



NEW CASTLE COUNTY POLICE

Ride Along Policy

DIRECTIVE 31 **Appendix 31-A**

REVISED MARCH 24, 2023

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines and explain the procedure for civilians or other law enforcement personnel who wish to participate in a ride along with New Castle County Division of Police.

II. Procedure:

Requests to participate in a Ride-Along Program will be processed and approved through the Professional Development Unit. Participants must complete the following forms in their entirety: **Ride-a-Along Application, Confidentiality Agreement, Waiver of Civil Liability and Indemnification Agreement**. All applicants must be 16 years old or older.

The length of the ride-along program may vary according to the individual participating. Generally, the program participants are allowed to ride one (1) time per calendar year for a maximum of six (6) hours unless prior arrangements have been made and agreed upon in advance. Interns, County employees, and elected officials are exempt from the one time per year cap.

a. Eligibility

1. Family members of current officers who are in good standing with the division. Family members of former officers who left the division in good standing.
2. College students who are enrolled in law enforcement and related studies.
3. Members of the community who wish to get a better understanding of the duties that officers perform on daily basis.
4. New Castle County Employees.
5. Potential law enforcement applicants.
6. Sworn officers from other jurisdictions.
7. Media personnel who are full-time bona-fide members of a news organization (requires approval from Chief of Police or designee).

b. Disqualifications

1. Anyone who has a prior felony conviction.
2. Anyone who has been convicted of illegal drug related charges.
3. Anyone who has been convicted or charged with weapon related charges.
4. Anyone who is currently under criminal investigation.
5. Anyone who is currently involved in a civil litigation with New Castle County.
6. Anyone with an extensive arrest record.
7. Anyone affiliated with a subversive group.

c. Rules of the Ride-Along

It shall be clearly understood that the role of the ride-along participant is that of an observer only. The participant will not take part in any arrests, investigative stops, handling of evidence, or handling of police equipment. Participants should not intervene either physically or verbally unless specifically requested to do so by the officer to whom he/she is assigned. Below are guidelines for the participants to follow during the ride-along.

1. Participants must be neat, clean and properly attired. The ride-along shall be canceled if the individual's appearance is not appropriate.
 - A. Males
 1. Shirts shall have collars and sleeves.
 2. Pants shall be neat, clean and full length without holes or tears.
 - B. Females
 1. Shirts or blouses shall not have scoop necks or expose the midriff.
 2. Pants shall be neat, clean and without holes or tears. Skirts or dresses of appropriate length may be worn.
2. Participants are not allowed to wear any uniforms or apparel that can be construed as being affiliated with law enforcement.

3. Participants are prohibited from wearing apparel with offensive labels, signage, or writing as deemed inappropriate by the shift commander.
4. Civilian participants will not be armed or carry a weapon of any type. Prior approval from the Chief of Police or his/her designee is required for sworn police officers to carry their firearm during the ride-along. If approved, officers must follow their department's policies for carrying a firearm off duty and use of deadly force. Federal agents may be armed provided that their weapon is carried within the rules and regulations of their agency.
5. Audio recorders and/or cameras of any type are not permitted unless previously approved by the Chief of Police.
6. If at any time during the ride-along, the participant does not follow the officer's directions, or creates a situation that places him/her in a dangerous situation, the officer has the authority to terminate the ride-along and transport the participant back to County headquarters. Officers are required to write a memorandum through their chain of command to the PDU Section Commander documenting the circumstances that led to the termination of the ride-along.
 - a. If the participant is from another agency, the PDU Section Commander will notify the officer's department of the incident in writing.
 - b. If the participant is part of an internship program, the PDU Section Commander will notify the school/college/university of the incident in writing.
7. The Shift Commander has the authority to approve/deny/terminate or adjust the ride-along request prior to or during the ride-along if the Shift Commander deems that it is in the best interest of New Castle County or the division.
8. The participant will not leave the police vehicle unless directed to do so by the officer. Seatbelts must be worn at all times by the participant while in a moving police vehicle.
9. No ride-along shall occur between the hours of 2400 to 0700, unless the participant is a certified police officer or approved through the Chief of Police.

10. The ride-along for those under 18 (ages 16-17) can only occur on a Saturday morning between 8am-12pm or 9am-1pm.
 - a. There must be two officers present during the ride-along with the primary officer being of the same sex as the ride-along participant. During the ride along the 2nd officer is present but utilizes a separate patrol vehicle.
 - b. Youth participants must complete either a New Castle County Police sponsored youth camp/academy or currently be enrolled in the New Castle County Police Youth Academy.
 - c. Participants currently enrolled in the Youth Academy should wait until March (or halfway through the program if the program does not begin in November) to request a ride-along.

d. Assigned Officers' Responsibilities

1. No officer will act as a ride-along host officer until they have completed their probationary period.
2. Officers operating vehicles carrying ride-along participants will not engage in a vehicular pursuit under any circumstance.
3. Officers carrying a ride-along participant in their vehicle will use their discretion in permitting the participant to exit the vehicle, approach the scene of an incident, or remain in the vehicle. The safety of the participant shall be considered along with other factors.
4. If, in the judgment of the host officer, he/she is entering into a dangerous situation, the officer may, at their discretion, leave the participant in a place of safety. Should a situation dictate that a ride along participant be dropped off at a safe location, such as an open convenience store or restaurant, the officer will immediately notify RECOM so that arrangements can be made to pick up the participant at the earliest opportunity.
5. At the conclusion of the ride-along, the host officer with whom the participant was riding shall report to the shift commander any unusual occurrence which may give rise to any potential liabilities.
6. If at any time a participant is injured, reports an injury, or reports to have personal property that has been damaged as a result of the ride-along, the host officer will immediately notify the shift

commander and complete any necessary reports regarding the circumstances surrounding the injury, claim of injury, or damage to property. The participant may be transported to a medical facility for treatment.

7. Officers must safeguard all DEJIS protected laptop images and or documents from the view of participants that do not have DELJIS clearance.

Notwithstanding anything contained herein, the Chief of Police has the ultimate authority and discretion to waive any requirements or restrictions to this policy.