

**PORTSMOUTH, NH POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE****S-106
CITIZEN RIDE ALONG PROGRAM****EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-25-85****REMARKS:****REVISIONS: 08-05-99; 05-14-08; 09-28-16; 03-09-17; 05-23-17; 01-25-24; 05-21-24****I. PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of this standard operating procedure to establish procedures in obtaining special authorization to ride in police vehicles or sit in the Emergency Communications Center. The Portsmouth Police Department is interested in assisting citizens in learning the intricate workings of police functions. The primary purpose of the program is to educate the public as to the activities of the Portsmouth Police Department.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Portsmouth Police Department to continue the ride along/sit-in program, however, due to concerns of liability and potential interference with an officer's duties, rules governing the program and the participants have been set forth in this policy.

III. PROCEDURE**Objectives and Eligibility**

- A. It is the objective of the Portsmouth Police Department to provide the opportunity for citizens to learn about this agency and the field of law enforcement in a safe and professional manner.
- B. A citizen ride-along program will expose the participant to the daily operations of patrol/communications and, in some cases, provide insight to those individuals working toward a career in law enforcement.
- C. The following persons are eligible to participate in the program at the discretion of the Chief of Police, or his/her designee:
 - 1. Residents of Portsmouth who are eighteen (18) years of age and older.
 - 2. Visiting law enforcement personnel.
 - 3. Portsmouth Police Department non-sworn employees.
 - 4. An adult relative of an active Portsmouth Police Department employee.

5. Professionals and students in the field of Criminal Justice or similar fields who are 18 years of age or older.
 6. Portsmouth Police Explorers, with permission from the Explorer Coordinator. If under the age of 18, the Explorer's parent or legal guardian shall complete the Portsmouth Police Department Ride Along/Sit-In Request Form (RAP-1 see attachment "A")
 7. Portsmouth City officials.
 8. Members of the news media.
 9. Others approved by the Chief of Police.
- D. Participation in this program will be restricted to once every six (6) months unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Police.

Making the Request

- A. All requests must be initiated by completing the Portsmouth Police Department Ride Along/Sit-In Request Form AND the Confidentiality Agreement.
 1. Applications must be submitted to the Shift Commander no less than 3 business days prior to the requested ride-along date.
 2. All applications will be reviewed regarding the eligibility of the participant, the date being requested, and the staffing levels on the requested date.
- B. Applicant names will be checked in IMC, through NCIC/SPOTS, and through the Interstate Identification Index (III) for the existence of any active warrants or criminal history. The results will be reviewed by the Lieutenant of Patrol or his designee.
- C. The application will be reviewed and approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- D. The Shift Commander of the approved shift will be advised of the ride-along approval and they will then notify the applicant. The Shift Commander will also advise the participant of the appropriate dress attire.
- E. All requests will be assigned a CAD number.
- F. The Ride Along/Sit-In Request Form and the Confidentiality Agreement will be forwarded to the Personnel and Training Division after the above steps have been completed.

Preparing the Ride-Along

- A. The on-duty Shift Commander will alert the assigned ride-along officer so that they may prepare for their assignment.
- B. The participant will present positive I.D. to the on-duty Shift Commander and/or assigned ride-along officer. Such I.D.s may include a valid driver's license, birth certificate, U.S. Passport, or U.S. Military Common Access Card.
- C. If time permits, the participant should arrive in time to observe the shift briefing.
- D. The assigned officer shall brief the participant on safety and procedural guidelines, such as:
 1. Safety equipment found within the police vehicle. This may include identifying the location of first aid kits and the procedures in the use of the police radio if an emergency arises.
 2. At no time will the assigned officer respond to a high-risk call or participate in a vehicle pursuit with a participant present in their vehicle. The officer will explain to the participant that they may need to drop them off at a safe location if the situation dictates. The officer should explain in a manner that will assure the participant that their safety is most important and that their drop off time would be minimized as much as possible.
 3. For the purposes of this policy, high-risk calls can be defined as:
 - a. Cases involving, or believed to be involving the use of deadly weapons;
 - b. Any situation where there is a potential for exposure to explosives, hazardous materials, or natural / man-made disasters;
 - c. Any instance where, in the opinion of the officer and/or Shift Commander, the risk is too high for the participant to be present.
 4. The officer should provide the participant with the phone number to police communications should they need to be dropped off. This can be achieved quickly through the distribution of the officer's business card.
 5. The participant should be advised to withhold all comments and questions concerning the manner in which a call is being handled until the situation is over.
 6. All participants are prohibited from carrying a firearm or other dangerous weapon.
 7. The participant should be advised that they may observe an event that could require their appearance in court as a witness.

- E. Should the assigned officer drop the ride-along participant off at a safe location, they shall alert the Shift Commander immediately once the matter has stabilized.
- F. The participant can terminate their ride-along at any point.

Operational Procedures

- A. The Shift Commander holds the right to terminate or suspend the ride-along at any time during the assigned shift.
- B. Ride-along participants shall ride in the front passenger seat and shall wear their seatbelt at all times.
- C. The ride-along participant shall not get out of the vehicle during any motor vehicle stops or incidents that have the potential of turning into a high-risk call (examples being domestic disputes, burglar alarms, or a fight). The assigned officer should always err on the side of caution and have the participant remain in the vehicle if there's a potential for danger.
- D. Officers should introduce the participant as a ride-along to all citizens they come in contact with. At no time should the ride-along converse with arrestees, detainees, or involved parties to an incident or crime.
- E. Prior to the completion of the ride-along, the assigned officer should debrief the participant to ensure that all questions have been answered.
- F. If available the Shift Commander should also meet with participant to review the events from the shift.

Restrictions

- A. Ride-along participants are prohibited from observing any special investigation operation or any other investigation that may be compromised by their presence.
- B. Ride-along participants are not permitted in the booking room (station tours free of prisoners excluded). The participant will remain in the lobby during the processing of a prisoner.
- C. Ride-along participants will remain in the police cruiser during prisoner transfer at the Rockingham County Jail.
- D. Recording devices of any kind are strictly prohibited. The use of cameras can only be approved, in advance, by the Chief of Police.

Mark D. Newport, Chief of Police
MDN/jca

Portsmouth Police Department
Citizen Ride Along/Communications Sit-In Request

Dear Chief,

I would like to ride along/sit-in on (date) _____ for the time period of _____ to _____ with Officer/Dispatcher _____.

I have read the release form and I understand the provisions of the release form and the instructions I must adhere to.

NAME: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSON

NAME: _____ TELEPHONE # _____

Signature of Person Requesting Ride Along/Sit-In: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian if under 18: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY OFFICER / SUPERVISOR

- Resident at least 18 years of age
- Visiting Law Enforcement Personnel
- Portsmouth Police Department Personnel
- Adult relative of Officer/Dispatcher
- Professional/Student in the field of Criminal Justice
- Portsmouth Police Explorer
- Portsmouth City Official
- Member of News Media
- Otherwise approved by the Chief of Police

AUTHORIZATION BLOCK

This request is APPROVED []

This request is NOT APPROVED []

Chief of Police or designee

CAD #

Officer Comments (Optional):

PLEASE RETURN TO THE PERSONNEL AND TRAINING DIVISION

Portsmouth Police Department
Non-Disclosure of Confidential Information and Waiver of Liability

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

- I. As evidenced by my signature below, I agree not to discuss or disclose any person's personal information observed or heard while participating in the Communications Sit in Program, the Police Ride Along Program, the Police Explorer Program, the Citizens Police Academy, Internship or any other similar program by the Portsmouth Police Department. This confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement includes, but is not limited to, criminal histories, motor vehicle information or anything gained from an ongoing or past police investigation.
- II. Any breach of confidentiality or disclosure of any such information is a misdemeanor and by signing this document, I state I am fully aware of this fact and will be subject to criminal prosecution as well as possible civil liability for any such breach. I am also aware that Federal as well as State Statutes governing the privacy of an individual's records will also be violated by such breach or disclosure.
- III. I, binding my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, do hereby release and agree not to hold liable the City of Portsmouth, its officers, agents and employees, for any and all actions, causes of actions, claims, demands, costs or damages, both foreseen and unforeseen, arising from or resulting from property damage, personal injuries or death sustained by me or my property or any of my heirs or assigns as a result of my participation in the Communications Sit in Program, the Police Ride Along Program, the Police Explorer Program, the Citizens Police Academy, Internship or any other similar program by the Portsmouth Police Department, whether caused by negligence or an intentional act.
- IV. I understand that my participation in this program may include riding in a police vehicle with a police officer who will be responding to police calls for service and performing other police duties. I hereby agree to obey the instructions of any police officer regarding matters affecting official police business. I know that, as an inherent incident of my participation in this program, I may at times be placed in unpredictable situations, both foreseeable and unforeseeable, which may be dangerous and could lead to serious bodily injury or death, and that there is no duty on the part of the City nor any of its officers or employees to protect me from said danger.
- V. I understand that prior to participation in the program that a warrant and criminal history check will be conducted, which may reveal information that renders me ineligible for the program. I further understand that the program may be terminated at any time by the Portsmouth Police Department for any or no reason at all.
- VI. I state that I have carefully read this Release, know the contents, accept the conditions stated herein and sign my name as a free and voluntary act.

CAUTION: This is a complete release of all rights. Read carefully before signing.

Signature: _____ Date signed: _____

Witness Signature: _____

Printed name of Witness: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO THE PERSONNEL AND TRAINING DIVISION