



## ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS

Security classification:  
NOT PROTECTIVELY  
MARKED

Disclosable under FOIA  
2000:  
YES

### MOUNTED POLICING

Author:  
ACC Hansen

Force/organisation:  
Avon and Somerset  
Constabulary

### Via email

Date created:  
31 January 2013

Telephone:  
01275 816437

Attachments@: Nil

To: The British Horse Society

### Equine Clothing That Closely Resembled Police Uniform

I write as the national lead for mounted policing within the United Kingdom in order to clarify the position with regard to equine clothing that closely resembles police uniform. As an influential and respected publication serving the equestrian community, I thought it might be helpful if I set out the legal position from a policing perspective to assist your readers and prevent any misunderstanding.

Over recent months a number of examples of high visibility equine apparel have been brought to my attention. These articles have caused concern to the police on the grounds that individuals wearing them are likely to be mistaken for being a police officer due to the design closely resembling police uniform. I have therefore sought advice on the legality of these designs, which has identified the following as the three main characteristics of police high visibility uniform:

**Wording** – police high visibility clothing typically has POLICE printed as a contrasting block of letters prominently displayed to the rear and/or front.

**Colour** - police high visibility uniform is universally yellow.

**Chequered Banding** – police high visibility clothing commonly uses blue/silver chequered banding, this colour being standardised by international convention.

The conclusion of these enquiries is that any item of clothing that has been manufactured to match these characteristics of police uniform is at risk of contravening legislation, namely Section 90 Police Act 1996. The ultimate decision about the legitimacy of any individual product is yet to be defined conclusively by any court, but the legal standard as enacted is an objective measure of whether the clothing worn by an individual, and/or their horse, would give the impression that that rider is a police officer when they are not. As such, any wording displayed on clothing which is similar in appearance to 'POLICE' (i.e. in a shape, format or font used on police uniform), even if spelt differently, would leave the wearer at risk of breaching the law, particularly if the other characteristics are present.

**Avon and Somerset Police Headquarters, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QJ  
01275 816437**

It is apparent that this issue has been subject to considerable debate through equine forums and I wish therefore to clarify the position from the police's perspective for your readers so that they appreciate the risks associated with wearing such products and/or designs. I would also like to take this opportunity to confirm that whilst the police would support any work to make the roads safer, we do not endorse or recommend any specific high visibility products or manufacturer, nor have we done so.

Yours faithfully

Rod Hansen, Assistant Chief Constable  
**ACPO Lead for Mounted Policing**