

## RIDE-ALONGS

### PREAMBLE:

The Omaha Police Department (OPD) wishes to promote the support, education, and understanding of the public it serves. Ride-Alongs with police officers can help improve police and community interaction and help address community perceptions and misperceptions of crime. Ride-Alongs may be authorized mostly with Uniform Patrol Bureau (UPB) officers, however, with specific approval by the Chief of Police or the respective OPD Deputy Chief/Director, Ride-Alongs may be conducted with Criminal Investigation Bureau, Air Support Unit, Behavioral Health and Wellness Unit, or using other Department-owned vehicles.

### POLICY:

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) to maintain a Ride-Along program that allows potential police officer applicants/candidates, local criminal justice students and/or OPD interns, community leaders, visiting dignitaries, selected OPD volunteers, chaplains, and employees, and other persons approved by OPD command who are nineteen (19) years of age or older to briefly experience the demands and responsibilities faced by police officers and/or police employees.

### PROCEDURE:

#### I. General

- A. Most Ride-Alongs will occur with Uniform Patrol Bureau (UPB) officers and must be approved by the respective UPB Precinct Captain.
  - 1. Ride-Alongs are normally only approved to be conducted between the hours of 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm Mondays through Thursdays, excluding holidays.
- B. Ride-Alongs in other OPD bureaus may be approved by the respective bureau Deputy Chief / Director or the Chief of Police.

**NOTE:** Air Support Unit helicopter Ride-Alongs shall only be approved by the Chief of Police or designee.

- C. Ride-Along participants are not allowed to carry weapons, whether concealed or not, during their Ride-Along regardless of whether or not the participant possesses a permit to carry the weapon.

**EXCEPTION:** This provision does not apply to sworn law enforcement from other agencies participating in an OPD Ride-Along. Participants who are sworn employees of another law enforcement agency may be approved to carry their weapon concealed during their Ride-Along. The Bureau Deputy Chief/Director or Chief of Police may approve such requests.

- D. Ride-Along participants shall:
  - 1. Wear attire that conforms to the OPD "Casual Dress" or "Business Casual" dress rules, as described in the OPD "[Dress Code](#)" policy posted on the OPD website.
  - 2. Wear seat belts at all times when in an OPD vehicle.
  - 3. Not enter crime scenes or any private property or areas where citizens have a reasonable expectation of privacy unless granted authority by the lawful property owner/occupant.

4. Not become actively involved in police incidents.
5. Not read Mobile Data Computer (MDC) screens/content while in the vehicle.

**EXCEPTION:** BHWU interns may be allowed, with the supervision of an OPD employee, to become involved in a police incident and/or read MDC screens and content as part of their official duties.

- E. Officers shall not engage in pursuits, expedite to any calls, or engage in any risky driving behavior or traffic stops of a high-risk nature while conducting a Ride-Along.
- F. Officers shall utilize sound and prudent judgment prior to taking any action that could potentially place a Ride-Along participant at risk. Examples of the type of calls officers should exercise extra caution in responding to include but are not limited to the following:
  1. Domestic violence and sexual assault calls.
  2. Calls involving child victims.
  3. Assault, fight, or unruly crowd type of calls.
  4. Suicide calls.
  5. Drug overdose calls.
  6. Possible death or person-down calls.
  7. Serious personal injury crash calls.

**NOTE:** BHWU Interns should be allowed to participate in these types of calls when safe and with appropriate supervision by OPD employees, as crisis response is an important aspect of their internship duties with the Department.

- G. Cameras or recording devices are prohibited, unless approved in writing by the Captain of the respective precinct, Deputy Chief / Director, or Chief of Police.
- H. If a Ride-Along participant witnesses a crime, reporting officers will include the participant's name, statement, etc. as a witness in the appropriate reports.
- I. Ride-Alongs may be terminated by OPD supervisors/officers if participants engage in improper conduct, fail to follow officers' commands, or for safety reasons.
  1. When circumstances arise that make it necessary for safety, officers may:
    - a. Instruct the Ride-Along participant to remain in the police vehicle.
    - b. Drop the Ride-Along participant off at a safe location such as a hospital, open business, etc. and arrange for a later pick-up. Officers will inform 911 Dispatch that the Ride-Along participant has been dropped off and the location.

## II. Eligibility

- A. Ride-Alongs are not available to all members of the general public. The following is a general, but not all inclusive, list of eligible participants:
  1. OPD employees.

2. Official OPD volunteers, interns, and/or Chaplains.
3. Persons who are interested in a career in law enforcement, including police officer applicants.
4. Visiting dignitaries.
5. Officials or officers from other jurisdictions/states.
6. Other persons approved by the Chief of Police or an OPD Deputy Chief / Director.

**EXAMPLES:** Douglas County 911 employees, members of the media, etc.

**B. Ride-Along participants shall be subject to a Criminal History Record Check/Background Check.**

1. A local check shall be conducted by the precinct in which the Ride-Along has been requested.
  - a. If more than a local check is needed, the precinct will request assistance from the OPD Backgrounds/Inspections Unit (BIU). The BIU will ensure a waiver is completed prior.
2. The following offenses/findings shall normally disqualify persons from being able to participate in a Ride-Along unless specifically approved by the Chief of Police or an OPD Deputy Chief / Director:
  - a. Any felony conviction.
  - b. Board of Mental Health committals.
  - c. Conviction for "Resisting Arrest" within the last ten (10) years.
  - d. Conviction for "Assault of a Peace Officer."
  - e. Two or more convictions of "Assault" within the last five (5) years.
  - f. Two or more convictions of "Driving Under the Influence" (DUI) within the last five (5) years.
  - g. Conviction for "Carrying Concealed Weapon" or other weapons offenses within the last five (5) years.
  - h. Currently under Court jurisdiction.
  - i. Conviction of any Sex Offense.
  - j. Any documented gang affiliations.
  - k. Any criminal record or other factor determined to be detrimental to the objectives of the OPD.

**C. Ride-Along participants must be at least nineteen (19) years of age.**

**III. Required Forms and Form Routing**

A. An OPD “Ride-Along Request Form” ([OPD Form 112J](#)) shall be submitted by all eligible persons who would like to request a Ride-Along.

1. [OPD Form 112J](#) is available to OPD employees via PowerDMS and to the public on the OPD website.

**NOTE:** Non-OPD employees should be referred to the OPD website to obtain the form, when feasible.

2. If the applicant is an OPD volunteer or intern, an OPD Chaplain, or a member of the Omaha Coalition of Citizen Patrols (OCCP), the completed [OPD Form 112J](#) shall be forwarded to the OPD Volunteer Coordinator.
  - a. The Volunteer Coordinator will work with the respective UPB precinct captain or designee of the precinct in which the Ride-Along is requested to check the local criminal history record of the applicant.
    - (1) If more than a local check is needed, the OPD Backgrounds / Inspections Unit (BIU) will be consulted for a broader Criminal History / Background Check of the applicant.
  - b. If the check is favorable, the Volunteer Coordinator will inform the Ride-Along applicant they have been approved to participate in a Ride-Along and will obtain the appropriate signed OPD “Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement and Covenant Not to Sue” form ([OPD Form 40](#)) or signed OPD “OPD Behavioral Health and Wellness Unit Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement, and Covenant Not to Sue” form ([OPD Form 40A](#)) from the applicant.
    - (1) The original, signed [OPD Form 40](#) or [40A](#) shall be forwarded to the OPD Data Unit (Administrative Information Coordinator) for filing and scanning into the OPD Records Management System.

**NOTE:** All signed Form 40’s and 40A’s will be maintained in OPD Data Unit files for a minimum of five (5) years.
    - (2) A copy of all signed forms will be maintained in the respective precinct/section files for a period of five (5) years.
  - c. The Volunteer Coordinator shall notify the respective OPD precinct/section captain if the background check was “cleared” and shall forward a copy of the “Ride-Along Request” form and the signed “Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement, and Covenant Not to Sue” so the Ride-Along can be scheduled with the applicant.
3. If the applicant is a community leader, visiting dignitary, potential police officer candidate, or other type of applicant they shall submit a completed “Ride-Along Request” form ([OPD Form 112J](#)) to the captain of the precinct/section in which they wish to have their Ride-Along.
  - a. The respective precinct/section captain or designee will check the local criminal history record of the applicant.
    - (1) If more than a local check is needed, the OPD Backgrounds/Inspections Unit (BIU) will be consulted for a broader Criminal History/Background Check of the applicant.

- b. If the Criminal History/Background Check is favorable, the precinct/section captain or designee will inform the Ride-Along applicant they have been approved to participate in a Ride-Along and will obtain a signed OPD “Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement, and Covenant Not to Sue” form ([OPD Form 40](#)) or “OPD Behavioral Health and Wellness Unit Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement and Covenant Not to Sue” form (OPD [Form 40A](#)), as applicable, from the applicant.

- (1) The original signed [OPD Form 40](#) or [40A](#) shall be forwarded to the OPD Data Unit (Administrative Information Coordinator) for filing and scanning into the OPD Records Management System.

**NOTE:** All signed forms will be maintained in OPD Data Unit files for a minimum of five (5) years.

- (2) A copy of all forms will be maintained in the respective precinct/section files for a period of five (5) years.

- 4. If the applicant is a sworn employee from an outside law enforcement agency, their credentials shall be verified prior to the Ride-Along by the captain, or designee, of the precinct or section in which they request to have their Ride-Along.

- a. Their status as an outside sworn law enforcement officer shall be documented on the “Ride-Along Request Form” ([OPD Form 112J](#)) in the “OPD Office Use Only” space for “Notes.”

- b. The respective precinct/section captain or designee shall verify the requesting party’s credentials and conduct a local check of the applicant.

- (1) If more than a local check is needed, the OPD Backgrounds/Inspections Unit (BIU) will be consulted for a broader Criminal History/Background Check of the applicant.
    - (2) If the background check is favorable the respective precinct captain or designee will inform the Ride-Along applicant they have been approved to attend a Ride-Along. The precinct/section captain or designee will then obtain a signed the “Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement and Covenant Not to Sue” form ([OPD Form 40](#)) from the applicant.
    - (3) The original signed “Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement, and Covenant Not to Sue” form shall be forwarded to the OPD Data Unit (Administrative Information Coordinator) for filing and scanning into the OPD Records Management System.

**NOTE:** All signed “Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement, and Covenant Not to Sue” forms will be maintained in OPD Data Unit files for a period of five (5) years.

- (4) A copy of all “Ride-Along Request” forms and “Ride-Along Release, Indemnity Agreement, and Covenant Not to Sue” forms will be maintained in the respective precinct/section files for a period of five (5) years.

## REFERENCES:

### I. Laws

- A. Nebraska Revised Statutes (NRS) § [28-1201](#) – [28-1202.04](#), and [69-2427](#) – [69-2445](#).

## **II. Previous OPD Orders**

- A. General Orders: #78-18, 72-23, and 58-24.

## **III. Other**

- A. PPM Monthly Updates: #04-2021 and 08-2021.