



What makes a Police Mini?



Thanks to the Australian Academy of Science for allowing the use of the Shine Dome.

Before looking at each state, it is important to get an understanding of what was involved with a police Mini, and what made them different from the run-of-the-mill Minis that were sold to the public.

As far as I can ascertain, General Duties Minis were mechanically completely standard. Certain equipment for police work, such as flashing lights, sirens, two-way radios and aerials, and police insignia, were added by each state police transport section.

On the other hand, Cooper S and Clubman GTs that were used by the NSW Police Special Traffic Patrol, were significantly modified for high-speed patrol work. These modifications were covered under Special Production Orders (SPOs) from the BMC factory.



NSW pursuit cars had special speedos. This one, being km/h and mph is c1973-75.



SPOs covered every component, nut, bolt and washer, that was removed, changed or replaced in order to bring the cars up to the required specification.

For example, SPO.16 included lowered front seat frames, SPO.25 specified reversing lights and two-speed wipers, while SPO.26 listed competition brake disc pads. As an indication of the detail involved, SPO.41, dated 4 September 1970, covers nine pages of changes – listing every pin, lever and clip, as well as the major components.

Other changes included a ported/polished cylinder head (possibly carried out by Lynx Engineering in Sydney, though not confirmed) an improved camshaft, free-flow exhaust, competition distributor, Lynx Ram-Flo re-usable air cleaners (serviced every 2,000 miles), and competition brake pads. Inside the car included rear seatbelts, hand-brake warning light and a Smiths tachometer (“mounted on the right-hand side of the dash and red-lined at 6,000rpm”).

While the SPOs were for use within the factory, details of the changes made from standard cars were sent to service managers at dealerships, in the form of Service Letters.



Roger Foy, former Road Proving Supervisor at BMC, reported recently that “information on Police Cooper ‘S’ had only been sent to Dealers in the areas where the vehicles operated, by means of a Service Letter. This was to ensure that should a Police vehicle require servicing, the Dealer would be aware of its special features. Presumably it was also to ensure that other Dealers continued to order standard Cooper ‘S’ and not try to order vehicles to Police specification.”

The SL from 1 November 1967, includes the lowered seat frames, competition disc brake pads (Hardie Ferodo DP11) and reversing lights; “Utilisation of the rear indicator lights, operated from a switch mounted on the gearshift remote control.” The SL also specifies the use of Olympic GT radial-ply tyres – not the Dunlop SP41 that are often mis-quoted.

SPO.41 relates to the Mk2 Cooper S, and the associated SL from 6 October 1970 states: “the first vehicle to include SPO.41 was Chassis No. 2372”. Changes made specifically for the Mk2 Cooper S include the fitting of Dunlop Aquajet tyres, twin HS4 1½” SU carburetors (replacing the previous 1¼” HS2 on the Mk1), a new inlet manifold, single-piece heat shield, and a new distributor.

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Most visible signs are twin 1½” carbs with single-piece heatshield, Ram-Flo air filters, and handbrake warning light.