




# City of Manassas Police Department General Duty Manual



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| Effective Date:<br>05-15-2023   | <b>GENERAL ORDER</b>  | Number:<br>07-14   |
| Subject:<br><b>Ride-Along Program</b>   |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Amends <input type="checkbox"/> Rescinds <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviewed: 05-15-2023 |   | Reevaluation:<br><input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 18 months <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| General Order # 7-14  |   |  |
| Accreditation Standards:  | By Authority Of:<br><br>Douglas W. Keen, Chief of Police | Total Pages: 3   |

## PURPOSE:

To establish a clearly defined ride-along program, and procedures that specify who may accompany police officers in police vehicles as ride-along participants during patrol activities.

## POLICY:

It is the policy of the Department to encourage citizen involvement in its uniformed, day-to-day activities. To this end, the Ride-Along Program is established. Ride-along participants may be adults or juveniles (with a parent / guardian's written permission). Ride-Along Program participants are assigned to uniformed Officers (including Patrol Officers, K-9 Officers, or School Resource Officers), and Animal Control Officers. Department activities such as undercover operations or other Investigative Services Division operations are inappropriate for Ride-Along Program assignments.

The Department recognizes that the presence of a ride-along participant during official Department activities may exacerbate certain situations, and constitute a safety risk to officers, ride-along participants, and other citizens. The presence of ride-along participants during law enforcement activities has been deemed a violation of a citizen's reasonable expectation of privacy, in certain situations. Therefore, ride-along participants receive firsthand exposure to only those situations that may be observed by any "passerby" in the community during a given situation. Ride-along participants are not taken into private property areas without the prior consent of the property owner or other person with apparent authority to grant such consent.

Members of the news media may participate in the Ride-Along Program, subject to the provisions of this General Order. Officer safety and the safety of ride-along participants are of primary importance. Ride-along activities are authorized only in accordance with this directive.

## DISCUSSION:

The Department is committed to establishing close ties with, and responding to the needs of the community. The Ride-Along Program is an important means for the Department to maintain a two-way flow of ideas and attitudes with the community, educate citizens concerning police activities and duties, and enhance recruitment efforts.

## PROCEDURE:

### I. Program Eligibility

- A. Applicants for the Ride-Along Program must meet at least one of the following criteria:
1. A resident of the City.
  2. A member of a City civic or business organization.
  3. A City employee whose position would be enhanced by knowledge of Department operating procedures.
  4. A current applicant for a sworn or non-sworn position with the Department.
  5. Law enforcement officers from any law enforcement agency.
  6. Law Enforcement Explorer Scouts who have received prior approval from their Post Advisor.
  7. Students in an accredited law enforcement program, or related field.
  8. Family members of Department sworn or non-sworn members.

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9. Members of the clergy, public service organizations, the news media, or victim advocate organizations.
10. Other persons whose participation is determined by the approving official to be in the interest of the Department. Such authority and reason shall be specified on the application.
- B. Uniformed non-sworn members of the Department, such as Emergency Communication Specialists or School Crossing Guards, must be attired in civilian clothing. The wearing of a uniform is not authorized for civilian ride-along participants.
- C. Attire for the ride-along participant may be casual dress, but should be neat, clean, and conservative. The Duty Supervisor determines the appropriateness of attire.

## **II. Exceptions to Application Requirements**

- A. Victim / Witness employees of the Prince William County or Manassas City government, who have executed a release form.
- B. Non-sworn members of the Department and police interns, who have executed a release form.

## **III. Application Procedures**

- A. A completed Ride-Along Program Application shall consist of the Application Form, and the appropriate Adult Release Form or Juvenile Waiver Form, completed in their entirety.
  1. See Attachment "A" for the Ride-Along Program Application and Waiver Form (Adult).
  2. See Attachment "B" for the Ride-Along Program Application and Waiver Form (Juvenile).
- B. Application Forms, Release Forms, and Waiver Forms are maintained in sufficient quantities in the Roll Call Room, and in the Records Section.
- C. Applications must be completed in their entirety, including an adult release or juvenile waiver form, and submitted to the Supervisor assigned to oversee the program at least 5 (five) working days prior to the requested ride-along date.
  1. Adult Release Forms are signed by the ride-along participant.
  2. Juvenile Waiver Forms must be signed by the ride-along participant's parent / guardian.
- D. The Commander of Patrol Services is the primary authority for ride-along participation and has the authority to designate which Supervisor is assigned to oversee the program. The designated Supervisor reviews the application, and obtains a wanted status check and criminal history check on the applicant. The Supervisor approves / disapproves all applications.
  1. Applicants who are "wanted" or have a significant criminal history are inappropriate for a ride-along assignment.
- E. Approved applications are forwarded to the appropriate Duty Supervisor for assignment to a uniformed officer.
- F. Restrictions.
  1. Recording devices and cameras are prohibited, unless pre-approved by the Chief of Police or a Division Commander.
  2. Civilian participants are not authorized to carry weapons of any type. Certified Federal or Virginia law enforcement officers may have this requirement waived by the Chief of Police or a Division Commander. If waived, all officers on duty, including overlap shifts and those working details during the shift, are notified that the participant is armed.
    - a. Federal or Virginia law enforcement officers working joint operations with the Department are exempted from this General Order.
  3. Sergeants and Lieutenants may, in unusual circumstances, waive the advanced application requirement notice, and approve a ride-along. When this is done, the application is completed in its entirety prior to the ride-along, and contains a written explanation of the waiver.
- G. The designated Supervisor maintains the Ride-Along Program File, which contains both approved and rejected applications for the current and previous year.
- H. Ride-alongs are limited to a maximum of 50 (fifty) hours per calendar year per participant, not to exceed 20 (twenty) hours during a 90 (ninety)-day period. The designated Supervisor maintains a record of the ride-along hours of each participant.

## **IV. Duty Supervisor's Responsibility**

- A. Duty Supervisors receive applications from the designated Supervisor. After reviewing the application, the supervisor assigns the ride-along participant to a specific uniformed Officer or Animal Control Officer.

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- B. The Duty Supervisor may alter the scheduled times of the approved ride-along, or revoke the application, if the assignment would substantially interfere with operations.
  - 1. In such an event, the Duty Supervisor documents the reasons for his decision on the application.
- C. The presence of the participant is considered by the Duty Supervisor in determining how to best deploy officers. The participant should be kept remote from high risk incidents.
- D. The Duty Supervisor exercises the authority to revoke, limit or terminate an approved ride-along assignment at any time, if in his judgment, the participant's conduct, demeanor, sobriety, attire, or motives are not in the best interest of the Department, or interfere with operations.
- E. The Ride-Along Application Form is signed by the Duty Supervisor upon completion of the assignment, and returned to the designated Supervisor.

**V. Officer / Animal Control Officer Responsibility**

- A. Officers / Animal Control Officers notify the Emergency Operations Center at the commencement, and upon the conclusion of the Ride-Along Program assignment.
- B. The assignment should not exceed 5 (five) hours, unless specifically extended by a supervisor. The participant may terminate the assignment at any time.
- C. Officers / Animal Control Officers may determine any "ground rules" they consider necessary for their protection and safety, and explain these "ground rules" to the participant in detail, prior to the beginning of the assignment, keeping in mind the goals of the program.
- D. Officers / Animal Control Officers remain alert to the presence of the participant, and model their response to incidents accordingly. The safe positioning of the participant during response to high- risk incidents is of critical importance.
  - 1. The participant may be placed at a safe location some distance from the scene, when deemed necessary.
  - 2. In this event, the PSCC is notified, and arrangements are made for a pick-up by an officer who is not involved in the incident.
- E. Dialogue with the participant should be open and candid.
- F. Efforts are made to ensure that the participant does not become actively involved in confrontational situations, and is not taken into private property areas where citizens have a reasonable expectation of privacy without the prior consent of the owner or other person with apparent authority to give such consent.
  - 1. Search warrants and the exceptions to search warrants provided in the Code of Virginia empower law enforcement officers to enter private property.
  - 2. Search warrants and the exceptions to search warrants do not empower law enforcement officers to bring "third parties" such as ride-along participants on private property. The presence of such third parties is not reasonably necessary to accomplish law enforcement responsibilities.
  - 3. In the event that a request for police service involves entering a private residence or place of business, and it would be an appropriate learning experience for the participant, the Officer or Animal Control Officer seeks prior consent from the owner or other person with apparent authority over the property, before bringing the participant into the property.
  - 4. Federal court opinions have held that "third parties" may be exposed to a law enforcement activity that is reasonably observable by any passerby in the community, without the consent of the owner or other person with apparent authority over the property.
  - 5. As with any consent issue, the person granting consent may withdraw such consent at any time. In that event, the participant is removed from the property as soon as possible.
- G. Any problems that occur during a ride-along should be explained to the Duty Supervisor in detail.

Attachments: "A" Ride-Along Program Application and Waiver (Adult).  
 "B" Ride-Along Program Application (Juvenile).  
 "C" Ride-Along Program Waiver (Juvenile).

Index as: Ride-Along Program.

References: N/A.