

	<b>Onslow County Sheriff's Office</b> GENERAL ORDER	<b>Number:</b> 1.1
	<b>Subject:</b> RIDE ALONG	<b>Effective Date:</b> 12/5/2022
	<b>Revised:</b> 12/5/22	<b>Pages:</b> 6

**GO 1.1.0 OBJECTIVE**

Establish a program and guidelines that will allow citizens, other agency law enforcement personnel, and Sheriff's Office Detention Officers an opportunity to ride with patrol deputies to enhance their understanding of the Patrol Unit functions.

**GO 1.1.1 REMARKS**

The Onslow County Sheriff's Office strives to establish a climate of openness and honesty with a mutual desire with our citizens to perform our duties with respect, acceptance, understanding, and approval of the public.

**GO 1.1.2 POLICY**

**Ride Along Request Form and Waiver**

Requesting participants shall complete a Ride Along Request Form and Liability Waiver. The Division Major shall approve the Ride Along request.

**Eligibility**

Participants must be of good reputation, with no felony convictions or serious misdemeanor convictions. The Sheriff's Office will conduct a background check before approving the Ride Along request.

Any applicant may be disqualified from participating in the program. The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant and are not limited to:

1. Being under 18 years of age.
2. Prior criminal history.
3. Pending criminal action.
4. Any previous and pending lawsuit against the County.
5. Denial by Command Staff.
6. Attitude inconsistent with honorable law enforcement service.

Onslow County Sheriff's Office Deputies may not request a family member to participate in the Ride Along Program to have that family member ride with them.

Priority to participating in the Ride Along Program is given to current or alumni Onslow County Sheriff's Office citizen law enforcement academy graduates, Onslow County government employees, or sworn law enforcement officers from other agencies.

Certified and retired law enforcement officers or detention officers in good standing and current employees of the Onslow County Sheriff's Office are not required to obtain local records checks before requesting to participate in the Ride-Along Program.

Participants with unfavorable reports within the community, the organization they represent, or those with recent criminal misconduct will not be allowed to participate.

### **Background Check**

A local criminal records check shall be obtained encompassing at least the past five (5) years of residency within Onslow County. Citizen candidates with less than five (5) years of residence must have a criminal records check from their previous state or county in conjunction with the local check.

Participants shall be eighteen (18) years of age or older. The following exceptions apply to the age requirement:

1. Active members of the Sheriff's Office's Explorer Post who have completed at least twenty-five (25) hours with the program and a parent or guardian shall sign the Liability Waiver form.
2. High school seniors completing their senior project, and the Ride Along is part of said project. The participant shall have a written request from their senior project manager. A parent or guardian shall sign the Liability Waiver form.

Law enforcement personnel from other agencies, Sheriff's Office members or members of their immediate family, BLET candidates, college interns, citizens of Onslow County, and others deemed appropriate for educational or civic reasons. Sheriff's Office member's family members will not ride with their law enforcement relative unless approved by the Sheriff or Chief Deputy.

The Sheriff or Chief Deputy must approve special category participants. Special category participants include:

1. Elected officials or candidates for office
2. Government representatives
3. Media personnel

The Sheriff or their designee has final approval for Ride Along participation. Division Majors may approve a ride-along unless specifically outlined within this policy.

### **Disclaimer**

Each participant must sign a disclaimer that releases the Sheriff's Office from all liabilities before permission to ride along will be granted.

### **Understanding of Rules**

Each participant must read and understand this policy, initialing each paragraph to indicate their agreement and willingness to follow the stated directions of the policy.

## **GO 1.1.3 SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS AND DEPUTY REQUIREMENTS**

Participants in the Ride Along program will be required to provide valid picture identification, i.e., driver's license, state-issued identification card, or military I.D., to the deputy assigned before being permitted into the patrol vehicle. This identification must be on the participant's body during the ride.

The deputy shall not allow the participant to access confidential or sensitive situations.

When a deputy is assigned a rider, they will use the opportunity to fully acquaint the participant with their assigned duties and responsibilities, including the hazards and dangers involved.

They will attempt to expose the participant to law enforcement work without exposing them to hazardous situations. The participant shall not interfere with the deputy performing their duties.

Deputies shall review the Ride Along form and ensure that the ride has been approved. The deputy shall notify Communications that they have a ride-along.

Deputies with ride-along participants shall not expose the ride-along to an incident or call for service with an exceptionally high level of danger. Deputies shall inform their supervisor of the conflict, and another deputy shall be dispatched to the call. If another deputy is unavailable to cover the call, the deputy should temporarily discontinue the ride by dropping the rider off at a safe and open public location. The deputy shall notify Communications of the rider's status and location. The supervisor should plan to retrieve the rider and have the rider transported to the deputy's location after the scene is secure or to the office by another deputy to terminate the Ride Along for that day.

The deputy may also discontinue the ride if continuing the ride would threaten the deputy's safety or substantially interfere with discharging their duties.

The deputy will consider the law enforcement objective, the danger to the participant in continuing, the danger in the participant not continuing (as in weather, hazardous conditions, location of discharge, etc.), and the participant's attitude or request.

Deputies should not shield the rider too carefully from the law enforcement activities since experience and enhancement of the agency's functions are the purposes of the Ride Along Program. However, riders shall not participate in enforcing the law or be subject to dangerous situations to the health and welfare of the rider.

Deputies shall report all adverse or suspicious incidents involving the citizen rider to their supervisors. This shall be in writing.

Deputies and other members shall refrain from conversing or conveying personal or personnel problems to the rider. Matters involving opinions, politics, and topics that would be in poor taste for the Sheriff's Office should not be discussed.

Deputies will not use the Mobile Data Terminal to research or obtain information on a subject requested by the Ride Along.

### **Termination**

Participants in the Ride Along Program who refuse to abide by the rules, abuse the program or jeopardize the safety of any deputy or their safety will be immediately returned to the office.

The deputy involved shall report the issue to the Sheriff or Chief Deputy and determine whether to suspend or terminate the Ride Along participant's privilege to ride in the future.

#### **GO 1.1.4 AVAILABILITY HOURS FOR RIDE-ALONG:**

The Ride Along Program is available each week on Saturday and Sunday. The Ride Along times are from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Exceptions to this schedule may be made with the approval of the Sheriff or Chief Deputy.

Once approved, civilian participants will be allowed to ride no more than once every two months, except Onslow County Sheriff's Office Detention Officers, chaplains, other law enforcement, and select alumni citizens law enforcement academy graduates.

When practical, participants who request multiple opportunities to participate in the Ride Along Program should be rotated among deputies.

#### **GO 1.1.5 GENERAL RULES FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Participants must request approval at least 48 hours before riding.

Participants must obey the lawful directions and guidance provided by the deputy they are riding with.

Participants will not be allowed to carry weapons during the ride-along except for qualified law enforcement officers under the Law Enforcement Officers' Safety Act (LEOSA). Eligible participants not in a law enforcement uniform will carry their weapons concealed.

Participants shall not have access to any computer databases, i.e., DCI, NCIC, eWarrants, Veripic, etc., used in the day-to-day operations of the Sheriff's Office unless they are certified and employed by the Sheriff's Office.

Participants will not be able to operate Sheriff's Office equipment unless it is a case of an emergency that threatens the safety of the deputy, the ride-along, or an innocent party.

Participants will not perform or become involved in a law enforcement function unless an emergency threatens the deputy, the rider, or an innocent citizen.

Participants must abide by the policies of the Sheriff's Office.

Participants will not use the Ride Along Program to promote business or political opinions.

Participants will not be allowed to enter crime scenes or areas sensitive to an investigation.

Participants may enter any public property. Participants must have permission from the property owner to enter private property. The deputy assigned to the rider will seek

permission from the property owner. If declined, the rider will remain inside the patrol vehicle until the call for service is completed.

Participants that are current Sheriff's Office detention officers shall be limited to a 6-hour tour and must be conducted on a scheduled non-workday.

No audio, video, picture, recording, or other digital reproduction may be made by any Ride Along passenger at any time without the express consent of the Sheriff.

**BY ORDER OF SHERIFF CHRISTOPHER D. THOMAS**

**DIGITALLY SIGNED**