



ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

151 Douglas Avenue Elgin, Illinois 60120



Effective Date:
10/08/01

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Revised Date:
02/01/24

Chief of Police:

Observer Programs, 45.3

Cross Reference:

Policy Sections:

- 45.3.1 Management of the Observer Ride-along Program
- 45.3.2 Requesting an Observer Ride-along
- 45.3.3 Approved Observer Ride-alongs
- 45.3.4 Denied Observer Ride-alongs
- 45.3.5 Patrol Division Responsibilities
- 45.3.6 Observations of the Emergency Communications Division
- 45.3.7 Expectations of Citizens
- Appendix A: Adult Observer Ride-Along form
- Appendix B: Juvenile Observer Ride-Along form
- Appendix C: Emergency Communications Observer form

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for civilian observer ride-alongs in police vehicles and scheduled observations of the Emergency Communications Division.

POLICY STATEMENT

It shall be the policy of the department to provide citizens an opportunity to ride with officers in police vehicles and observe the Emergency Communications Division. These programs foster positive relationships with the community and provide citizens with the ability to learn more about the department. Participation in these programs is not limited to Elgin residents.

DEFINITION

Observer Ride-along Form: Department authorized form for citizens to request an observer ride-along with sworn police officers in a police vehicle.

Emergency Communications Observer Form: Department authorized form for citizens to request an observation of the Emergency Communications Division.

PROCEDURES

45.3.1 MANAGEMENT OF THE OBSERVER RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

- A. The observer ride-along program is coordinated by the Community Relations/Crime Prevention Unit, hereinafter referred to as CR/CP.
- B. The following individuals are exempt from this policy; however, all observer ride-along guidelines must be adhered to. The observer ride-along is coordinated through employees and/or their respective supervisors.
 - 1. Accreditation Assessors.
 - 2. Community Advisory Board Members.
 - 3. Department Chaplains.
 - 4. Department Interns.
 - 5. Elected officials or dignitaries of the City of Elgin.

6. Explorer Post #1445 members.
7. Immediate family members of department employees.
8. Law enforcement officers from other agencies during the course of official business.
9. Professional Support Staff of the department.
10. Youth Empowerment Program Members.

45.3.2 REQUESTING AN OBSERVER RIDE-ALONG

- A. To request an observer ride-along, applicants shall complete the appropriate form:
 1. Citizens 18 years of age and older:
Adult Observer Ride-Along Form; refer to Appendix A
 2. Citizens 16 and 17 years of age:
Juvenile Observer Ride-Along Form, contains a parental consent; refer to Appendix B
- B. Observer ride-along forms include a waiver and release of liability as approved by the City of Elgin Legal Department.
- C. Citizens are permitted to participate for a maximum of four hours, once a year, during the hours of 0630-2245. Exceptions may be granted with approval of the supervisor assigned to CR/CP.
- D. Upon receipt of an observer ride-along form, CR/CP shall:
 1. Review the content of the applicant's global subject jacket if one exists within the department's records management system.
 2. Contact the Emergency Communications Division for a warrant and criminal history check, hereinafter referred to as the background check. Employees shall follow all applicable standard operating procedures and laws during the performance of background checks.

45.3.3 APPROVED OBSERVER RIDE-ALONGS

- A. Citizens who pass the background check are approved for the observer ride-along and CR/CP will sign the approval section and notify the appropriate shift Lieutenant. The form will remain in the patrol shift book until the day of the observer ride-along where the employee assigned to the police information desk will complete the remainder of the form.
- B. Citizens will be assigned to the dates/times specified on the form and will be notified by CR/CP at least three days prior to the scheduled observer ride-along.
 1. CR/CP will take precautions to ensure the scheduling of observer ride-alongs does not overburden any specific shift.
 2. Observer ride-alongs scheduled for exempted persons should not impact the scheduling of citizens who request an observer ride-along.
- C. CR/CP will ensure citizens are aware of the established expectations for the observer ridealong; refer to Section 45.3.7 to view these expectations.

45.3.4 DENIED OBSERVER RIDE-ALONGS

- A. Based on the outcome of the background check, citizens may be denied for the reasons listed

below. Prior to notification to the citizen, denials shall be reviewed and approved by the CR/CP supervisor. CR/CP is responsible for documenting the denial on the form and informing the citizen of the denial, along with an explanation.

1. Applicants who have been arrested, convicted, or adjudicated of any crime will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 2. The citizen has warrants.
 3. The citizen is involved, at any level, in a current criminal investigation.
 4. The citizen is under the age of 16.
 5. When an employee has knowledge of information that could exclude a citizen from an observer ride-along and the individual's participation would not be in the best interests of the department, the employee shall notify CR/CP to verify the information. The CR/CP supervisor is responsible for making the final decision in allowing the citizen to participate in an observer ride-along.
- B. The Chief of Police or designee may make exceptions to the above restrictions.
- C. A shift supervisor may refuse to honor the approved observer ride-along form or terminate such. The supervisor shall document the reasons on the form and email the circumstances to the CR/CP supervisor. The criteria for canceling an observer ride-along are below, but may not be limited to:
1. Violations of rules/expectations.
 2. Exhibits obvious erratic behavior.
 3. Does not exercise proper personal hygiene.
 4. Dressed inappropriately. No clothing shall be allowed that is distasteful or contains any discriminatory or distasteful logos or printing.
 5. Shift activity. Whenever possible, supervisors who know the observer ride-along will be canceled shall ensure notification to the citizen prior to the scheduled time. Citizens shall be instructed to contact CR/CP to select another day and time.
- D. The shift supervisor will be responsible for documenting the reasons for the denial on the form.
- E. Citizens who have been denied due to an arrest, conviction or adjudicated of any crime may submit another request one year after their original request.

45.3.5 PATROL DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Upon receiving notification from a citizen of a scheduled observer ride-along, the employee shall confirm the citizen has an authorized form by checking the respective patrol shift book. For notifications pertaining to observations of the Emergency Communications Division, refer to Section 45.3.6.
- B. The employee assigned to the police department's information desk will confirm the citizen's identity through photo identification and will document such on the observer ride-along form.
- C. The shift supervisor shall be notified that a citizen has arrived and will review the approved form.
- D. The shift supervisor will make arrangements for an officer to conduct the observer ride-along. The supervisor or assigned officer shall document the name of the assigned officer on the form.

- E. If possible, requests for a specific officer should be honored.
- F. As mentioned in Section 45.3.4, shift supervisors may refuse to honor the observer ride-long form or terminate the observer ride-along; refer to that section for more information.
- G. Officers shall represent the police department in a professional manner at all times and shall:
 - 1. Provide an overview of the police vehicle.
 - 2. Ensure citizens are always secured with a seat belt.
 - 3. Explain the possibility of being subpoenaed to court proceedings to provide testimony to incidents they witness.
 - 4. Explain the possibility of hazardous situations and the importance of responding to the officer's instructions which are necessary for the safety of all involved parties.
 - 5. Ensure the citizen understands expectations that are outlined at the end of this policy.
- H. Officers should include the citizen in police reports when they are witnesses, as appropriate.
- I. Officers shall use their discretion when allowing the citizen to follow them outside of the police vehicle; the citizen's safety is a priority. Incidents that may incur a risk include calls that involve violence, an arrest, a traffic stop, or an alarm activation.
- J. Under no circumstances will a citizen be permitted to leave the police vehicle to enter a crime scene. In the event the officer is at the crime scene for an extended period of time, the officer will make other arrangements for the observer.
- K. At the completion of the observer ride-along, the officer shall submit the completed form to CR/CP and the form shall be retained for a period of three years, in accordance with the department's records retention schedule.

45.3.6 OBSERVATIONS OF THE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

- A. Citizens may request an opportunity to observe the Emergency Communications Division due to an interest in the Emergency Communications/Dispatch field, participation in the Citizens Police Academy and as a requirement for their high school/college course.
- B. The Lieutenant assigned to the Emergency Communications Division assigns a Communications Shift Supervisor to the responsibility of processing and scheduling citizen observations of the division.
- C. Citizens must be 16 years of age or older and are required to complete and sign the Emergency Communications Observer form. The signature confirms that the citizen has acknowledged the confidentiality and observer guidelines.
- D. Citizens may observe for a maximum of four hours, once a year, during the hours of 0630-2245.
- E. Upon receipt of an observer form, the assigned Communications Shift Supervisor shall:
 - 1. Review the applicant's global subject jacket, if one exists, within the police records management system.
 - 2. Conduct a warrant and criminal history check, referred to as a background check. Supervisors shall follow all applicable standard operating procedures and laws during the performance of these duties.

- F. Based on the outcome of the background check, citizens may be denied for the reasons listed below. The Communications Shift Supervisors are responsible for documenting the denial on the form and informing the citizen of the denial, along with an explanation.
1. Applicants who have been arrested, convicted, or adjudicated of any crime will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 2. The citizen has a warrant.
 3. The citizen is involved, at any level, in a current criminal investigation.
 4. The citizen is under the age of 16.
 5. When an employee has knowledge of information that could exclude a citizen from observing the Emergency Communications Division and the individual's participation would not be in the best interests of the department, the employee shall notify a Communications Shift Supervisor to verify the information. The Lieutenant assigned to the Emergency Communications Division is responsible for making the final decision as in allowing the citizen to observe the Emergency Communications Division.
- G. The observation may be terminated at any time by a Communications Shift Supervisor or senior Telecommunicator when the citizen fails to abide by the program expectations which are outlined at the end of this policy or due to high call volume or safety reasons.
- H. Citizens who have been denied due to an arrest, conviction or adjudicated of any crime may submit another request one year after their original request.
- I. The assigned Communications Shift Supervisor approving of the observation request shall:
1. Document their approval on the form, to include the date/time of the observation.
 2. Ensure notification is made to the citizen and will explain what is expected of the citizen, especially the importance of confidentiality. Refer to the end of this policy to view expectations.
 3. Attach documentation pertaining to the background check to the form.
 4. Ensure notification is made to Telecommunicators and place a copy of the approved form in the Observation Binder located in the Emergency Communications Division.
- J. When a citizen arrives for a scheduled observation of the Emergency Communications Division, the employee assigned to the police department's front desk shall contact a Communications Shift Supervisor or Telecommunicator to confirm the observation.
- K. All approved forms shall be maintained in the Emergency Communications Division for a period of three years in accordance with the department's records retention schedule.



45.3.7 EXPECTATIONS OF CITIZENS

The department has established expectations of citizens to ensure the effectiveness of these programs, privacy of those requesting public safety services and the safety of all involved parties.

- A. Cancellations need to be completed within 24 hours by contacting the department's non-emergency number at (847) 289-2700. Cancellations pertaining to an observer ride-along shall be relayed to the on-duty patrol supervisor and notification to CR/CP. A Communications Shift Supervisor shall be notified when a citizen cancels an observation of the Emergency Communications Division.

- B. The citizen shall arrive five minutes prior to the scheduled time to the police department's information desk and a copy of the completed form and photo identification card shall be provided to the employee assigned to the information desk.
- C. Citizens shall not possess or carry any firearm, baton, knife, or other dangerous weapon.
 - 1. This provision also applies when citizens hold a firearms concealed carry license.
 - 2. Exemptions to this practice may be made for certified law enforcement officers; however, approval must be granted by the respective supervisor.
- D. Dress in business casual attire. For observer ride-alongs in police vehicles, citizens should wear comfortable shoes and weather appropriate attire.
- E. The citizen should exercise proper personal hygiene.
- F. Citizens should be prepared to participate without eating when scheduled for an observer ride-along with the Patrol Division.
- G. The citizen should conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- H. The citizen shall not speak to callers, victims(s), suspect(s) or any other involved parties on calls for service. The department encourages questions to be directed to officers and Telecommunicators, when appropriate, outside the presence and/or hearing of others.
- I. The citizen should respect the confidentiality of others and may not discuss the names and addresses of citizens with others.
- J. No video recording or photography of any kind unless permission is granted by the employee. General notes of the citizen's observations are permitted.
- K. The citizen shall not have the ability to view LEADS information or other confidential law enforcement data systems.

APPENDIX A: ADULT OBSERVER RIDE-ALONG FORM

 <p>ELGIN Police Department</p>	<p>ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT Adult Observer Ride-Along Form</p>	
<p>Observer may ride once per year, for a maximum of four (4) hours, between the hours of 6:30a.m. through 10:45p.m. The City of Elgin reserves the right to deny this opportunity to any individual. Any untruthful information provided is grounds for automatic denial. The undersigned hereby agrees to keep everything seen and heard by the undersigned confidential and shall not discuss any names, addresses or specific incidents with anyone other than the officer with whom the undersigned is riding. To submit this form, save a copy of the completed form to your computer and send as an attachment to ridealong@cityofelgin.org. If you do not hear back within 2-3 business days, please call the Community Relations/Crime Prevention Unit at 847-289-2530.</p>		
Full legal name: _____		Date of birth: _____
List any alias(es) or other names used by you in the past: _____		
Full address: _____		Driver's license number: _____
Home phone: _____		Cell phone: _____
Work phone: _____		Reason for ride: _____
List all misdemeanor convictions, supervisions, guilty pleas, criminal diversions, or other admissions of guilt or stipulations to facts in a criminal context within the last five years: _____		
List all felony convictions, guilty or nolo contendere pleas, criminal diversions, stipulations to any facts in a criminal context, or other admissions of guilt within the last twenty years: _____		
List any outstanding warrants: _____		
List any and all orders of protection, restraining orders or injunctions to which you are now or have been subject: _____		
Emergency contact name: _____		Relationship: _____
Home phone of emergency contact: _____		Cell phone of emergency contact: _____
Availability (Applicants are encouraged to specify more than one day/time frame.)		
Days you are available: <input type="checkbox"/> Mon. <input type="checkbox"/> Tue. <input type="checkbox"/> Wed. <input type="checkbox"/> Thu. <input type="checkbox"/> Fri. <input type="checkbox"/> Sat. <input type="checkbox"/> Sun.		
Time frames: <input type="checkbox"/> 6:30a.m.-10:30a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:30a.m.-2:30p.m. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:30p.m.-6:30p.m. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:45p.m.-10:45p.m.		
Release and Waiver of Liability - Observers in Elgin Police Department Vehicles		
<p>For and in consideration of the undersigned being given the opportunity of observing police operations of the city of Elgin, Illinois, a municipal corporation, (hereafter referred to as "city"), by being permitted to ride in a patrol car, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the undersigned, (hereafter referred to as "rider"), hereby agrees, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Rider recognizes and understands that riding along with police officers in a police patrol vehicle is an inherently dangerous and hazardous activity, and may subject the rider to great bodily harm, including, but not limited to severe bodily injury and death. Rider hereby releases, waives, holds harmless and indemnifies city, its officials, officers, employees, agents and volunteers from and against any and all claims for damages, suits, causes of action, attorney's fees and any and all other liability of whatsoever nature, including, but not limited to any such liability which may otherwise accrue in favor of rider's heirs; dependants and/or assigns, arising out of or in connection with riders accompanying city police officers in a police vehicle. Rider hereby warrants and represents that he/she is fluent in the English language; has read and fully understands this waiver; is at least 18 years of age; and is not currently under the influence of any medication, alcohol or otherwise subject to any mental condition which may impair his/her ability to understand the nature or meaning of this waiver. The provisions of this waiver shall be severable. In the event any of the terms or provisions of this waiver are deemed to be void or otherwise unenforceable for any reason, the remainder of this waiver shall remain in full force and effect. I further understand that no hospitalization, health or accident insurance is provided with this release and waiver. Rider hereby consents to any and all criminal background checks which may be performed upon the Rider by the City of Elgin at the city's sole discretion, including but not limited to background checks which may be performed by the Illinois State Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation or Law Enforcement Agencies Data Systems (LEADS). 		
<i>Waiver signature to be completed at the police department in the presence of the officer assigned to the ride-along.</i>		
IN WITNESS WHEREOF , the undersigned has affixed his/her signature at Elgin, Illinois this:		
_____ day of _____	Month _____ Year _____	Observer's Signature _____
Copy of D/L or photo ID attached: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Identification confirmed by assigned officer: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Approved by _____	Date/time of ride _____	Assigned officer name & badge number _____
151 Douglas Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 Phone: (847) 289-2530 Fax: (847) 289-2950		
Revised 03/03/00		

APPENDIX C: EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS OBSERVER FORM



ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT
*Observations of the
 Emergency Communications Division*



Citizen may observe once per year, for a maximum of four (4) hours, between the hours of 8:00am - 12:00am. The police department reserves the right to deny this opportunity to any individual. Any untruthful information provided is grounds for automatic denial. The undersigned hereby agrees to keep everything seen and heard by the undersigned confidential and shall not discuss any names, addresses or specific incidents with anyone other than the telecommunicator. **To submit this form, save a copy of the completed form to your computer and send as an attachment to Supervisor Toni Bryant at bryant_t@cityofelgin.org.**

Full legal name: _____ Date of birth: _____

List any alias(es) or other names used by you in the past: _____

Full address: _____ Driver's license number: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Work phone: _____ Reason for observing: _____

List all misdemeanor convictions, supervisions, guilty pleas, criminal diversions, or other admissions of guilt or stipulations to facts in a criminal context within the last five years: _____

List all felony convictions, guilty or nolo contendere pleas, criminal diversions, stipulations to any facts in a criminal context, or other admissions of guilt within the last twenty years: _____

List any outstanding warrants: _____

List any and all orders of protection, restraining orders or injunctions to which you are now or have been subject: _____

Emergency contact name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home phone of emergency contact: _____ Cell phone of emergency contact: _____

Availability (Applicants are encouraged to specify more than one day/time frame.)

Days you are available: Mon. Tue. Wed. Thu. Fri. Sat. Sun.

Time frames: 8:00am-Noon Noon - 4:00pm 4:00pm - 8:00pm 8:00pm - 12:00am

For Office Use Only

Approved by _____ Date/time of observation _____