

**TEXARKANA, TEXAS POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL**

<i>Effective Date</i> October 25, 2010		<i>Amended Date</i> December 1, 2015		<i>Directive</i> 7.37.1	
<i>Subject</i> Citizen Ride-along Program					
<i>Reference</i>					
<i>Distribution</i> All Personnel City Manager City Attorney		<i>TPCA Best Practices Recognition Program Reference</i>		<i>Review Date</i> January 8, 2024	
				<i>Pages</i> 4	

This Operations Directive is for internal use only and does not enhance an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as a creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this Operations Directive, if proven, may only form the basis for a complaint by this Department, and only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

SECTION 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the duties and requirements for employees and participants regarding civilians riding in police vehicles with an on-duty Department employee for observation purposes.

SECTION 2 POLICY

In an effort to enhance the mutual respect of police officers and the community we serve, the Department grants approved citizens the opportunity to ride in police vehicles with an on-duty Department employee for observation purposes. This program will provide participants with a greater understanding of law enforcement in our city. At the same time, lines of open communication will be established through interaction between our officers and members of the community. Participation in this program is a privilege, and the Department reserves the right to deny a ride-along request from a citizen when necessary.

SECTION 3 PROCEDURES

A. Approved ride-along program participants:

1. Community members who are interested in broadening their knowledge of the police function within the city. This would include members of civic organizations, college students who are interested in the law enforcement field, and any other person authorized by a Division Commander or Chief of Police.
2. Media representatives who wish to conduct a ride along for purposes of developing a news story or other documentary. This category includes the print and electronic media. Media representatives must complete all documents required of any other participant. In addition, members of the media must have express written authorization from the office of the Chief of Police before recording any portion of the ride-along, by any means (audio, video, film, and photo).
3. Texarkana Texas Police Department Explorers.

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4. Members of the City Administration and City Council Members.
5. Police Department Chaplains.
6. A member of law enforcement from other departments.
7. Military personnel.
8. Persons recommended by a member of the Department.
9. No one under the age of 18 will be permitted to ride without signed parental consent.
10. All participants must be approved by the Division Commander or Chief of Police to participate and must have signed and delivered to the Texarkana Texas Police Department its Release and Indemnity Agreement.

B. Application Process:

1. Applications to participate in a ride-along shall be available at the Texarkana Texas Police Department. Applicants who receive a ride-along application shall be informed that the application must be returned to the Department once it is completed before authorization will be granted.
2. Applicants must provide a State issued photo-identification for verification when they return their completed application.
3. Application review will include a consensual 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.
4. Once approved, the applicant shall be notified and assigned a date for the ride-along.
5. Participants shall only be allowed to participate in this program once every 6 months unless given written authorization from the Division Commander or Chief of Police.

C. Ride-Along Coordinator

The Crime Prevention Coordinator will be the Ride-Along Coordinator. He shall:

1. Coordinate the Ride-Along Program and all requests referred to the Department;
2. Deny requests to participate in the Ride-Along Program if the applicant does not meet criteria set forth in this order or does not exhibit behavior that is in the best interest of the Department.
3. Notify applicant and Division Commander of any denial and the purpose of the denial.
4. Advise approved applicants that they may only participate in the Ride-Along Program no more than two (2) times per calendar year unless given written authorization from a Division Commander or Chief of Police.
5. Maintain a record of all requests to participate in the Ride-along Program, which shall include the:

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- a. Applicant's name
 - b. Date the request is approved or disapproved
 - c. Date the participant completed the Ride-along
6. Notify the applicant of the date, time, and location that has been approved for the ride-along.
- D. Reporting for Ride-along:
1. The ride-along program shall be scheduled between the hours of 0800-2300 hours, unless otherwise approved by the Division Commander.
 2. Participants should report to the police headquarters 15 minutes prior to their scheduled participation.
 3. The host officer shall meet with the ride-along participant. If not already completed, the ride along participant and the host officer shall review and sign the Texarkana Texas Police Department Waiver of Liability form. The host officer must notarize the form. Any participant who decides not to sign the liability waiver form shall not be allowed to participate in the program.
 4. The host officer shall review the rules of the ride-along program with the participant and provide them with a copy of the rules. In this review, the participant should be reminded that they may be called as a witness in court, if they observe a police event, which becomes subject to court action.
 5. Completed forms will be turned into the Operations Division Secretary.
- E. Duties of the Participant:
1. Participants shall play no active role in the police function. They must only act as an observer unless otherwise directed by their host-officer.
 2. Participants shall not be allowed to operate any police equipment unless directed to do so by a police officer in an extreme emergency.
 3. Participants must remain in the police vehicle at all times until directed otherwise by the host officer.
 4. 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.
 5. Participants shall not bring cameras or any recording devices without the express written permission of the Office of the Chief of Police.
 6. Participants shall not enter any person's home while participating in the ride-along unless the host officer has asked and been granted express permission from the homeowner/occupant to allow the ride-along participant entry.
 7. Participants shall follow the instructions of the host-officer at all times during the ride-along.

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8. 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. Law enforcement officers from other agencies must carry their weapon out of sight.
9. 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, as determined by the host officer or on-duty supervisor, shall not be allowed to participate in the program on the assigned date.

F. Duties of Host Officer:

1. Officers have a primary obligation to the welfare and safety of the ride along participant.
2. 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.
3. Host officers must never allow a participant to enter the home of any person unless the officer has first obtained the express 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.
4. Officers should notify Dispatch that they will have a ride-along in their vehicle.

G. Other Provisions

1. Participants will normally ride for a four (4) hour period, unless circumstances justify otherwise. Additional time may be approved by the on-duty supervisor on the shift to which the rider has been assigned. Police Chaplains will not be restricted to the four (4) hour period.
2. No off-duty employee of the Department shall ride with an on-duty officer in the performance and scope of the on-duty officer's official duties without the authorization of the Division Commander or his designee for each officer.
3. The host officer or any supervisor may revoke a participant's authorization to ride if it becomes apparent that the participant's conduct is not in the best interest of the Department.

H. RESPONSIBILITY

1. All members of the Department shall know and comply with all aspects of this directive.
2. All Division Commanders and supervisory personnel are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions and intent of this directive.