



POLICY TITLE: *Citizen Ride-Along Program*

STANDARD/REF #:

APPROVED BY: *David Dostal, Chief*

REVIEWED DATE: 2/1/2016

**REQUIRED
REVIEWERS:** *Captain of Patrol*

REVISED DATE: 3/14/2024

POLICY/PURPOSE:

The Cedar Rapids Police Department will provide a ride-along program to authorized members of the community in an effort to promote a better understanding of law enforcement experiences and the work performed by officers.

The purpose of the ride-along program is to provide participants (riders) with the opportunity to observe and interact with officers during the performance of their duties. Officers should use the ride-along to learn how the citizens view our department. Citizens, while participating in this program, should increase their awareness of the public safety needs, problems, and operations. With this knowledge and understanding, the public will realize the necessity of professional police service in our community.

PROCEDURE:

The administration of the Ride-Along Program is the responsibility of the Patrol Captain or designee under the direction of the Chief of Police. Eligible persons will be scheduled to ride by a lieutenant or above. Scheduling refers to dates and times only.

Riders will be at least 18 years old. Anyone less than 18 years old must be specifically authorized by the division commander or designee, with written permission by the minor's parent signing the Ride-Along Application and Waiver of Liability prior to participation in the program in person.

Screening Applicants

- Application to participate in the Ride-Along Program must be made in advance.
- All applications for ride along will be forwarded to the Patrol Captain or designee for approval or rejection.
- A Criminal History check will be completed at a minimum.
- The Patrol supervisor getting the notice of a ride-along will make the assignment.
- Citizen riders' photo I.D. will be attached to the Ride-Along Application/Waiver of Liability Form (CRPD #251) indicating approval.
- Completed forms will be returned to the Patrol Captain and filed for documentation purposes.

Any commander shall have the authority to cancel the ride-along based upon staffing or other relevant considerations.

The below criteria will be considered when evaluating participant applications:

- The rider should have a sincere interest in law enforcement, or be taking classes in a related law enforcement field. Spouses of employees of the Cedar Rapids Police Department may ride just like interested community members.
- The ride-along is to be an educational experience for the rider.



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- A full-time police officer or deputy from another agency as well as members of other criminal justice agencies may ride in a Cedar Rapids police vehicle and are exempt from these restrictions while performing "official business," if approved by a lieutenant or above.

PARTICIPANT RULES AND REGULATIONS:

For permission to be granted to the participant, that participant must complete the following:

- Sign Ride-Along Application/Waiver of Liability Form (CRPD #251).
- After the ride, the Patrol Captain will keep these forms on file.
- The rider must carry identification.

The participant must comply with the following rules set forth by the Cedar Rapids Police Department.

- The rider shall not interfere with the officer in the performance of their duties in any way.
- The rider shall remain in the squad car unless otherwise directed by the officer.
- No police equipment will be used or touched without the express direction of the officer.
- Cameras and tape recorders will not be authorized unless approved by the Chief of Police or designee.
- Police personnel will take care not to reveal confidential information to civilian riders.
 - The Watch Commander may determine that the rider will not attend roll call.
- All questions and comments, et cetera, should be asked or stated after an incident, not during the incident.
- At no time should a rider participate in enforcing laws unless requested to do so by the officer.
- Riders shall carry no personal weapons, with the exception of duly authorized law enforcement personnel.
 - In such cases, prior approval must be obtained from the Chief of Police or designee.
- Riders are required to follow any and all instructions given by the Watch Commander and or supervising officer.

Limitations to a ride-along:

- Riders are not permitted to ride during a vehicle pursuit.
 - The officer will drop the ride-along in a safe location before joining the pursuit, or the officer will not get involved in the pursuit.
- Riders are not permitted to respond to a high-risk call such as a gun call.
 - The officer will drop the rider in a safe location before responding to the high-risk call, or the officer will not respond to the gun call and notify headquarters of the situation.



CEDAR RAPIDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

APPLIES TO:

Department

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A rider shall be allowed to ride one time unless other arrangements are made and authorized by the Chief of Police or a captain.

During the course of the ride, if the officer or rider decides that a danger is present to the rider, the officer shall discontinue the ride-along. The officer may discontinue the ride if continuing it would threaten the safety of either the rider or the officer or substantially interfere with the discharge of the officer's duties. When termination becomes necessary, the Officer shall notify dispatch and the commander-in-charge and attempt to provide immediate transportation for the rider back to the station.