

Ride-Along Policy

405.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for persons to experience the law enforcement function first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process and hours of operation for the Ride-Along Program.

405.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Oakdale Police Department Ride-Along Program is offered to residents, students and those employed within the City. Every reasonable attempt will be made to accommodate interested persons. Any applicant may be disqualified with or without cause from participating in the program.

The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant and are not limited to:

- Being under 18 years of age.
- Prior criminal history.
- Pending criminal action.
- Pending lawsuit against the Department.
- Denial by any supervisor.

405.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The Ride-Along Program is available on most days of the week. Typically, ride-along times are from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Captain or Shift Sergeant.

405.1.3 SPECIAL PARTICIPANTS-AGE LIMIT EXCEPTIONS

Programs sponsored by national organizations which provide personal liability and medical insurance coverage for its members may be exempt from the minimum age requirement.

The Department may grant permission for youths involved in department-sponsored law enforcement programs or special community events to participate in ride-along activities. For any program that allows a ride-along participant under the age of eighteen (18), the written permission of a parent or legal guardian shall be obtained on the required Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement.

405.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be scheduled by the Sergeant. The participant will complete and sign a ride-along waiver form. Information requested will include a valid driver's license, address and telephone number. Only those with written permission from the Chief of Police or designee shall be allowed to participate in the Department's ride-along program.

The Sergeant will schedule a date, based on availability, at least one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy of the ride-along waiver form will be forwarded to the respective Shift Sergeant as soon as possible for his/her scheduling considerations.

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If the ride-along is denied after the request has been made, a representative of the Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

An individual that wishes to participate in the Community Ride-Along Program shall:

- (a) Complete a Community Ride-Along Program Application five (5) days prior to the desired date requested for the ride-along.
- (b) Complete a Confidentiality Agreement and a Community Ride-Along Program Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability prior to the desired date requested for the ride-along.
- (c) Complete all documents in their entirety. Any application materials that are not filled out in their entirety will not be considered.

A completed application will be forwarded to the Patrol Captain for processing and review to determine eligibility. Individuals will be notified that they are or are not eligible to participate, as well as provided the reason(s) for ineligibility. All documents related to the request, including application materials, shall be maintained in an administrative file pursuant to the city records retention schedule and applicable state law.

405.2.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception would apply to the following: cadets, Explorers, RSVP, chaplains, Reserves, police applicants and all others with approval of the Shift Sergeant.

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along will be allowed in the officer's vehicle at a given time.

The Chief of Police may authorize non-sworn department members to participate in the ride-along program on a regular basis, or more often than this policy normally allows, as deemed necessary to obtain job-related expertise. City employees permitted to participate in the ride-along program may participate without signing the Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement.

405.2.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride-along is required to be suitably dressed in business professional attire. Sandals, tank tops, and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the police vehicle. The Shift Sergeant may refuse a ride-along to anyone not properly dressed.

405.2.3 PEACE OFFICER RIDE-ALONGS

Off-duty members of this department or any other law enforcement agency will not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty officers without the express consent of the Shift Sergeant. In the event that such a ride-along is permitted, the off-duty employee shall not be considered on-duty and shall not represent him/herself as a peace officer or participate in any law enforcement activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

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405.2.4 RIDE-ALONG CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK

All ride-along applicants are subject to a criminal history check. The criminal history check may include a local records check and a Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Criminal History System check prior to approval (provided that the ride-along is not an employee of the Oakdale Police Department). Candidates will be subject to and comply with a complete background check and shall not have been convicted of a felony; a serious criminal or traffic offense, or order for protection/restraining order within the past year; or be involved as a defendant in a pending criminal case.

405.3 OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The officer shall advise the dispatcher that a ride-along is present in the vehicle before going into service. Officers shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times.

Officers should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, and if feasible, let the participant out of the vehicle in a well-lighted place of safety. The dispatcher will be advised of the situation and as soon as practicable have another police unit respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

Conduct by a person participating in a ride-along that results in termination of the ride or is otherwise inappropriate should be immediately reported to the Shift Sergeant. The officer assigned a ride-along will obtain an event number and log the participant in and out.

The Sergeant is responsible for maintaining and scheduling ride-alongs. Upon completion of the ride-along, a copy of the ride-along waiver form shall be returned to the Sergeant with any comments that may be offered by the officer.

405.4 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG

The assigned employee shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her in the conditions that necessarily limit participation. These instructions should include:

- (a) The ride-along will follow the directions of the officer.
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects or handling any police equipment.
- (c) The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time and the officer may return the observer to his/her home or to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of the officer's duties. Reasons may include, but are not limited to the ride-along participant's conduct, public safety, violation of the rules of conduct, or department response needs. If necessary, officers shall notify their shift supervisor that the ride-along has been terminated. The shift supervisor shall indicate the termination, as well as the reasons for termination, on the application form.
- (d) The officer may terminate the ride-along and return the observer to their home or to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of any officer's duties.
- (e) Ride-alongs may be allowed to continue riding during the transportation and booking process provided this does not jeopardize their safety.

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- (f) Officers will not allow any ride-alongs to be present in any residence or situation that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other person. Individuals will not be allowed to ride-along with officers performing search warrants and other specialized policing tactics raids or with plain-clothes units without specific advanced coordination and the approval of the Chief of Police or designee.
- (g) Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride-along be permitted to enter a private residence or on medical emergency responses with an officer without the expressed consent of the resident or other authorized person.