
CHAMPAIGN POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICY and PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 45.4

SUBJECT: RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/09

REVISED DATE:

REFERENCE ILEAP:

REFERENCE CALEA:

INDEX AS:

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PURPOSE:

The Champaign Police Department has a long-standing commitment to the development and improvement of positive police-community relations. A positive relationship between this Department and the citizens of our service community is necessary to promote a climate of understanding and support for the delivery of law enforcement services.

It shall be the policy of the Champaign Police Department to encourage citizens to participate in the Ride-Along Program. The Ride-Along Program affords citizens an opportunity to ride with an officer in the Patrol Section of the Operations Division while the officer is engaged in routine patrol activities. This program is not intended for citizens to engage in actual police activities.

POLICY:

45.4.1 PROGRAM COORDINATION

- A. The Operations Division Chief, or his designee, shall coordinate the Ride-Along Program. Requests for participation in the Ride-Along Program shall be directed to a shift supervisor.
- B. The Champaign Police Department prefers to have ride-alongs scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. Shift supervisors shall have the discretion to reduce this time frame as they see fit.
- C. Participants must have valid photo identification with them when they report for their scheduled ride-along.
- D. A criminal history check shall be conducted on all persons requesting participation in the Ride-Along Program. Individuals who have been arrested for any felony shall be denied participation. Individuals with a record of arrest for non-traffic misdemeanors or ordinance violation offenses may be denied participation at the discretion of the Deputy Chief of Operations.
- E. The executed Release and Waiver of Liability Forms shall be maintained in the Chief of Police's administrative files.

45.4.2 PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

- A. Each participant in the Ride-Along Program must complete a [Ride Along Waiver](#) prior to a ride-along and view the Ride-Along DVD. The Release and Waiver of Liability Form shall be of a design and content approved by the City Attorney.
- B. The minimum age for participants in the Ride-Along Program shall be sixteen years. Persons under eighteen years of age shall have a parent or legal guardian jointly execute the Release and Waiver of Liability Form. ([Ride Along Release - Juvenile](#)).
- C. Participants in the Ride-Along Program are expected to be neat and clean in appearance. Sweat clothes, shorts, etc. are not appropriate attire and shall not be permitted.
- D. All participants authorized for the Champaign Police Department's Ride-Along Program shall wear identification. Participants shall be issued ID cards marked "Ride-Along" that must be worn on their outermost garment during the duration of the ride-along, including when accompanying an officer outside the squad. Champaign Police Department personnel may wear their department-issued photo ID in lieu of the "Ride-Along" ID.
- E. The rider shall be instructed to follow the directions of the officer during the ride-along. Officers will inform their ride-alongs of the behavior expected prior to the ride-along. Ride-alongs will be advised that they may be listed as a witness in police reports relating to incidents that they have directly observed.
- F. Officers will also advise participants that failure to comply with reasonable directions or injecting themselves into a situation improperly will result in termination of the ride-along.
- G. Ride-alongs are not authorized to operate any Champaign Police Department equipment, unless an officer's safety is at risk or they are so directed by a Champaign Police Officer.
- H. No tape recordings, cameras, or similar devices are allowed without prior written approval from the Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief of Operations.
- I. An officer's involvement with the Ride-Along Program is voluntary, but an officer who has taken friends as riders can reasonably be regarded as volunteering to take others.
- J. An officer may request to decline participation in the Ride-Along Program for reasonable cause. Reasonable causes include those situations which

may result in embarrassment to the participant, the officer, or the Department. Final decisions on all assignments are the responsibility of the commanding officer.

45.4.3 PARTICIPANT CATEGORIES

A. Civilians.

1. No civilian may ride-along more than two times per year.
2. Champaign Police Department interns are authorized to ride-along as many times as the Internship Program Coordinator deems necessary to complete their internship programs.
3. Champaign Police Department civilian personnel are authorized to ride-along as many times as may be required to complete departmental business. If riding for reasons other than departmental business, civilian police personnel are limited to two times per year.
4. City officials, other City employees, and civilians from other criminal justice agencies are allowed to ride-along as many times as deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police or his designee.
5. Media representatives are allowed to ride-along as many times as deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police or his designee.
6. Civilian ride-along guests, including media representatives, are advised that they do not have authority to enter a private residence without the knowing consent of a person with legitimate expectations of privacy at that residence. (See case *Wilson v. Layne*, 119 S.Ct. 1962 [1999])

B. Sworn Police Personnel.

1. Sworn police officers are authorized to ride-along as many times as necessary to complete police-related business.
2. Sworn police officers riding-along for other than police-related business are limited to twice per year.

C. Exceptions

1. The Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief of Operations may make exceptions to the above restrictions for the purpose of accommodating special situations or requests.

45.4.4 SUPERVISION

- A. Supervisors shall determine to which officer the Ride-Along Program participant is assigned.
- B. A ride-along may be terminated at any time for persons who act in an unsafe, disorderly, irrational, or

dangerous manner, fail to obey instructions, distract an officer from his/her duties, or at the discretion of the shift supervisor.

- C. The officer who is assigned a rider shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the rider is not placed in harm's way.
- D. The rider may be dropped off at a safe location when an officer is responding to a highly dangerous situation. The officer should use his best judgment in determining whether it is safer to drop a rider off at a particular location or otherwise keep the rider with the officer and in the vehicle during the call.
- E. The officer should never be involved in any pursuits when carrying a Ride-Along Program participant.
- F. In the event a situation occurs which may result in future litigation involving a rider, i.e. emotional distress, physical altercation, etc., the officer assigned the rider shall prepare a written report documenting the incident in detail.

ISSUING AUTHORITY



Anthony D. Cobb
Chief of Police
Champaign Police Department