

Sample Guidelines for Developing Procedures for Law Enforcement

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CIVILIAN RIDE ALONG

I. POLICY

The observer program allows citizens to voluntarily accompany officers and to observe law enforcement activities to better understand the problems of policing. The observer may request to ride in any area at any time or with a particular officer. If convenient to the department and conditions permit, permission may be granted. Safety of non-police personnel shall be the primary concern.

II. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures for persons, sworn and non-sworn, riding in a(n) [redacted] Police Department vehicle.

III. PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO RIDE

A. Persons authorized to ride *without the* [redacted] *Police Department Release of Claims:*

1. [redacted] Police Department Police Officers who are off-duty;
2. [redacted] Police Department Reserve Officers;
3. Any person riding for the furtherance of an official police duty; i.e., prisoners, witnesses, victims, etc.;
4. To courteously serve the public, citizens in need of assistance of a non-official capacity, upon approval of a supervisor, may be transported to a reasonable location *within the City of* [redacted];
5. Active duty and reserve duty officers of other agencies in the performance of official duties; and
6. Non-sworn [redacted] Police Department employees in the performance of official police duties.

B. Persons authorized to ride *upon execution of a [REDACTED] Police Department Release of Claims:*

1. Off duty peace officers from other agencies;
2. News media, upon written approval of the Chief of Police; and
3. Any other person, upon written approval of the Chief of Police.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR PERSONS RIDING ON A RELEASE OF CLAIMS

A. Request

1. Persons who are eighteen (18) years of age or older and wish to ride in a(n) [REDACTED] Police Department police unit must complete and submit the [REDACTED] Police Department Rider Information Form and the Release of Claims Form.
2. The Rider Information Form and the Release of Claims Form shall be submitted to the Administrative Sergeant during normal business hours and must allow a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours advance notice.
3. In the discretion of the Chief of Police, this requirement may be waived in the case of full-time off-duty peace officers from other agencies.

B. Process Written Request/Release of Claim

1. The written request form, which includes the Release of Claims Form, will be utilized to evaluate the need for the person to ride, and to screen the rider to insure that the person does not have an unacceptable criminal record and/or outstanding warrants.

(The person requesting to ride must never have been convicted of a felony or any offense involving moral turpitude).
2. The record and warrant check, when completed, will be attached to the written request form.
3. Once the written request form has been approved by the Chief of Police or his designee, the approved time period by which the citizen may ride will be documented on the form.
4. The approved rider will be notified and given a copy of the written request form and a copy of the citizen observer instructions and rules. The approved rider must present his/her copy of the written request form and a photo I.D. to the on-duty supervisor who accommodates the rider's request for an observation ride.
5. The written request form and all record/warrant checks will be maintained in the office of the Chief of Police in a designated file.

6. Only one rider will be allowed to ride during each shift.
7. Citizen observers will normally be allowed to ride four times per year, unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Police. (The Chief's office shall maintain accurate records indicating the number of times each citizen observer rides in each calendar year.)
8. Citizen observers will normally ride for a four (4) hour period, unless circumstances justify otherwise. Additional time may be approved by the supervisor on the shift to which the rider has been assigned.

C. Dress and Grooming Standards

1. Observers in the Ride Along Program must dress and groom themselves in an appropriate and business-like manner. The on-duty supervisor or designee will make final approval of the observer's dress and appearance while riding in a police vehicle.
2. Minimum requirements consist of slacks or dress jeans and a collared shirt for males, slacks or dress jeans and blouse for females. T-shirts, tattered or unsightly blue jeans are not considered to be acceptable attire.
3. Riders will be clean and neat in appearance, hair will be neatly groomed at all times without presenting a ragged, unkempt, bushy or extreme appearance.
4. No observer shall wear on their clothing, anything that advertises any product, business or organization, nor shall they wear any sign, logo, symbol or word(s) that are inflammatory in nature.
5. Off-duty officers from other law enforcement agencies *may not wear* their agency's uniform when off-duty and riding, and must adhere to the specified attire and grooming standards. If a weapon is to be exposed, the off-duty officer's badge shall be displayed in a prominent manner.

D. Citizen Observer Instructions/Rules

Observers in the Ride Along Program are guests of the Police Department and shall conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Observers will:

1. Not use alcoholic beverages immediately prior to or during the watch in which they are authorized to ride;
2. Not use profane or abusive language or behave in any manner that would provoke or escalate tension;
3. Not enter into any investigation or converse with any citizen, witness or prisoner concerning a police incident or investigation;
4. Not make known to unauthorized persons the identity of persons arrested, detained, confined in jail or suspected of an offense;

5. Not operate or use any police equipment or vehicle, or any item in police custody or control except during the case of an extreme emergency when instructed to do so by a police officer;
6. Not carry a firearm (unless they are commissioned peace officers) or convey the impression to anyone that they are peace officers;
7. Remain in the police vehicle during routine traffic stops and disturbance calls of serious nature. They shall not enter a residence, building or other building, public or private, from which the public would be excluded due to a police incident or by the owner of the property; and
8. Obey without question any instructions in the furtherance of the police missions given by a police officer.

V. RESPONSIBILITY OF [REDACTED] POLICE OFFICERS

- A. It will be the responsibility of the patrol officer who is assigned a rider to advise dispatch of the citizen observer. Each officer shall insure that all precautions are taken for the safety of the rider.
- B. For the safety of citizen observers, an officer may, under certain circumstances, determine that their presence at a scene is not advisable. In such case, the officer may leave the citizen observer at a safe location within the City of [REDACTED]. If for any reason the observer must be left for a long duration, another officer or [REDACTED] employee will be notified, and the rider picked up.
- C. Officers will immediately report to their supervisors any interference with their duties or willful non-compliance with instructions, rules or regulations on the part of observers.
- D. Any supervisor, at his or her discretion, may cause or permit termination of the privilege of an observer to ride along when the effectiveness of the police mission and/or police operations is deterred. The supervisor terminating the privilege shall submit a memorandum to the Chief of Police citing the reason for termination.
- E. Officers will immediately notify their supervisor if any observer is injured while riding, and they will submit a written report of the incident to the Chief of Police.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE

- A. Any previous directive, rule, order or regulation that pertains to this subject matter and its amendments shall remain in full force and effect for any violations which occur prior to the effective date of this Order.
- B. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this Order is, for any reason, held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Order.
- C. The effective date is stated in the header block of this General Order.

POLICE DEPARTMENT
Citizen Observer Instructions and Rules

The [redacted] Police Department welcomes you to ride, as an observer, with one of our officers. As a professional law enforcement organization, we constantly strive to improve the level of service to our community. To that end, it is necessary to establish and maintain certain rules which govern the conduct and activities of citizens who ride with our officers to ensure the integrity of our Department is protected. In order for a citizen to ride, as an observer, with the [redacted] Police Department, he/she:

1. Must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.
2. Must complete and submit the Rider Information Form and the Release of Claims Form to the Chief of Police, during normal office hours, a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
3. Must be willing to undergo a background check, by the Department, to ensure the rider does not have an unacceptable criminal record and/or outstanding warrants.
 - a. Must never have been convicted of a felony or any criminal offense involving moral turpitude.
4. The approved rider must present their own copy of the written request form and a picture I.D. to the on duty supervisor that accommodates the rider's request for an observation ride.
5. Observers in the Ride along Program are guests of the Police Department and shall conduct themselves in an appropriate responsible manner. Observers will:
 - a. Not use alcoholic beverages immediately prior to or during the watch that they are to ride;
 - b. Not use profane or abusive language or behave in any manner that would provoke or escalate tension;
 - c. Not enter into any investigation or converse with any citizen, witness, or prisoner concerning a police incident or investigation;
 - d. Not make known to unauthorized persons the identity of persons arrested, detained, confined in jail or suspected of an offense;
 - e. Not operate or use any police equipment or vehicle or any item in police custody or control except in case of an extreme emergency when instructed to do so by a police officer;
 - f. Not carry a firearm (unless they are commissioned peace officers) or convey the impression or state to anyone that they are police officers;
 - g. Remain in the police car during routine traffic stops and disturbance calls of a serious nature and they shall not enter a house, building, or other property, public or private, from which the public would be excluded because of a police incident or by the owner of the property; and

- h. Obey without question any instructions in the furtherance of the police mission given by a police officer.
6. Dress and Grooming Standards:
- a. Observers in the Ride along Program must dress and groom themselves in an appropriate and business like manner. The on duty supervisor or his designee, will be the final judge of whether or not an observer's attire and/or grooming is appropriate for riding in a police car.
 - b. Minimum requirements are slacks or dress jeans and a shirt with a collar for males, slacks or dress jeans and a blouse for females. T-shirts and worn or unsightly blue jeans are not acceptable attire.
 - c. Riders will be clean and neat in appearance, hair will be groomed in such a manner that it can be maintained under all, but the most adverse conditions and does not present a ragged, unkempt, bushy or extreme appearance.
 - d. No observer shall wear, on his/her clothing, anything that advertises any product, business, or organization, or any sign, symbol, or word(s) that are inflammatory in nature.
7. Citizen observers will be allowed to ride for a four (4) hour period, unless circumstances justify otherwise. Additional time must be approved by a supervisor.

On behalf of all the [REDACTED] Police Department and myself, I hope that you find this as an educational, but enjoyable experience which serves to provide you with a better understanding of the law enforcement profession.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Chief of Police

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, this the _____ day of _____, 20____, personally appeared before me the said _____ known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he freely and voluntarily executed the same for the purpose and consideration therein expressed.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE, this the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public in and for
the State of Texas

Printed or Typed Name of Notary

My commission expires:

POLICE DEPARTMENT
SAMPLE CITIZEN RIDE-ALONG REQUEST

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to ride-along on *(date)* _____, accompanying Officer
(name) _____ for the following reason:

_____.

I have read and signed the release form and I understand the provisions.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time of Day to Contact: _____

Date: ____/____/____ _____
Signature

Parent or Guardian *(if rider is a juvenile)*

From: (Law Enforcement Official)

To: (Officer)

Subject: Authorization

Request is Approved Denied *(check one)*

Observer Authorized to Ride *(hours)* _____ On *(date)* _____

With Officer *(name)* _____ In *(area)* _____

POLICE DEPARTMENT
SAMPLE RIDE-ALONG APPLICATION

Name (*Last*) _____ (*First*) _____ (*MI*) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Driver's License: _____ Social Security: _____

Law Enforcement Affiliation (*if any*): _____

Reasons for Request: _____

I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:

Reviewed by: _____ Rank: _____

Time/Date: _____

Disposition: Approved Denied (*check one*)

Signature: _____

Remarks (*Reasons for denial, or Officer and Beat Assignment*) _____

Unit Number Assigned: _____ Officer Assigned: _____

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Subject: Evaluation – Ride-Along Program

TO:

(Commanding Officer)

FROM:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NO.: _____ AGE: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

On *(date)* _____ I was given the opportunity to ride-along
with Officer _____ of the Patrol Division.

The following is my evaluation of the program:

(Signature)

Please mail this evaluation to:

(Division): _____

(Dept. Head) _____

(Address) _____

POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: Officer's Evaluation of Participant in Ride-Along Program

TO: Administrative Division

FROM: Officer _____

EVALUATION OF: _____

ON (date) _____, I participated in a Ride-Along Program with the above-named person.

My impressions of this person and his/her conduct during the Ride-Along are as follows:

(Officer)

(Patrol Supervisor)

(Lieutenant)

(Captain)

(Chief Deputy)

Forward through Chain of Command to Administrative Lieutenant, Administration Division.