

**POLICY #24**

Subject: Ride – Along

Effective Date:

Reference: Standard Operating Procedures

Distribution: All Personnel

**POLICY:**

This policy restricts people from participating in Ride-Along programs due to concerns of liability, and potential interference with an officer's duties.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this general order is to establish procedures in obtaining special authorization to ride in police vehicles.

**PROCEDURES:**

**A. Ride-Along Requests:**

1. Generally, Police Ride-Along is prohibited. There exists a possible exception for people employed by a law enforcement agency, or other persons who can show reasonable grounds to request to Ride-Along, but only with written authorization of the Chief of Police. Persons wishing to ride along should pick up ride-along forms at the police department in person between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. daily, Monday through Friday. Completed request forms and waivers should be returned at least 48 hours before the desired ride-along date. The forms referred to herein are found at the end of this order.
2. The Chief of Police shall be the sole person to grant permission for citizens to ride with police officers. The Chief may perform a records check on any applicant for ride-along.

**B. Limitations:**

1. A person may not ride unless approval has been granted and the Chief has the properly completed waiver. Approval will be for one specific eight-hour period unless the Chief of Police grants special limitations or extensions.
2. Normally, no more than one observer will accompany an officer at a time.
3. Juveniles must be 16 years of age or older to ride and must have request and waiver forms signed by parent or guardian.
4. No one will be allowed to observe police activities relating to raids, or ride with plain-clothes units without specific advance coordination and approval of the Chief of Police.

**C. RIDE-ALONG CONDUCT:**

1. The observer should be appropriately dressed, if not, the on-duty supervisor may cancel ride-along approval.
2. The host officer shall instruct the observer on the procedures required while riding, which shall include:
  - a. Observer must follow directions of the officer.
  - b. Observer may be required to appear as witness in court.
  - c. Observer may terminate the ride whenever he or she wishes.
3. Observers shall at all times remain under the complete control of the assigned officer and shall comply with all directions and requests.
4. Observers shall not interfere with investigations in any way by conversing with victim, suspects or witnesses, handling evidence or police equipment, or participating in any police activity unless directed to do so by the assigned officer.
5. Should an officer indicate a desire to cease participating in the ride at any time, the officer shall return the observer to the point of origin as soon as possible, or another reasonable location.

**D. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:**

At no time shall an officer, while accompanied by an observer, engage in emergency pursuit driving, respond to a crime-in-progress reportedly involving violence, or perform a felony vehicle stop. If officers must perform such activities, they must deposit the observers at a safe location.

**E. ARRESTS, TRANSPORTING, BOOKING:**

If the host officers feel there are no hazards involved, the observer may accompany the officer while transporting or booking prisoners. If the officer believes a problem may arise, the observer should be temporarily transferred to another officer or returned to the point of origin.

F. Any officer hosting a Ride-Along shall complete an "Officer's Ride-Along Report," and submit it with his/her daily activity.