



**I P M B A**

**International Police Mountain Bike Association**

**Fact Sheet**

**General Information**

- As of June 2003, 45% (5,695) of the U.S.'s 12,656 local police departments were using bicycles, with a total of nearly 29,000 nationwide. The ratio of bikes to officers was highest in jurisdictions with a population of 2,500-9,999 (11 per 100), with an overall ratio of 6 bicycles per 100 sworn personnel.

**Number of bicycles operated by local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

<b>Population</b>	<b>% using bikes</b>	<b>Total # of bikes</b>	<b>Bikes per 100 officers*</b>
All Sizes	45%	28,724	6
1,000,000 +	100%	2,785	3
500,000-999,999	89%	1,862	4
250,000-499,999	90%	1,200	4
100,000-249,000	93%	2,657	5
50,000-99,999	89%	3,382	7
25,000-49,000	82%	3,905	8
10,000-24,999	75%	5,647	9
2,500-9,999	51%	5,477	11
Under 2500	18%	1,809	8

\*Part-time officers are included with a weight of .5 assigned.

Source: Local Police Departments 2003. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Publication #NCJ 210118.

- As of June 2003, 16% (489) of the U.S.'s 3,061 sheriffs' offices were using bicycles, with about 3,400 operated nationwide. Overall, sheriffs' offices had about two bicycles for every 100 sworn personnel.

**Number of bicycles operated by sheriffs' offices, by size of population served, 2003**

<b>Population</b>	<b>% using bikes</b>	<b>Total # of bikes</b>	<b>Bikes per 100 officers*</b>
All Sizes	16%	3,354	2
1,000,000 +	81%	1,103	3
500,000-999,999	58%	440	2
250,000-499,999	42%	417	2
100,000-249,000	34%	588	2
50,000-99,999	22%	350	2
25,000-49,000	11%	194	1
10,000-24,999	10%	238	2
Under 10,000	2%	24	1

\*Part-time officers are included with a weight of .5 assigned.

Source: Sheriffs' Offices 2003. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Publication #NCJ 211361.

- There are more than 300 bike medic teams across the country, including 52% of EMS agencies in the nation's largest 200 cities. Source: Journal of Emergency Medical Service 200 City Survey, February 2002.

- Departments with bike units range in size from fewer than 10 to over 9,000 sworn personnel. IPMBA has over 3,000 active members representing approximately 1200 law enforcement agencies, nearly 150 EMS agencies, and nearly 50 private security providers.
- Members represent 44 states, the District of Columbia, the US Virgin Islands, US military personnel overseas, and the following countries: Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Canada, England, Ghana, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Scotland, Switzerland, Wales, and the West Indies.
- Bike officers are utilized by a variety of law enforcement agencies, including: municipal, county, airport, transit, campus, tribal, and state police departments; sheriff's offices; military installations; hospitals; national, state, and local parks; and private police/security providers. They are also used by city and county-based fire/EMS departments, private hospitals and ambulance services, campus EMS providers, and search & rescue teams.
- According to a 2001 survey of IPMBA members, approximately 82% of bike units have at least one full-time member. 56% have fewer than 10 full-time members, while 11% have more than 20. Two responding police agencies had at least 150 bike officers. Approximately 71% of bike units have a combination of full and part-time members.

## Operations

- Approximately 45% of bike units operate year round; the rest operate primarily during the summer months.
- Most police officers spend only a portion of their shifts patrolling by bike. Approximately 45% spend between 1-10 hours per week on bike; about 12% operate a bike more than 30 hours per week.
- 91% of bike officers report that a percentage of their on-bike hours are spent operating at night.
- Bikes are used for a variety of operations, including: routine patrol, drug enforcement, community policing, directed patrol, crowd management and control, and a wide variety of special events. They are frequently used in tourist areas, downtown business districts, low income housing districts, high crime areas, parks, shopping malls, and airports.
- Most EMS agencies use their bike teams only for special events; however, a number of cities with crowded tourist or downtown districts have implemented regular patrol during peak hours, including Boston, Orlando, and Baltimore. Bike medics are deployed on a full-time basis in the UK cities of London, Manchester, and York.
- The average daily mileage of a public safety cyclist on an eight-hour shift is 15-25 miles.

## Uniforms and Equipment

- Most units use multi-speed mountain bikes. A number of manufacturers supply bikes specifically designed and equipped for police use. The average expense to fully equip one bike is about \$1,200. The annual maintenance on a properly maintained bike is approximately \$300.\*
- Bikes are typically equipped with rear racks and bags, front and rear lights, water bottle cages, and a rear-mount kickstand. Some are also equipped with audible warning devices (siren or horn), front or full suspension, cyclo-computers, and/or bar ends.
- Bike medics typically carry panniers outfitted with basic first aid supplies, cardiac monitors/defibrillators, AED's, drug bags, traction splints, I.V.s, and oxygen.
- Public safety cyclists typically carry basic bicycle tools, a spare tube, and a mini-pump or CO<sub>2</sub> cartridge.
- Safety equipment includes an approved (CPSC, Snell, or ANSI) bicycle helmet, protective eyewear for night and daytime use, pedal retention devices (toe clips or clipless pedals) and padded cycling gloves.
- A number of uniform suppliers manufacture uniforms designed specifically for bike officers. Depending upon departmental preference, bike uniforms may be custom-manufactured to match regular uniforms, or officers may be outfitted more casually in polo-style shirts. Uniforms may consist of: t-shirt and vest cover, moisture-wicking undergarments, uniform shirt, padded cycling shorts or briefs, bike-specific uniform shorts/pants, moisture-wicking socks, firm-soled yet flexible shoes, cycling jacket, and cycling rainwear.
- Nylon duty gear is preferable to leather because of the weight and the effects of the elements on leather.

\*Source: *Bicycling magazine*, December 2002.

## **Benefits of Police and EMS Bike Units**

- Bicycles can easily penetrate crowds – in highly congested areas police and EMS personnel on bikes can move more quickly and safely than those in golf carts, Gators™, or on foot, and can reach areas that are not accessible to police cruisers and ambulances.
- Response time in heavy traffic is improved – during their trial period in Orlando, bike medics responded in less than one minute 55% of the time; less than two minutes 83% of the time; and less than three minutes 95% of the time; contrasted with an average of four minutes for motorized rescue units.
- Stealth advantage – bicycles give officers the “stealth advantage” – because they are silent. Cops on bikes can ride right up to the scene of a crime before they are noticed.
- Police and EMS cyclists lead by example – promoting helmet use and bike safety to the community and its children.
- Bicycles are great for public relations – a police officer or a medic on a bike is much more approachable than one in a police cruiser or ambulance.
- Bicycle use promotes good health – and departments benefit from decreased healthcare costs.
- Bicycles are enjoyable – even occasional bike duty improves morale.
- Bike units are cost-effective – the average cost per bike is approximately \$1200, a fraction of the cost of a cruiser, an ambulance, or any other motorized vehicle.

## **Training**

- The International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) has certified more than 1,000 Police and EMS Cycling Instructors, who in turn have provided training to more than 30,000 public safety cycling personnel.
- IPMBA offers the Police Cyclist Certification Course, the Public Safety Cyclist II Course, the Survival Tactics and Riding Skills Course, the Bicycle Rapid Response Team Training Course, the Security Cyclist Course, the EMS Cyclist Certification Course, the Maintenance Officer Certification Course, and the Instructor Certification Course.
- The annual IPMBA conference is the premier training event for public safety cyclists, featuring eight pre-conference training courses, nearly 50 dynamic and innovative on-bike sessions and information-filled classroom-based workshops, and the nation’s largest and best bicycle patrol product exhibition.
- IPMBA makes a variety of resources available to police and EMS bike units, including start-up information packets, sample policies and procedures, and training tips.
- IPMBA strongly supports the growth of the profession, and, through industry partnerships, encourages the development of products that increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and safety of the public safety cyclist.

**International Police Mountain Bike Association**  
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