

# FORT MYERS POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 5.3

**TITLE:** Explorer Program/K.O.P.S. (Kids Our Primary Source)

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish guidelines for the Explorer and K.O.P.S. Programs.

## SCOPE

These procedures shall apply to all Fort Myers Police Department personnel.

## SECTION I: MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. The Explorer Program Mission: The Mission and intent of the Explorer Program with the Fort Myers Police Department is to educate and involve youth in police operations, to interest them in possible law enforcement careers and to build mutual understanding. The Explorer Program provides knowledge of the law enforcement function in our community and establishes an awareness of the complexities of police services.
- B. Explorer Program Goals and Objectives: The Ft Myers Police Department Explorer Program has three main themes that are provided for through goals and objectives. The three main goals are:
1. To further the Explorer's education.
  2. To encourage Explorer's participation in a rewarding and productive service activity.
  3. To enhance the Explorer's preparation for future roles as citizens, community members, leaders, and law enforcement careers.
- C. K.O.P.S. Mission, Goals and Objectives: The Mission, Goals and Objectives of the K.O.P.S. Program are to:
1. Expose middle school age children to Law Enforcement and other law-oriented career goals.

2. Assist in creating a positive, healthy relationship between the Police Department and the youth of the City of Fort Myers and Lee County.
3. Assist middle school age children with becoming mature, responsible citizens, and peer leaders.

## **SECTION II: MEMBERSHIP**

A. Eligibility Requirements: All applicants of the Fort Myers Police Department Explorer Post #55 and K.O.P.S. Program must meet certain criteria in order to become a member. Membership will be granted to those applicants who meet the criteria outlined below. In all cases no applicant shall be denied on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion or nationality.

1. Explorer Program:

- a. 14 -20 years of age (Must have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- b. Enrolled in High School or in possession of a High School Diploma or Equivalent.
- c. Have a "C" Average (2.0) or above. Report cards are to be submitted quarterly to advisors. If a member falls below a "C" average, they will be placed on Administrative Leave until grades are brought up.
- d. Must attend three consecutive meetings to meet the eligibility requirements of Explorer Post #55.
- e. Complete a Fort Myers Police Explorer Post #55 application and background check.
- f. No Felony or Misdemeanor arrests resulting in judicial action, such as a diversion program, probation and/or commitment.
- g. Applicants must not have possessed or used alcohol or any illegal substance for a period of 12 months prior to the application date.
- h. Pass a Membership Board review.
- i. Must be able to provide their own transportation to Post Events. (The Explorer is always responsible for transportation; however, the post will provide transportation when possible.)

2. K.O.P.S.:

- a. 11 years of age or entering the sixth grade. Not older than the age of 14 years. At 14 years of age, the K.O.P.S. member can qualify for the Explorer Program.
- b. Enrolled in Middle School.
- c. Must have and maintain "C" Average (2.0) or above. Report cards are to be submitted quarterly to advisors. If a member falls below a "C" average they will be placed on Administrative Leave until grades are brought up.

- d. Must attend two consecutive meetings.
- e. Complete a Fort Myers Police K.O.P.S. Program application and background check.
- j. No Felony or Misdemeanor arrests resulting in judicial action, such as a diversion program, probation and/or commitment.
- f. Applicants must not have possessed or used alcohol or any illegal substance for a period of 12 months prior to the application date.
- g. Pass a Membership Board review.
- h. Must be able to provide their own transportation to events. (The member is always responsible for transportation; however, transportation will be provided when possible.)

B. Membership Ineligibility: To preclude a conflict of interest, persons within the following categories are ineligible to participate in the program:

- 1. Currently employed as a guard, private detective, security guard or a similar occupation. The only exception shall be an Explorer who is out of school and takes a job in the above categories. This shall be determined by the Membership Board.
- 2. Members of Law Enforcement Agencies (full time) other than the Fort Myers Police Department.
- 3. It is determined that a member has engaged in any conduct, which would constitute a felony or misdemeanor in this state at the time of commission, whether or not the conduct resulted in the arrest of the member or the filing of criminal charges.

C. Application: The application must be completed in full with the following items before the membership process can begin:

- 1. Parental Agreement Form (members 11-17).
- 2. Hold Harmless Release
- 3. Media Release.
- 4. Copy of Social Security card
- 5. Copy of Drivers License/Identification Card, if one has been issued.
- 6. Copy of Birth Certificate.
- 7. Copy of current report card or grades.

D. Background Check: The membership process includes a background check that shall at a minimum include the following:

- 1. Local records check.

2. Warrants check.
3. Driver's license check and history.
4. Employment history.
5. Verification of at least three personal references.

All background investigators shall be trained in the collection of relevant information required in the background investigation.

### **SECTION III: PARTICIPATION AND DUTIES**

- A. Explorer Required Participation: Explorers are required to volunteer a minimum of 16 hours per month in the Office or at an assigned duty post. Regular meetings will count as time worked.
- B. Explorer Authorized Activities: Explorers may participate in the following training activities:
  1. Traffic/crowd control detail under the supervision of a Police Officer.
  2. Operate the police radio under the supervision of a police officer.
  3. Assist motorists with disabled vehicles under the supervision of a Police Officer.
  4. Complete routine paperwork such as Tow Slips, Lost and Found Property Reports, or other miscellaneous reports under the supervision of a police officer. The police officer supervising the Explorer shall review the documents for spelling, grammar, and accuracy.
  5. Prepare witness statements when the Explorer is a witness to a crime during his/her tour of duty.
  6. May serve as a reception officer at the police station to assist citizens and direct walk-in complaints.
  7. May train in police records under the supervision of records personnel.
  8. May train with any other division of the police department provided approval has been made through the Chief of Police. All activities must be in line with the Explorer's policy manual.
  9. An Explorer may operate a police vehicle under the supervision of a police officer. The Explorer must have completed the city's online training for operation of vehicles. The Explorer must also hold a valid drivers license and allow it to be checked on an annual basis.
- C. Explorer Unauthorized Activities: Explorers may not participate in the following activities:
  1. The National Law Enforcement Exploring Committee has established a policy that prohibits Explorers from performing Covert Acts or Acts which might undermine the role of Law Enforcement Exploring in the community.
  2. Assist in criminal interrogation.
  3. Assist in searching the inside of any building or other structure as a result of an alarm call, prowler call, or any police call outside of supervised training.
  4. Leave the police vehicle except upon specific instruction of the police officer providing the ride-along training.

5. Assist in any crime scene search with the exception of crime scene protection.
6. The Explorer will not be left in control of the arrest of any prisoner.
7. The Explorer will not be armed in any manner.
8. The Explorer will not sign any arrest affidavit, offense accident report, traffic citation or other legal documentation.
9. The Explorer will not assist in providing cover for any possible crime in progress.
10. The Explorer will not ride with any Vice, Narcotics or Organized Crime Division Unit.

D. K.O.P.S. Required Participation: K.O.P.S. members are required to attend monthly meetings.

E. K.O.P.S. Authorized Activities: K.O.P.S. may participate in the following training activities:

1. Members may be asked to provide assistance in Department functions.
2. Members can assist Youth Relations Officers at their schools to help promote a positive working relationship with the police department and be considered peer role models to other students.
3. Marching in parades, public appearances that promote youth activities, or any other activity that is requested by the Chief of Police.
4. Program Activity Reports shall be completed monthly by the lead advisor and submitted to the Youth Relations Supervisor.
5. Activity hours will be kept on the form provided, known as K.O.P.S. Program monthly Report.

#### **SECTION IV: ORGANIZATION & COMMAND STRUCTURE**

A. The Police Department is the Role Model for the Explorer Post; therefore, the Rank Structure will be similar to that of the Police Department. Each Post Position will have an assigned Rank:

1. Chief of Police
2. Deputy Chief
3. Captain Operations Bureau
4. Lieutenant Community Relations Division
5. Senior Advisor
6. Associate Advisors
7. Chief of Explorer Post (1)
8. Deputy Chief of Explorer Post (1)
9. Captain of Explorer Post
10. Lieutenant of Explorer Post
11. Sergeant of Explorer Post
12. Explorer Private

B. The K.O.P.S. program will begin to build leadership skills utilizing a smaller rank structure as outlined below:

1. K.O.P.S. Captain
2. K.O.P.S. Lieutenant

3. K.O.P.S. Sergeant
4. K.O.P.S. Members

#### **SECTION V: AUTHORITY**

- A. Law Enforcement Explorers and K.O.P.S. are NOT certified law enforcement members. **(C.A.L.E.A. 16.4.1a)** Accordingly, Explorer members:
1. Are not commissioned as sworn law enforcement members.
  2. Have NO arrest powers (other than that of any other citizen).
  3. Will not in any way, act or present himself/herself in the capacity of a law enforcement member.
  4. Will not in any way interfere with the duties of any law enforcement officer.
  5. Will not carry ANY weapon, either lethal or non-lethal on their person or in a vehicle.
  6. Will not exit a patrol vehicle unless directed to do so by the accompanying certified law enforcement member.
  7. Explorers and K.O.P.S. will not stop or attempt to assist a law enforcement officer at the scene of any crime. If observed that an officer needs assistance, the Explorer will go to the nearest phone and call 9-1-1.

#### **SECTION VI: UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

- A. All Fort Myers Police Department Explorer Post and K.O.P.S. members are directed to wear the designated uniforms as described in this General Order. Explorer and K.O.P.S. members will be in full uniform identifying themselves as an Explorer or K.O.P.S. member at all Post Activities and Training sessions unless otherwise directed by a Post Advisor or Post Commander. The primary uniforms for each assignment are described below.
- B. There will be NO modifications to uniforms without prior approval of the Chief of Police or designee. All uniforms will be worn in their entirety. All members of the Post shall wear the uniform in compliance with this General Order, while on duty or while performing extra-duty details, unless the nature of their assignment or detail requires wearing civilian clothing or another specified uniform.
- C. It is the policy of the Fort Myers Police Department that all personnel present a neat, well groomed, and well-equipped image that provides for a high level of visibility, inspires confidence, and creates uniformity in appearance. Members shall be held strictly accountable for the proper care, use and maintenance of all issued articles of uniform and equipment. Uniforms and equipment shall be worn and used only in accordance with this General Order.
- D. The uniform, footwear, and equipment shall be kept clean, pressed, polished and subject to daily inspection. All snaps and buttons shall be kept securely fastened, and articles other than pens shall not be carried in shirt pockets unless pockets are fastened. Police Explorer Badges will be worn on the uniform shirt **ONLY**. Badge belt clips and wallet badges are Prohibited.
- E. No item of uniform or equipment shall be transferred or exchanged by members of the Post. Only a Post Advisor or designee shall conduct the exchange or issuance of uniforms and equipment.

- F. The Explorers and K.O.P.S. uniform shirt will differ from that of certified law enforcement members to eliminate confusion with certified members. **(C.A.L.E.A. 16.4.3)**
- G. Members, whether in or out of uniform, shall not use tobacco products while dealing with the public.
- H. Undershirts worn with the uniform in a visible manner must be navy blue or black for Explorers or white for K.O.P.S., crew neck only.
- I. Long sleeve undershirts shall not be worn under short sleeve uniform shirts.
- J. During a period of suspension, no member shall wear the official uniform either in whole or part.
- K. No mixture of civilian outer clothing with the official uniform shall be permitted, on or off duty.
- L. Member of the Fort Myers Police Department Explorer Post and K.O.P.S. program shall not wear the official uniform outside the county except when necessary to perform official duties. Members who live outside the county may wear their uniform to and from Post Activities.
- M. Uniform items shall not be altered other than necessary to ensure proper fit.
- N. The ownership and title to all uniforms and equipment issued to Explorer and K.O.P.S. members is vested in the Fort Myers Police Department. When a member resigns, takes a leave of absence, under disciplinary suspension or is discharged the member shall surrender to a Post Advisor all issued uniforms (cleaned prior to returning) and equipment.
- O. Classification of Uniforms:
  - 1. Explorer Post Class A: Standard French blue long-sleeve shirt with Explorer patch sewn on both sleeves underneath the department patch, black pants, black socks, and black shoes or boots that may be shined or polished, duty belt and gear.
  - 2. Explorer Post Class B: Standard French blue shirt with Explorer patch sewn on both sleeves underneath the department patch, black pants, black socks, and black shoes or boots that may be shined or polished, duty belt and gear.
  - 3. Explorer Post Class C: Grey Post #55 t-shirt, black BDU's or Dickies (supplied by member), black boots, and black belt or duty belt, as assigned for duty of the day. Pockets of the BDU's are not to be filled with any non-essential items. The Class C uniform is for specialty training, only when approved by Advisor.
  - 4. Explorer Post Honor/Color Guard: Standard French blue long-sleeve shirt with Explorer patch sewn on both sleeves underneath the department patch, white ascot, white gloves, uniform pants, black socks, black boots clean and polished, clean and polished duty gear.
  - 5. K.O.P.S. Uniform: Black cargo pants and grey t-shirt with a white undershirt. Dark socks and dark shoes or boots that may be polished or shined and a duty belt. Black FMPD baseball style cap.
  - 6. Civilian Dress: When given permission by the Explorer or K.O.P.S. Advisor, civilian dress may be worn. Civilian dress will be a collared shirt with long pants, unless otherwise specified by a Post Advisor. Civilian dress shall represent a professional standard befitting of the Explorer or K.O.P.S. program.

- P. Shoes, boots and sneakers:
1. Black boots or black athletic shoes (solid black, no flashy insignia) may be worn with the uniform.
  2. High or low-cut shoes are optional.
- Q. The department shall supply equipment to each Explorer or K.O.P.S. member that is appropriate to their position. A list of issued equipment is maintained by the ***Supply and Logistics Specialist***.

#### **SECTION VII: HAIRSTYLE REGULATIONS (C.A.L.E.A. 26.1.1)**

- A. Male Explorers/K.O.P.S. in Uniform: Hairstyles will be worn in a fashion that is professional in appearance and style and in keeping with normal business standards as determined by the Fort Myers Police Department. Maximum expansion out from the head shall be no more than one and one half-inches (1 ½"), tapered to no more than one inch, (1") bulk (extension from the skin) at the back of the neck. Hair shall not extend over the top of the ear when groomed and shall not touch the back of the collar in normal posture.
1. Sideburns shall not extend below the opening of the ear canal (middle of the ear) and shall be no more than one inch (1") in width. Sideburns shall not flare and shall be trimmed horizontally across the bottom.
  2. Mustaches are permitted and must be neatly trimmed at all times. Mustaches shall not extend more than one half inch (½") horizontally beyond the corners of the mouth and shall not extend more than one half (½") below the corners of the mouth and shall not cover any part of the upper lip.
  3. Beards and goatees are not permitted.
- B. Male Explorers/K.O.P.S. Not in Uniform: Hairstyles will be worn in a fashion that is professional in appearance and style and in keeping with the normal business standards as determined by the department. Beards, long hair and sideburns will be acceptable if well maintained and the style does not push the limits of public acceptance or create an extreme appearance, as determined by the police department. Uniformed male Explorers/K.O.P.S. shall adhere to the guidelines in Section A.
- C. Female Explorers/K.O.P.S. in Uniform: Female officer's hair may touch the collar, but not fall below the collar's edge. Long hair must be worn up in a neat, stylish, professional manner, which permits the wearing of a hat. Conspicuous barrettes, pins, or combs will not be permitted.
- D. Female Explorers/K.O.P.S. Not in Uniform: Hairstyles will be worn in a fashion that is professional in appearance and style and in keeping with the normal business standards as determined by the department.
- E. Prohibited hairstyles: The following hairstyles are prohibited for all employees (except those in specialized units noted above):
1. Mohawk
  2. Punk Style (spikes, tails, unusual colors)
  3. Designs engraved in the hair



4. Hairstyles deemed to be extreme (not within the norm of professional business standards)
5. Hairstyles deemed to be "extreme" shall be handled on a case by case basis with the ultimate decision lying with the Chief of Police or designee.

#### **SECTION VIII: JEWELRY AND TATTOO REGULATIONS (C.A.L.E.A. 26.1.1)**

A. Jewelry regulations for all Agency Members on-duty: Jewelry is limited to the following:

1. No more than one ring can be worn on each hand as long as it does not hamper the Explorers/K.O.P.S. job or cause a distraction.
2. One bracelet on each hand that does not exceed one half-inch (½") in diameter.
3. Wristwatches.
4. A business appropriate, tasteful necklace can be worn and may be visible.
5. Females may wear more than one earring in each ear. Earrings must be post or stud style only, business appropriate, tasteful, and not cause a distraction.
6. Earring size must not be a distraction or hamper the employee's ability to perform their job. Simple, tasteful, business appropriate earrings, post or stud style only.
7. Males are prohibited from wearing earrings during on-duty hours, including court appearances and training, except as authorized by their unit commanders.
8. Members / employees shall not wear any item of ornamentation in their nose, eyebrow, tongue, or any other location of their body that is visible during duty hours or any duty-related function, with the exception of permitted earrings. Ornamentation shall include; body piercing jewelry, intentional body mutilation or scarring, or foreign objects inserted in or under the skin.

B. Additionally:

1. The use of gold, platinum, or other veneers or caps for the purposes of ornamentation is prohibited. Teeth, whether natural, capped, or veneer, will not be ornamented with designs, jewels, initials, etc.
2. Fingernail painting: Female members may paint their fingernails one solid color or French manicure, which is not deemed to be "extreme" (not within the norm of professional business standards). Second colors other than french, designs or applications shall not be placed on the fingernails. Colors deemed to be "extreme" shall be handled on a case-by-case basis with the ultimate decision lying with the Chief of Police or designee.

C. Tattoo regulations for all Agency Members:

1. Tattoos are prohibited in a visible location on the neck, face, head, or hands of members / employees. Tattoos located on the arms or other non-restricted areas that may be visible, shall be covered when in a teaching (e.g., SRO, DARE, etc.) or public speaking capacity.

2. Visible tattoos shall not be obscene, indecent, sexually explicit, or advocate or symbolize sex, gender, racial, religious, ethnic, or national origin discrimination.
3. Tattoos on any area of the body that are likely to associate the member with, or be interpreted as associating the member with, or be interpreted as the member advocating, any racist, sexist, extremist, gang, criminal, or drug activity or affiliation are strictly prohibited.
4. The Chief of Police shall be the final determining authority whether body ornamentation is considered in violation of this policy.

#### **SECTION IX: EXPLORER ACTIVITIES AND DETAILS (C.A.L.E.A. 16.4.1b)**

- A. Activities: Law enforcement Explorers participate in the following activities as opportunities present themselves:
1. Explorer Academy.
  2. Law Enforcement Explorer competitions.
  3. Social functions as organized by the Post.
  4. Office picnics and Christmas dinners when invited.
  5. Field trips as organized by the post.
- B. Details: The Fort Myers Police Explorers will assist the Police Department during parades, special events and other incidents as directed by the Chief of Police or his designee, and the Senior Advisor. Additionally, when approved by the Chief of Police or his designee, and the Senior Advisor, the post will provide assistance to other organizations.
1. At least one ranked Explorer and one Advisor or approved adult chaperone must be present at all details. If the detail consists of four or more Explorers a Post Advisor must be present.
  2. Explorers will be in the designated uniform.
  3. Explorers will work the times for which they volunteered.
  4. Explorers working details will report immediately to the Supervisor or Senior Police Officer present, for duty assignment.
  5. Explorers will ensure that the area to be patrolled is secure. There will be no horseplay; this is a work detail. The radio is for official use only, using departmental codes and signals.
  6. Explorers will follow all appropriate instructions given by any Fort Myers Police Department employee.
  7. Explorers who direct traffic during special events or parking details will have completed four (4) hours of training in proper traffic control procedures, including equipment and hand gestures with and without lights. A traffic vest will always be worn.
  8. Explorers will patrol in pairs, never alone.

9. Explorers will remember that they are not police officers and have no arrest powers. If they observe anything out of place or illegal, they will not confront anyone involved. The Explorer will call for assistance from an advisor. The advisor will make appropriate decisions and action. The safety of the Explorer is paramount in this issue.
10. Explorers will leave the area when their assigned tour of duty is over. Explorers not signed up to work the detail will not be at the detail area or command post, distracting the Explorers on duty.

## **SECTION X: RIDE-A-LONG PROGRAM**

- A. The Purpose of the Ride-a-Long Program is to provide Explorers with firsthand experience of Law Enforcement procedures; to supplement classroom training in basic procedures through observation and conversations with Police Officers during the performance of their duties. The Ride-a-Long Program is a PRIVILEGE and can be REVOKED at any time. K.O.P.S. members are not permitted to take part in the Ride-a-Long Program.

It is the intent of this program to expose the Explorer to Police Functions while taking precautions to avoid hazardous situations. Care must be taken to minimize the possibility of injury to the Explorer and avoid the risk of liability on behalf of the City. The examples in this procedure are only intended to suggest guidelines for the Police Officer, as there may be other areas in which Explorers may or may not participate. Therefore, each situation should be considered separately according to the circumstances prevailing.

- B. Qualifications: An Explorer wishing to participate in the Ride-a-Long Program must meet the requirements below:

1. Must be 16 years of age. Explorers engaged in "competition training" that are 15 years of age may be eligible after a review by the Explorer Advisors for training purposes, per General Order 3.2 Ride-a-Long Program.
2. Be a member for six (6) months.
3. Must possess a Valid Drivers License.
4. Completed the Ride-a-Long Procedures training.
5. A member in good standing with no disciplinary actions pending or being completed.
6. Hold Harmless Release on file signed by both of his/her parents/Guardians, for sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, or signed by the Explorer if eighteen or older.
7. Participate in 75% of all meetings and activities.
8. Must be pre-approved by the Post Senior Advisor or designee.

- C. Ride-a-Long Training: Each Explorer will complete a Ride-a-Long Procedure Class. This class will be instructed by the head advisor of the Post or his/her designee. The instructor shall be an advisor and provide a curriculum to the Training Division. The instructor shall provide a written sign in sheet with the Explorer's name and signature signifying attendance in the class. Training will be in the areas of:

1. Emergency Procedures

2. On View Situations
3. Drop Off Procedures
4. Use of Equipment
5. Specific Duties During Ride-a-Longs
6. Limitations/Prohibitions

D. Assignment of Ride Alongs: Explorers will be assigned to a Ride Along by the Senior Advisor, or the Post Advisor as designated by the Senior Advisor. Assignments shall be made with regards to the Explorer's age, school schedule, work schedule and training level. Ride-a-long assignments must be approved by the on duty Watch Commander or designee prior to an Explorer entering the vehicle. Explorers may ride a maximum of 32 hours per month with a maximum of 8 hours per day. Additional Ride-a-long hours may be awarded by the Post Advisor(s).

E. Procedures:

1. Explorers under 18 years of age will sign and must have their parents and/or guardians sign a Hold Harmless Release waiver release form prior to the first Ride Along. This form must be signed with original signatures and notarized. In the event guardianship changes a new Waiver must be signed.
2. Explorers over the age of 18 will sign a Hold harmless Release waiver release form prior to the first Ride Along. This form must be signed with original signatures and notarized.
3. Explorers will ride a minimum of 20 hours with Advisors first. Upon completion of the 20 hours the Advisors will meet with the Explorer, review Ride-a-long sessions and set up a Ride Along program for the Explorer.
4. Post Advisors are responsible for monitoring the program and maintaining a record of each Ride Along. The Explorer Deputy Chief should maintain Ride-a-long records in each Explorer's file to include evaluations. Explorers are responsible for turning in their paperwork at each meeting. If this is not done the Explorer will be suspended from the Ride-a-long program for a duration determined by the Post Advisors.
5. All Explorers will be evaluated quarterly on their Ride-a-long sessions based on their reviews and personal feedback. New Ride-a-long programs for each Explorer will be given at that time.
6. Explorers will be assigned to ride with selected Officers who are familiar with the Ride-a-Long Program, have two years seniority with FMPD or are a department approved Field Training Officer. Approved Explorer Program Advisors are exempt from the two year and/or Field Training Officer requirements.
7. Explorers 14 – 17 years old are permitted to ride between 0600 and 2300 hours only. Explorers 18 years old or older are permitted to ride later with the permission of the watch commander. In all cases, the Explorers Ride-a-long session must end within 12 hours of the start of school (if school is scheduled). No Explorer can ride during school hours unless there are no regularly scheduled classes.

F. Duties and Responsibilities: The Explorer participates in the Ride-a-long program as an observer. The Explorer may participate in certain calls and fulfill various duties as determined by the Ride-a-long officer. These may include:

1. Direct Traffic
2. Assisting motorists
3. Complete Written Reports
4. Operate the Police Radio
5. Perform other duties to help an officer in routine procedures, as requested by the Police Officer.
6. An Explorer may assist the officer in handling equipment to check in or out of the vehicle, if required. AT NO TIME WILL AN EXPLORER HANDLE A FIREARM, OR ANY WEAPON TO INCLUDE CAPSTUN, BATON OR TASER. Exceptions will be in an official training course.

G. Prohibited Activity: The Explorer Will Not:

1. Guard or search prisoners.
2. Issue citations.
3. Operate a patrol vehicle, public address system, siren and/or emergency lights.
4. Fingerprint prisoners.
5. Book prisoners (may assist w/ Paperwork, Supervised).
6. Sign arrest reports.
7. Exit the patrol vehicle with the intent to assist in any possible volatile situation.

H. Role in the Patrol Vehicle:

1. The Explorer is not a Sworn Officer and serves only as an observer with no arrest powers.
2. The Explorer is always under the Direct Command, Authority and Responsibility of the Officer he/she is assigned to.
3. The Explorer is not to interfere with the duties of the Police Officer.
4. During all Motor Vehicle Stops, the Explorer shall remain in the Police Vehicle, unless directed to do otherwise by the Officer.
5. The Explorer will remain safely in the Patrol Vehicle when an unexpected potentially violent or dangerous situation develops. The Explorer should be transported away from the area when possible.
6. During any arrest process the Explorer must not interfere with the Arresting Officer and may not collect, store or transport any of the Arrested Party's property. The Explorer shall not be used to guard Crime Scenes.
7. The Explorers authorization to use the Police Radio is at the discretion of the Police Officer assigned.

8. When the Explorer is present during any interview or questioning of an Arrestee, Suspect, Victim, or Complainant he / she shall never interject with comments or questions. If the Officer allows the Explorer to observe such interviews or questioning, the Explorer is to stay a safe distance away to avoid any resistance or hazardous condition that may arise. The Explorer may be required to fill out a sworn affidavit and appear in court if they are present during an interview.
9. Any illness, injury, blood-borne pathogen exposure, or any imminent emergency situation that occurs during a tour of duty to the Explorer participating in the Ride-a-long program, he/she is required to immediately contact the Post Advisor (or his/her designee). If the Explorer is unable, the Communications Division may contact the Post Advisor (or his/her designee).
10. The Explorer shares the responsibility of educating the Patrol Officer concerning the Explorers abilities during a Ride-a-Long. If the Officer is unclear of the Explorers Role, the Explorer is expected to inform them. The Explorer is expected to discuss with the Officer exactly what the Officer expects in given situations, such as, traffic stops, in progress calls, radio usage, etc.

I. Ride-a-Long Situational Procedures: Explorers may view crimes "In Progress" while on Ride-a-Longs, on special duty assignments, or while off duty with friends and family. This section sets forth guidelines on how to react to these occasions. It is also an integral part of the Explorer's duties while on a Ride-a-Long:

1. Traffic Stops: On any traffic stop, the Explorer will remain in the cruiser until the officer tells the Explorer that he or she may exit the vehicle and stand outside the patrol vehicle passengers' door area and observe the violator's vehicle and passenger actions. This will occur only when the officer feels it is safe for the Explorer to do so.
2. Regular Calls: Routine, non-hazardous calls, where an event is not developing, but has already occurred. Action taken shall be at the discretion of the officer, and then only at the direction of the officer shall the Explorer do anything.
3. Crime Scene: An Explorer will only enter a crime scene with the permission of the person in charge of the scene, and only after the area is secured and no chance of crime scene contamination is possible.
4. Arrests: In the event of an arrest an Explorer will not be left in charge of the arrestee. The Explorer will not fingerprint, search or pat down the arrestee.
5. Priority Calls: The Explorer will remain in the vehicle and observe the scene until he or she is instructed to leave the cruiser by the officer with whom the Explorer is riding.
6. Emergency Drop Off Procedures: In the case of an extreme emergency where an Explorer is riding with a police officer, that officer shall not be dispatched as the primary responding officer. If the officer is required to respond to the emergency, the officer shall make every effort to drop off the Explorer at the police department. In event that the police department is out of the way, the police officer shall drop the Explorer at the closest Fort Myers Fire Station (Central, Palm Beach, Benchmark, Jefferson, Shoemaker, or Treeline). Once the Explorer is dropped off the police officer will notify dispatch of the location of the Explorer

and dispatch will send the next available unit to pick up the Explorer. Dispatch shall call the fire station and notify them to expect the Explorer.

7. Staying with the Patrol Vehicle During Emergency Situations: If the situation is such that the Explorer cannot be dropped off as described in the Emergency Drop Off Procedure the Explorer is to remain with the patrol vehicle. The Explorer's Training Officer will direct the Explorer to remain in the vehicle and provide communication assistance with dispatch if needed and/or call for help if required. The Explorer's objective in emergency situations is to be a GOOD WITNESS and is not to become involved in the activity of a dangerous call.
8. Termination of Ride Along: A Ride-Along may be terminated by the Officer or Supervisor at any time. Should the ride be terminated for any reason, the Explorer is not to question the decision. The Explorer shall submit a memo to the Post Advisor simply stating that the ride was terminated early and by whose authority the ride was terminated. The Post Advisor will then determine why the ride was terminated.
9. Emergencies: Should a serious situation develop on a Ride-Along and it appears that the Officer is in imminent danger, the Explorer should advise Radio/Dispatch of the officer's I.D. number, their location and the nature of the problem provided the officer cannot transmit over the radio himself. If the officer is down, the Explorer should broadcast "Officer Needs Help!" give the location, the officer I.D. number and request assistance and an ambulance if necessary.
10. Assisting the Officers: The Explorer is to assist the officer by being an extra set of eyes and ears. The Explorer will follow all orders and directions given to him by the officer. Any questions the Explorer may have about field contacts or procedures should be saved for the Training Officer and should be discussed in the privacy of the patrol car. The Explorer is never to argue with the Officer.  
  
Explorers are not expected to go to the downed officers' aid if the Explorers own safety is in question. The Explorer should seek a safe position and then notify Radio/Dispatch of the emergency. This Department does not require Explorers to do more than this. The Explorer's only obligation in a serious situation is to get to safety and then request aid for the fallen officer.
11. Special Rules: Each Officer has special ways of handling their responsibilities. The Explorer should develop a rapport with the officer at the start of the ride and ask if any special rules exist. They should take care to show the Officer that they appreciate the opportunity to ride and assist.
12. Ride-a-Long Training Officers: The officer is responsible for the immediate supervision of the Explorer and should keep in mind that the Explorer will be expecting guidance and leadership.

The officer with an Explorer shall be willing to answer questions presented to them by the Explorer. The officer will keep in mind that the Explorer is engaged in an educational experience while riding.

The officer shall prepare a written report to the Senior Post Advisor of any unusual occurrences involving the Explorer. Those matters which are of an emergency or serious in nature should be immediately reported verbally and then in writing.

After each ride the officer shall review the activity report (Explorer form), make comments, and sign the report. The Explorer will be responsible for turning in the form to the Post Advisor at the next meeting.

If at all possible, officers will refrain from using Explorers as witnesses for arrests or on citations. This will avoid having the Explorer miss any school time because of a subpoena. However, if the incident is of a serious nature and the officer has no choice but to use them as a witness, then use them.

## **SECTION XI: EXPLORER ACADEMY**

- A. In order for an Explorer to become a Certified Explorer he/she must participate in a 40-hour Explorer Academy.

Academy training should include (but is not limited to) the following classes:

1. Crime Prevention
2. Criminal Law and Juvenile Delinquency
3. Crime Scene Search/Preservation
4. Explorer Safety and Policy Manual
5. Fingerprinting
6. First Aid, CPR certification
7. Note Taking and Report Writing
8. Patrol Procedures and Department General Orders
9. Traffic and Crowd Control

Additional information regarding Explorers may be found in the Explorer's Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

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**APPROVED:**

**[ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE ON FILE]**

**Jason Fields, Chief of Police  
Fort Myers Police Department**

**10/5/2023**

**Date**