

TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



TITLE: RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM		NUMBER: 501
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 23, 2012		REVIEW DATE: April 23, 2022
New X Amends Rescinds		Dated April 03, 2002
AUTHORITY: Chief Ronald A. Ricucci		TOTAL PAGES: 4

01 Purpose: To establish procedures pertaining to the Ride-Along Program.

02 Policy: This program is a valuable asset to the outreach efforts of the Department and citizen participation is encouraged.

03 Eligibility:

A. Any person 16 years or older may participate in the ride-along program. Parental permission is required for those seventeen years of age or younger.

04 Limits of Participation:

A. Participation in this program is restricted to no more than once every six months, unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Police or designee. Police employees and volunteers are exempt from frequency limitations.

B. Only one Ride-Along participant is allowed during any one shift, unless an exception is granted by the Chief or Patrol Operations Commander.

C. Individuals with a criminal history may be disapproved for Ride-Along participation.

05 Procedures:

A. Ride-Along operations may be conducted any day, year-round, except during staff shortages. Ride-Along applications will be available in Administrative Services and Communications. Those interested in a Ride-Along will apply in person, preferably two weeks in advance, complete an application in duplicate and show either a driver’s permit, MVA I.D. card, passport or official photo identification. Normally the Administrative Services employee who accepts an application is responsible for confirming the applicant’s identification, as well as requesting a computer check through Communications. When Administrative Services is closed, Communications personnel will assume this task.

B. The following forms are to be completed and signed where indicated prior to any Ride-Along taking place: 1) Ride-Along Application with Waiver and Pre-Check Authorization for Minors (TPPD Form 500-001) and 2) Police Ride-Along Guidelines (TPPD Form 500-002) Note: Applicants under 18 years of age must have a parent or guardian, in person, sign forms where required and show valid identification. The application, waiver and records check will not be required for elected or appointed City officials participating in the program.

C. Administrative Services will review the entire application and forward it to the Patrol Operations Commander for approval/disapproval. In the Commander's absence, the Chief of Police will approve applications.

D. Approved applications will be forwarded to the appropriate Shift Supervisor, who will contact the applicant within five days to schedule the ride-along. The Host Officer will be notified by the Shift Supervisor prior to the scheduled ride-along in order to prepare for the assignment.

E. Disapproved applications will be retained by the Patrol Operations Commander or designee, who will contact the applicant and advise him/her accordingly.

F. Immediately prior to the scheduled ride-along, the Host Officer will:

1. review the application to ensure it has been properly signed;
2. provide the applicant with a visitor's I.D. card to be worn on the outermost garment;
3. conduct a brief orientation for the guest, to include (a) a complete review of the Police Ride-Along Guidelines, (b) proper use of the police radio in the event the guest must use it in an emergency, and (c) an offer to tour the station, if desired.

G. Throughout the ride-along, the officer will solicit questions from the guest. Upon conclusion of the ride, a short debriefing session will be held by the host officer to ensure that all of a guest's questions have been answered.

H. Following the ride-along, the original application and any written guest comments will be forwarded to the Patrol Operations Commander for review and 1-year retention.

06 Authorities and Responsibilities:

A. The Patrol Operations Commander has primary responsibility for the Ride-Along Program and ensuring compliance with the procedures noted herein. The Patrol Operations Commander has the authority to alter ride-along hours, or to temporarily suspend the program during staff shortages. (Note: Exceptions to program suspensions for the media and/or visiting law enforcement personnel may be granted by the Chief or Patrol Operations Commander.)

B. The Host Officer may terminate any ride-along for improper conduct by a participant, after approval from the Shift Supervisor.

07 Restrictions:

A. Ride-Along participants will not be permitted on the scene of any raid or search warrant service, or inside the outer perimeter of a major incident.

B. Due to safety and privacy issues, the participant will not enter residences or businesses for the following types of calls: domestics, family trouble, D.O.A.s, alarms, burglary in progress, robberies, and armed subjects or any call the officer feels may present a dangerous situation for the ride-along participant.

C. The officer will obtain permission from the victim or property owners before allowing the ride-along to enter a residence or business once it is safe to do so.

D. No civilians, including a ride-along, are allowed in the prisoner processing area while a subject is being processed. At the Host Officer's discretion, he/she may transport a prisoner to the station with the ride-along, or may request an additional officer to transport either the subject or ride-along. A ride-along will not accompany the Host Officer and prisoner to an alternate processing. The ride-along will be concluded if another officer is required and not available.

E. Items **not** to be carried by participants are: nightsticks, flashlights longer than six inches in length, any type of knife, chemical spray, firearms, sound recording device or cameras, except for the following:

1. Maryland sworn officers and federal officers are the only participants permitted to carry their authorized handguns.

2. Credentialed members of the media are permitted to carry still or video cameras, with the proviso and understanding that they are not permitted to use them on any private property, either a residence or business

F. At no time shall an officer, while accompanied by a ride-along, engage in pursuit driving.

G. Ride-Along are not permitted in unmarked Police vehicles, nor are they allowed to ride with K-9 officers. Officers shall not use MDT's in full view of ride-along.

H. Wives, husbands, children or significant partners of officers will not be allowed to ride with their spouse/significant other. They will not be allowed to participate as a ride-long when their spouse/significant other are working the same shift.

I. No smoking is allowed in Police vehicles at any time.

J. A ride-along will not proceed unless both participants, the Host Officer and guest, have their seat belts buckled. (CALEA 41.3.3)