10) years from the date the agreement was executed.