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**ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE – 103.006**  
**PATROL OBSERVERS**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: October 15, 1994**  
**REVIEW DATE: Annual**  
**AFFECTS: All Personnel**

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**REVISION DATE: April 11, 2017**

**I. PURPOSE**

This directive establishes procedures to help ensure the safety of citizens who wish to observe patrol activity by accompanying an officer on patrol. The practice is beneficial to both citizens and officers who participate in the program. Officers are given the opportunity to explain the "hows" and "whys" of police work that members of our profession often accept as standard procedure. The citizen, who sometimes envisions daily patrol as comparable to television drama, now sees an incident from the officer's perspective. Both parties gain a better understanding of police/public contacts and both are able to provide positive ideas for improving police/community relations.

For people involved in various police programs and for civilian employees, the opportunity to "ride on shift" serves to enhance the training process. For friends and relatives, riding provides a better understanding of an officer's duties and may calm their concerns about officer safety. In all instances, participation in the process allows an officer to present a positive image of our Department.

**II. POLICY**

Departmental policy allows civilians to ride with on-duty patrol officers as observers. The administration supports the policy as a learning process for civilians and officers alike. Officers are encouraged to participate in the ride-along program and to make every effort to explain the questions their rider may have. The policy outlined below attempts to minimize any disruption to the patrol officer's obligations and make the experience meaningful for both the officer and the citizen observer.

**III. PROCEDURES**

Patrol Observers will be authorized in accordance with the following guidelines:

**A. Law Enforcement Explorers**

1. Law Enforcement Explorers will be permitted to ride-out when approved by an Explorer Post Advisor in accordance with the Post's rules and regulations and any applicable Department S.O.P. or Administrative Directive.

**B. Student Interns**

1. Student Interns will be permitted to ride-out as scheduled by the Training Coordinator in accordance with the Administrative Directive 105.008.

**C. Volunteer Citizen Group Members**

1. The Support Services Division (SSD) will schedule current Citizens Police Academy Members for a ride-out in accordance with the course curriculum.
2. The Support Services Division will schedule Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association (CPAAA) members in good standing for a ride-out. Members of the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association may ride once per calendar year as scheduled by the Support Services Division.
3. Youth Police Academy participants will be scheduled for their ride-out by the program coordinator in accordance with the program curriculum.
4. Persons in the Citizens Assisting Plano Police (CAPP) program may ride-out as part of their membership in the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association, but will otherwise not ride as a part of the Citizens Assisting Plano Police duties.

**D. Plano Police Applicants**

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In an effort to assist potential police applicants in making an informed decision regarding their career, any citizen who has a desire to become a police officer with the Plano Police Department will be afforded the opportunity to complete a ride-out under the following guidelines:

1. The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) will schedule applicants for their ride out.
  2. The applicant must be currently registered for a scheduled test and provide proof of registration to the Professional Standards Unit.
  3. The applicant may ride only one time.
- E. Friends and Family of Plano Police Department Employees
1. An employee requesting a family member or friend be allowed to ride will ensure all necessary paperwork is completed as far in advance as possible, but not less than 24-hours prior to the date of the ride unless approved by the Watch Commander. The employee making the request is also responsible for making arrangements with an officer to take the family member or friend on a ride-out.
  2. Family members and friends are restricted to one observation ride per calendar quarter.
- F. Law Enforcement Personnel From Other Agencies
1. Certified law enforcement personnel from local, state, or federal agencies will be permitted to ride-out and will not be required to undergo a criminal history check or complete the application process. However, the rider will be required to show his/her credentials and provide the name and phone number of a supervisory person in their agency capable of verifying the riders current employment status. The rider WILL NOT be permitted to ride unless their current employment status is verified.
  2. Officers from other agencies who are riding as part of a special duty status will be permitted to wear their department issued uniform only with approval from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
  3. Officers from other agencies, who are not on special duty assignment:
    - a. Will not ride in uniform;
    - b. Will not assist in building searches; and
    - c. Will not knowingly be placed in any situation where it is highly probable they need to establish identity as an officer. (Exception: There are emergency circumstances in which an officer from another agency must assist in order to prevent personal injury, combative arrests, etc.)
- G. Other Persons Affiliated with The Plano Police Department
1. Plano Police Department Chaplains, Compliance Coordinator(s) performing audits, and the Police Legal Advisor may ride-out under the following guidelines.
    - a. Must have the approval of the on-duty watch commander;
    - b. Must make their own arrangements with whom they want to ride;
    - c. May ride at any time
  2. Civilian employees of the Department or Public Safety Communications Personnel who are in training or who must observe field activity as a duty assignment and participants in the

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Leadership Plano or Management Preparation Program (MP3) may ride-out under the following guidelines:

- a. Must have the approval of the on-duty watch commander;
- b. May ride at specific times prearranged by their supervisor or program coordinator;
- c. Civilian employees may only ride-out while on-duty;

H. Political Officials, Candidates, and/or Potential Candidates

1. Individuals who hold a political office, are running for a political office, or are preparing to run for a political office may be permitted to ride-out when approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

I. NCIC/TCIC Access

1. Law Enforcement Explorers, Student Interns, Volunteer Citizen Group Members, Plano Police Applicants, Family and Friends of PPD Employees, Other persons Affiliated with PPD, and Political Officials, Candidates, and/or Potential Candidates, are permitted to observe police operations but will not be permitted direct access or view of NCIC/TCIC information or patients in the care of the fire department in order to protect the privacy of citizens.

Note: The prohibition against direct access or view of NCIC/TCIC information does not apply to persons who are currently certified in NCIC/TCIC operations.

J. Restricted from participating in patrol observation

- a. Persons who may be deemed a safety risk to themselves, the officer or others;
- b. Off-duty Plano Police Officers (Due to Fair Labor Standards Act restrictions);
- c. Any person who does not have prior approval of the on-duty watch commander.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

Note: During those times when the threat alert has been increased through the National Threat Advisory System of the Department of Homeland Security ride-outs may be limited or suspended at the discretion of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

K. Approval Procedures

1. Ride Along Program Coordinator

The 1<sup>st</sup> Watch Command Area 01 Watch Commander will serve as the Ride Along Program Coordinator for the Department. The coordinator or his/her designee is responsible for the review and pre-approval of all paperwork related to the ride-along request and for notifying Patrol of those persons who are approved to ride with an officer.

Note: Even though a person has been pre-approved to participate in the Ride-Along Program, the on-duty Watch Commander may refuse to allow the person to ride on a particular day or time because of manpower limitations, specific police activity that is anticipated, if the observer is inappropriately dressed, etc. The final decision will be made by the on-duty Watch Commander.

2. Rider Request Forms

- a. All persons, regardless of their relationship to the Department, must complete an Adult Ride Along Application for Patrol Observation form or a Juvenile Ride Along Application for Patrol Observation form the first time they request or are assigned to ride.

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- b. Completed forms are forwarded to the Ride Along Program Coordinator.
  - c. The coordinator or his/her designee will ensure the form and a criminal history report on the subject are filed in an area accessible to the Watch Commanders.
  - d. Any Watch Commander having a question about the status of specific individuals requesting to ride should review the Rider Request Record file.
  - e. Information (release of liability forms, criminal history records, memos, etc.) obtained as a result of subsequent requests to ride are forwarded to the coordinator or his/her designee for inclusion in files.
  - f. The Rider Request Form is updated to show each time an individual makes a request to ride OR is approved to ride based on submission of a Release of Liability Form.
3. Release of Liability Forms
- a. Civilian personnel of the City of Plano **WILL NOT** complete a Release of Liability form if they are scheduled to ride for training purposes or as a special duty assignment.
  - b. All other persons, including police chaplains, off duty civilian police personnel, interns, Law Enforcement Explorers, etc. must sign a Release of Liability Form each time they ride with an officer.
  - c. Persons under the age of 18 years must have the Release of Liability Form co-signed by their parent or legal guardian.
  - d. No person under the age of 17 will be permitted to ride-out, with the exception of Law Enforcement Explorers and Youth Police Academy participants. The Chief of Police or his/her designee may waive this restriction at his/her discretion.
  - e. The Release of Liability Forms becomes a part of the rider's permanent file maintained by Patrol Services.
4. Police Ride Along Rules of Conduct
- a. Each civilian observer, prior to being approved to ride along, shall read the "Rules of Conduct" (attachment). In signing the release of liability form, the civilian observer agrees to abide by the Rules of Conduct.
5. Criminal History Checks
- a. All riders who are not employees of the Plano Police Department or of the City of Plano Public Safety Communications must be checked through the NCIC/TCIC computer system and local police records Master Name Index Search for the existence of a criminal history and/or outstanding warrants prior to approval. The Watch Commander should be notified of any pertinent information about the rider that is discovered in the Master Name Index and/or CCH.
  - b. The following may be justification for rejection of the request by the watch commander:
    - (1) Has a history of narcotics addiction within the past 5 years;
    - (2) Has a history of suicidal tendencies or attempts in the past 5 years;
    - (3) Has been convicted of a Class B or above offense within the past 5 years;
    - (4) Has been convicted of a felony in the past 10 years;

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(5) Has been arrested 2 or more times for any offense in the past 5 years, with arrests for Class C traffic offenses excluded on a case-by-case basis.

c. The Criminal History check is initiated by the coordinator or his/her designee and becomes part of the rider's file.

L. Officer Responsibility

1. The assigned officer shall control the activities of the rider. Discretion must be used in order to provide appropriate safety and protection.
2. The officer will require the rider to stay in the patrol vehicle if potential risk is anticipated; or, if deemed appropriate, drop the rider off at a safe location.
3. Riders will not be allowed to handle any evidence or property, become involved in discussions with suspects, victims or witnesses or engage in any activity that could hamper an investigation.
4. Riders under the age of 18, regardless of their association to the Department, will not accompany officers on bar checks.
5. Officers should extend the utmost courtesy and respect to persons who ride with them. The officer should encourage discussion and questions, but should be mindful not to release information that could be confidential in nature.
6. The Plano Police Department will not allow any rider to accompany officers into a private place, such as a private residence, for any purpose. Consent can only be granted by the property owner or an adult tenant, if the property owner does not reside at the location.

M. Officer's Refusal/Discontinuation of a Rider

1. Although supervisors normally ask officers to voluntarily take an observer, circumstances may require the assignment of an observer to a particular officer. In these circumstances, the assignment of a rider to an officer is considered a duty assignment and cannot be refused, except:
  - a. On the basis of personality conflicts, for safety reasons, or the personal hygiene of the rider; or
  - b. If the officer chooses to not have a Police Chaplain as a rider.
2. The refusal or discontinuation of a rider shall be discussed with the on-duty supervisor who will decide to terminate the ride or reassign the rider.
3. Discontinuation of a ride shall be documented by a memo written by the officer. The memo must:
  - a. Give specific reasons for terminating the ride;
  - b. Be forwarded to the Ride Along Program Coordinator or his/her designee for inclusion in the rider's file.

N. Supervisor Responsibility

1. Supervisors are encouraged to maintain a rotational system to promote fair and equal assignment of riders among shift officers.
2. Supervisors have the authority to cancel, terminate, suspend or refuse any rider for failure to comply with policy or instructions from the assigned officer.
3. At their discretion supervisors may limit the number of riders per shift.

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4. Supervisors may, in the best interest of the Department and the persons involved, choose to assign the rider to an officer other than one specifically requested.