

	FREDERICKSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES	
	OPERATIONS	
315.00	APPROVED: <i>Brian F. Layton, Chief of Police</i>	Initiated: 10/01/2007
		Revised: 02/20/2025

RIDE-ALONG/COMMUNICATIONS OBSERVATION PROGRAM

315.00 – Citizen Ride-Along Requests – Citizens wishing to participate in the Department's ride-a-long program should obtain a waiver form and a Citizen Ride-A-Long Request Form from the Department's Records Section. The forms can be picked up during normal business hours or emailed. The citizen should complete and return the forms to the Records Section at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the ride-along date. Processing the request includes:

- The Records Section will forward the completed request forms to the Services Sergeant.
- The Services Sergeant will review the request form for content assuring that the citizen making the request is suitable to participate in the program.
- The Services Sergeant will confer with the Watch Commander and/or Shift Supervisor to determine if the request poses any problems.
- If the request is approved, the Services Sergeant will give the original copy to the Watch Commander or Shift Supervisor and forward a copy to the Records Section where the duplicate will be filed with the executed waiver and the requester notified of the approval.
- If the request is disapproved, both copies will be forwarded to the Records Division for filing and notification to the requester.

315.01 – Limitations – Approval must be obtained prior to a citizen ride-along. The completed ride-along request and completed waiver must be submitted prior to the ride-along. Additionally:

- Approval is for one specific time.
- Ride along requests may be denied based upon criminal history information or other information which potentially causes a negative impact on the Department.
- In the event a time change is necessitated, approval must be obtained from the Services Sergeant prior to the change and the documents must reflect the change.

- Unless an extenuating circumstance arises, only one (1) rider will be allowed at any one time in a police vehicle. The Watch Commander may authorize a second rider in a vehicle if safety allows.
- Individuals requesting to ride along must be eighteen (18) years or older to ride unless special authorization is obtained from the Chief of Police.
- Requesters under the age of eighteen (18), after receiving special authorization, must have the request and waiver forms signed by parent(s) or guardian(s) before final approval. Additionally, criminal history checks will be requested from the Juvenile Intake office prior to any juvenile participating in a ride along.
- No one will be allowed to ride-along and observe any police activities relating to raids or covert activity unless approval is granted by the Detective Division Commander or the Chief of Police.
- Individuals participating as a ride-along are not permitted to be armed. The only exception to this policy is for a certified sworn law-enforcement officer with concurrent jurisdiction in the City of Fredericksburg.

315.02 – Beginning the Observer's Tour – If the "ride-along" observer does not request a specific officer, the Shift Supervisor will appoint an officer to act as the "host". Other requirements are:

- Prior to the "ride-along" commencing the tour, the Watch Commander will provide the observer a comment form and ask that the form be completed and turned in to the Shift Supervisor at the end of the ride.
- The officer assigned to "host" the "rider" will secure a copy of the officer's ride-along report form and the form will be filled out and turned in at the end of the officer's tour of duty.
- All persons who participate in the ride-along program shall be appropriately attired. If not, ride-along approval will be canceled by the shift Supervisor.
- The officer assigned as the "host" shall instruct the ride-along observer of the procedures while riding, which include:
 - Observer must follow directions of the officer at all times.
 - Observer may be required to appear as a witness in court.
 - Observers may indicate at any time a desire to terminate the ride. This request will be complied with as soon as practical.
 - Observers may not be permitted to enter private residences, based upon safety or privacy issues.
 - Observers may be required to be "dropped off" at a safe location, if the incident the officer is handling has a high potential for danger to the observer.
 - Observers are not allowed to record audio or visual or take photographs

315.03 – Arrests and Transporting Subjects – If the officer who is the "host" for the observer feels there are no discernible hazards involved, the observer may accompany the officer while transporting prisoners. If the officer believes a problem may arise, the observer should be temporary transferred to another officer or turned over to the Shift Supervisor.

315.04 – Ending the Observers Tour – Upon completion of the ride, the observer will be returned to the police department and:

- Reminded to complete the Observer Response Form.

The completed form and the officers ride-along report will be forwarded to the Chief of Police through the chain of command for review, and then forwarded to the Records Section for filing with the request, waiver and the officer's ride-along report.

315.05 –Communication Section (Comsec) Observation Requests – Citizens wishing to participate in the Department's Comsec Observation Program shall obtain an Emergency Communication Center (ECC) Request Form from the Department's Records Section unless waived by the Support Services Division Commander or the Communications Manager. The forms can be picked up during normal business hours and when completed returned to the Communications Section. Upon approval of the request, a date and time will be scheduled by the Communications Manager or designee for the citizen. Processing the request includes:

- Criminal History Check
- Linx Check
- RMS Check
- Number of prior observations