

ASHEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines to govern the department's ride-along program.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Asheville Police Department (APD) to acquaint the community with its police officers. This program is meant to help the community understand the broad range of police duties and the vital role officers perform.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

1901.1 PARTICIPATION

- A. Each Division Commander will be responsible for administering the ride-along program for their Division, including:
 - 1. Conducting background checks of participants.
 - 2. Determining the time, frequency, and duration of each ride-along.
 - 3. Maintaining a record of all requests with information on the frequency of participation, rejections (with reasons), and background information.
- B. The following persons may participate in the ride-along program:

1. Off-duty members of other federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies.
 2. Members of organized community groups.
 3. Members of the academic community for purposes of conducting research or observing police operations.
 4. City officials, including City Council members or senior City staff members.
 5. Anyone else determined by the Watch Commander, Division Commander, or above when deemed to be in the interests of the Department.
- C. Ride-along requests from city officials will be arranged through the Office of the Chief of Police.
- D. Only persons eighteen (18) years and older will be permitted to participate in a ride-along.
- E. A general release form must be completed and signed by the ride-along participant before being allowed to ride. Failure to sign the form will disqualify the applicant from the ride-along program. A new release form will be signed and dated each time a participant rides.
- F. The Patrol Operations Division Commander or designee must approve ride-alongs before the ride-along commences. Off-duty police employees may not ride along unless approved by the Patrol Operations Division Commander or above.
- G. Ride-alongs with any non-patrol (specialized) unit must be approved by a Bureau Commander or the Chief of Police.

1901.2 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

- A. When assigned a rider, an officer will immediately inform the supervisor in charge of any unusual assignment that could present a hazard beyond average risk.
- B. The officer may not disclose privileged, confidential, or sensitive information. Officers will not discuss personnel issues.
- C. Officers will not allow participants to access the scenes of:
1. Death investigations, including homicides or suicides.
 2. Rapes or sexual offenses.
 3. Serious crimes in progress, such as armed robbery.

- D. During a ride, if the officer or citizen decides that danger is present to the citizen, the officer will discontinue the ride. The officer may also discontinue a ride if continuing would threaten the safety of the officer or citizen or substantially interfere with the discharge of duties.
- E. Officers will not leave the City limits of Asheville City with a ride-along participant without a supervisor's approval.
- F. Ride-along participants are observers. Officers will not permit participants to indicate to anyone, by any means, that the participant is a police officer. Participants will not engage in any police action unless an emergency occurs where the officer would require citizen assistance.

1901.3 RESTRICTIONS

- A. Riders will be able to observe routine law enforcement activities. They will not enforce laws or assist in enforcing laws.
- B. Unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Police or designee, participation in the program is limited to once every twelve (12) months, regardless of which unit the participant rides with.
- C. Participants may not ride more than five (5) hours during any shift or past midnight without prior approval from a Division Commander or above.
- D. Only one rider will be allowed in each vehicle. District supervisors will ensure that proper scheduling is accomplished in advance. No more than one rider per district will be allowed at any time.
- E. Applicants are not permitted to carry any type of weapon, even those they are lawfully permitted to carry concealed or otherwise.

1901.4 SAFETY

- A. The Watch Commander or a supervisor in charge may cancel the ride-along if necessary due to safety or operational concerns.
- B. The officer must continuously evaluate the safety of the rider. The officer has the authority to discontinue the ride-along. An escorting officer should not expose a rider to avoidable hazardous situations.
- C. If a ride-along participant requests to discontinue the ride because of the nature of a call, the officer will return the citizen to the respective district as soon as possible and practical.

BY ORDER OF:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Zack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Zack
Chief of Police