



Ride-Along Policy	Related Policies:
<p><i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i></p>	
<p>Applicable Arkansas Statutes: 12-6-402</p>	
<p>CALEA Standard: 45.2.1</p>	
<p>Best Practices:</p>	
<p>Date Implemented:</p>	<p>Review Date:</p>

- I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to set forth the department's mandates with respect to citizen ride-alongs and civilian passengers. (Sworn Police Officers are exempt from this policy. Officers of this department are prohibited from transporting civilian passengers unless such transportation is in the ordinary course of their law enforcement duties, in compliance with this policy, or otherwise approved by the Chief of Police or their designee.)
- II. **Policy:** It is the policy of this department to establish a ride-along program in an effort to enhance the mutual respect of police officers and the community. This program will provide its participants with a greater understanding of law enforcement in our community.
- III. **Procedures**
 - A. Who can participate in the ride-along program:
 - i. All participants must be approved by the Chief of Police or their designee and be at least 18 years of age or have guardian approval.
 - ii. All participants must complete an application and waiver of liability form.
 - iii. Media representatives must complete all documents required of any other participant. In addition, members of the media must have express written authorization from the Chief of Police or their designee before recording, by any means (audio, video, film, photo), any portion of the ride-along.
 - B. Application Process:
 - i. Applications and regulations for ride-alongs shall be available at the police department. Applications, along with photo identification, must be returned to the department once they are completed.
 - ii. Completed applications shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police or their designee for review.

- iii. Application review will include a record check and NCIC inquiry. An applicant who has a felony record or a misdemeanor record that involves moral turpitude or dishonesty may be excluded from participation in this program.
 - iv. Once approved, the applicant shall be notified and assigned a date for the ride-along.
 - v. Participants shall only be allowed to participate in this program once every 12 months unless authorized by the Chief of Police or their designee.
- C. Reporting for ride-along:**
- i. The ride-along program shall be scheduled by the Chief of Police or their designee.
 - ii. Participants should report to the police department 15 minutes prior to their scheduled participation.
 - iii. The on-duty officer shall meet with the ride-along participant. The ride along participant and the officer shall review and sign the liability waiver form. The officer must sign as a witness. Any participant who decides not to sign the liability waiver form shall not be allowed to participate in the program.
 - iv. The officer shall review the rules of the ride-along program with the participant. In this review, the participant should be reminded that they might be called as a witness in court, if they observe a police event that becomes subject to court action.
 - v. The officer shall issue the participant a “ride-along” participant identification tag that the participant shall be required to wear on his or her outermost clothing.
- D. Duties of the Participant:**
- i. Participants shall play no active role in the police function. They must only act as an observer unless otherwise directed by their host-officer.
 - ii. Participants shall not be allowed to operate any police equipment unless directed to do so by a police officer in an extreme emergency.
 - iii. Participants must remain in the police vehicle at all times until directed otherwise by the host officer.
 - iv. Participants must not speak to victims, witnesses, prisoners or other persons associated with a police event. Should a witness, prisoner, victim, or other person speak to the participant, the participant should politely direct the person to speak to one of the officers present.
 - v. Participants shall not bring cameras or any recording devices without the express written permission of the Chief of Police or their designee.
 - vi. Participants shall not enter any person’s home while participating in the ride-along, unless the host officer has asked, and has been granted express permission from the homeowner/occupant to allow the ride-along participant entry.

- vii. Participants shall follow the instructions of the host-officer at all times during the ride-along.
 - viii. Participants shall not be allowed to carry any firearm or other weapon, even when otherwise authorized by law, while participating in the ride-along program.
 - ix. Participants should be dressed in comfortable, casual, but conservative clothing during the ride-along. (Pants and shirt/jacket for men, Pants and blouse/jacket for women) Participants who are inappropriately dressed shall not be allowed to participate in the program on the assigned date.
- E. Duties of Host Officer: **Options (agency head should consider and select from the following):**
- i. The host officer has no duty to protect the ride-along; may drop the ride-along at a safe location prior to responding to a hot call; or may elect to practice discretionary decisions in between.
 - ii. Host officers shall conduct their activities in a manner consistent with the efficiency of the police department as if the rider was not present.
 - iii. Officers have a primary obligation to the welfare and safety of the ride along participant. Officers shall not respond to emergency calls until initial responding officers have determined the scene to be safe.
 - iv. Host officers, in their discretion, may drop a participant off in an area of safety while responding to a dangerous police event in order to avoid exposing the participant to danger.
 - v. Distinguish civilian from news media, allowing the media to assume the risk of more dangerous activities.
 - vi. Give the host officer complete discretion to determine the level of dangerousness to the ride-along participant.
 - vii. Host officers may allow the participant to leave the police vehicle in order to better observe the police activity; however, where a participant has been allowed to leave the police vehicle, host officers shall maintain close supervision of the participant and not allow the participant to involve him or herself in the police activity.
 - viii. Host officers must never allow a participant to enter the home of any person unless the officer has first obtained the consent of the homeowner/occupant. In obtaining consent, the officer must specifically notify the homeowner/occupant that the participant is a "ride-along participant" and there is "no legal obligation" to allow the participant inside the dwelling.