



Civilian Observers

.01 Policy

The Ride-Along Program allows citizens to voluntarily accompany officers and to observe law enforcement activities to better understand the problems of policing. The program is intended to be an educational endeavor to acquaint citizens with the problems faced by law enforcement. By observing the field activities of their law enforcement agency, citizens will have a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of law enforcement. Therefore, the ride-a-long program will be used as an educational initiative to inform, education and promote community partnerships where and when possible.

.02 Terms

.03 Governing Legislation and Reference

Governing Legislation: N/A

Forms:

Ride-Along Application (Form 690).

.04 Procedure

A. Citizens Request to Ride-Along

Persons wishing to ride with an officer must complete a ride-along request form and waiver and return it to communications at least 18-hours prior to the ride-along date.

B. Request Approval

The Chief of Police, Commander of Operations and supervisors the rank of Sergeant or above may grant permission for ride-along.

C. Safety of Ride-Along Participants

Safety of non-police personnel will be the primary concern. Management needs to be aware of the potential danger of injury and accident to observers during the ride-along.

D. Limitations

A person will not ride unless approval has been granted by authorized personnel and a property completed waiver has been signed.

Approval will be for one specific eight-hour period, unless limitations or extensions are granted by the Chief of Police or Commander of Operations.

Only one observer will accompany an officer at a time. Minors must have waiver forms signed by parent or guardian.

A limit of one ride-along will be scheduled per shift. No individual will ride-along more than three times. Only the chief of Police or the Commander of Operations may grant a waiver of this limitation upon specific written request by the citizen. Requests whether granted or not cannot be appealed.

No citizen will be allowed to observe police activities pertaining to raids or ride with plainclothes officers without advance written permission of the Chief of Police.

E. General Guidelines

If no specific officer is requested by name, the on duty shift supervisor will appoint the host officer. The observer will obey the procedures as defined in the ride-along guideline handout and the directions provided by the host officer.

Observers/ Participants will not accompany an officer while transporting or booking prisoners. At no time will an officer, while accompanied by an observer, engage in, pursuit driving, respond to crimes in progress involving violence, or perform a felony vehicle stop. If officers are required to perform such activities, they must deposit the observer at a safe location.

Upon completion of the ride-along, the officer will return the observer to the station. The officer/will request the observer complete a comment form and return the form to the Police Department Administration when completed,

Ride-a-longs are permitted daily from 0800 to 0200 hours ONLY. To be eligible for a ride-along, the applicant must be:

- At least 16-years of age or older; and,
- Have not participated in a ride-along in the past 90-days.

The observer will report to the patrol supervisor prior to beginning the ride-along.

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The Ride-Along Program booklet has been prepared to assist members of this agency. The instructions, guidelines, and procedures contained in this booklet will be adhered to by all department personnel and are considered Department policy.

The Lieutenant will maintain all records related to the Ride-Along Program and will be responsible for the administration of the program.

All ride-a-longs will be in compliance with this general order and the Ride-Along Program document.

HISTORY: Adopted March 14, 2005

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles L. Owens". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

Charles L. Owens
Chief of Police