

607 EXPLORER RIDE-A-LONG PROGRAM

- I. DISCUSSION: The Explorer Ride-A-Long Program is designed to provide the Law Enforcement Explorer an opportunity to observe and gain practical experiences, with regard to the methods and techniques used by the Tampa Police Department, as they observe and converse with officers and Professional Staff employees during the performance of their routine patrol and job functions, respectively. This will help foster mutual respect between community youth and employees of the criminal justice system.

This program has been approved and adopted by the Boy Scouts of America and the National Learning for Life Law Enforcement Exploring Program.

The Tampa Police Department's Explorer Program provides the Law Enforcement Explorer: (a) an opportunity to gain a greater appreciation for the challenges which directly influence uniform patrol operations, (b) allows the Law Enforcement Explorer to have a better understanding for the importance of the services which the Tampa Police Department provides to the citizens who reside within the City of Tampa on a daily basis, and (c) gives the Law Enforcement Explorer a firsthand look at how these fundamental principles are applied.

The examples and guidelines listed in this operating procedure are only intended as suggestions for the approved police officer and/or an approved Professional Staff employee, as there might be other areas which an Explorer should or should not participate in; therefore each situation or experience should be considered separately and individually, according to the totality of the circumstances, while completing an Explorer Ride-A-Long with Tampa Police Department personnel.

Care must be taken to try to avoid hazardous situations and to minimize the possibility of injury to the Law Enforcement Explorer and avoid the risk of liability on behalf of the Tampa Police Department and the City of Tampa.

II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Post: Refers to the Tampa Police Explorer Program, established in 1976. This designation is also known as #275.
- B. Explorer: Young men and women, between the ages of 14 -20, who are interested in a career in law enforcement with a comprehensive program of training, competition, service, and practical experiences.
- C. Executive Chairperson for the Post: Refers to the Chief of Police.
- D. Committee Chairperson for the Post: Refers to the person appointed by the Executive Chairperson to oversee the Post Committee, the Post Advisor, and the

Explorer Program, offered by the Tampa police Department. Normally this will be a member of the Staff of the Division that oversees the Explorer program.

- E. Post Committee: A committee of three or more persons, who are employees with the Tampa Police Department, decided on by the Post Committee Chairperson, the Post Advisor, and as approved by the Executive Chairperson.
- F. Post Advisor: The Tampa Police Officer who has been assigned to the Explorer Program
- G. Police Officer: A non-probationary, sworn police officer, who is employed by the Tampa Police Department, who has volunteered to participate in the Explorer Ride-A-Long Program, and who has been approved by the Post Advisor. They have also met all requirements set forth by the Boy Scouts of America and Learning for Life.
- H. Professional Staff Employee: A full-time, non-sworn employee of the Tampa Police Department, who has volunteered to participate in the Explorer Ride-A-Long Program, and who has been approved by the Post Advisor. They have also met all requirements set forth by the Boy Scouts of America and Learning for Life.
- I. Associate Advisor: An individual employed by the Tampa Police Department to work in conjunction with the Post Advisor as his designee, when they are unable to be at any post function. They too have met all requirements set forth by the Boy Scouts of America and Learning for Life.

III. PROCEDURE:

- A. An Explorer who has qualified to participate in the Tampa Police Department Explorer Ride-A-Long Program will wear the Tampa Police Explorer Uniform unless otherwise directed the Post Advisor. This uniform will consist of, but not be limited to, one of the following:
 - 1. The Class B or Short Sleeve Tampa Police Explorer Uniform which clearly displays the Tampa Police Explorer Insignia or patch predominately on both outer sleeves.
 - 2. The Class A or Long Sleeve Tampa Police Explorer Uniform which clearly displays the Tampa Police Explorer Insignia or patch predominately on both outer sleeves.
 - 3. The Tampa Police Explorer Bike Uniform which clearly displays the Tampa Police Explorer Insignia on the front of the Uniform Polo Shirt, the Tampa Police Explorer “retro reflective” wording on the back of the Uniform Polo Shirt, and the Tampa Police Explorer “retro reflective”

wording on the outer most area of each sleeve; which may also include the Tampa Police Explorer Insignia or Explorer patch. This uniform is to only be worn when the Explorer is utilizing a Police Bike.

- B. The Explorer will be assigned to a selected Sworn Officer or Professional Staff Employee who has completed the necessary training and certification with the Tampa Police Explorer Program, Boy Scouts of America, and/or Learning for Life and who is familiar with the Tampa Police Department's operating procedures for the Explorer Ride-A-Long Program.
- C. Explorers who are "Ride-A-Long Certified" may ride a prescribed number of hours per month, as set forth & outlined by the Tampa Police Explorer Operating Procedures and the Post Advisor.
- D. A participating Explorer may ride on various shifts only after the Explorer has met or exceeded all the necessary requirements and been given prior approval from the Post Advisor.
- E. The Explorer will provide a "Tampa Police Explorer Ride-A-Long Authorization Form" to either the District Shift Commander, Squad Sergeant, Squad Supervisor, and/or his/her designee for approval. The form will be signed and returned to the Post Advisor by the Explorer who is completing the approved "Ride-A-Long". This approval will be take place prior to reporting to the designated roll call area or location.
- F. No Explorer shall ever be in possession of any tobacco products, of any kind, while in a City Vehicle, and as an active member of the Tampa Police Explorer Program. This is a direct violation of post policy and grounds for immediate termination from the Tampa Police Explorer Program.
- G. During an approved Explorer "Ride-A-Long", the duties of the Explorer are primarily limited to observation and learning the functions of the officer who they are assigned to.
- H. Specific equipment is assigned to the Explorer for specific duties. This equipment is assigned to them by the Advisor and the Tampa Police Explorer Program. Authorization to carry such equipment is only issued after the Explorer has shown proficiency in each item they will carry for the "Ride-A-Long".
- I. The equipment issued will be utilized by the Explorer for predetermined duties and at the discretion of each Tampa Police Officer or the Tampa Police Department Personnel they are assigned to during the approved "Ride-A-Long".
- J. Due caution must be used so that when the Explorer performs predetermined duties they will not directly participate in any potentially volatile or dangerous situations

and they cannot be involved in the direct custodial arrest of a subject, except in a dire emergency.

K. Duties that the Explorer may perform may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The Explorer may operate the Police Radio to answer or give verbal transmissions by utilizing the Tampa Police Department Communications Signals, Ten Codes, or “Plain English” terminology, but only under supervision.
2. The Explorer may conduct Traffic Control utilizing the proper equipment issued to them which includes a High Visibility Tampa Police Explorer Traffic Vest, an Audible Whistle, a Tampa Police Explorer High Visibility Directional Wand, , and the Tampa Police Explorer Service Cap. The Tampa Police Explorer Style Ball Cap may be worn during inclement weather conditions.
3. The Explorer may exercise crowd control, at the discretion of the officer who they are assigned to and/or a Tampa Police Department Supervisor who is on scene and directing them to do so. If the situation becomes violent the Explorer will immediately retreat and notify the officer.
4. The Explorer may assist in writing, typing, or utilizing the computer system (MDT) of the assigned officer to assist with learning how to write Tampa Police Department reports. This also applies to learning the paper style portion of all reports as well.
5. The Explorer may carry with them a duplicate set of standard Tampa Police Department Vehicle car keys, as issued to them by the corresponding Tampa Police Department Personnel, with whom they are conducting the “Ride-A-Long”. The Explorer may not drive any departmental vehicles except in exigent circumstances.
6. The Explorer may carry with them a Tampa Police Explorer Duty Belt with equipment, which has been issued to them, by the Post Advisor and which meets or exceeds the standards of the Tampa Police Department and which complies with its Standard Operating Procedures and Policies. At no time will a Police Explorer have a firearm during any ride along.
7. Any Explorer who is participating in a Tampa Police Explorer “Ride-A-Long” and in a Tampa Police Explorer Uniform, will wear an issued ballistic vest at all times. The vest will meet or exceed departmental guidelines. This guideline is also set forth by the National Learning for Life Exploring Program, outlining equipment to be utilized by youth in the program.

8. The Tampa Police Explorer will also have issued to them: (a) Tampa Police Department Police Radio, (b) CPR Mask and/or the equivalent, (c) Surgical Style Gloves, (d) Handcuffs, (e) Tampa Police Explorer Jacket, (f) Tactical Tourniquet and or any other authorized First Aid equipment
9. Optional items an Explorer may carry with them: (a) Leatherman Tool, (b) Cellular Phone, (c) Folding Cutting Tool, (d) Collapsible Baton for rescue type situations.
10. Explorers may not guard or search prisoners or suspects at any time, write or issue uniform traffic citations (they may assist while they are being issued), drive police vehicles, complete an arrest affidavit (they may assist), or operate the police radio independently.

IV. GUIDELINES:

- A. Any member of the Tampa Police Explorer Program who meets the following qualifications, as well as additional requirements imposed by the Post Committee, will be permitted to ride as an observer with Professional Staff employees of the department; providing the following are met:
 1. Must be a member of the post for a minimum of six months, and
 2. Must complete, sign, and have parents or legal guardian complete, sign and have notarized the Release of Responsibility Form provided by the Post Lead Advisor. The form will be retained in the Explorer's personnel file kept within the Post, and
 3. Must have satisfactorily completed the Tampa Police Explorer Ride-A-long Examinations with a passing average grade of at least 86%. The exam will test knowledge of the Tampa Police Department SOPs, Tampa Police Explorer SOPs, criminal law, civil law, communications, first aid, and constitutional law; and
 4. Must be approved by the Post Advisor.
- B. Any member of the Tampa Police Explorers who meets the following qualifications, as well as, any additional requirements imposed by the Post Committee, will be permitted to ride as an observer with a police officer from the Tampa Police Department; along with these Post #275 criteria:
 1. Must fulfill all of the requirements of the guidelines above (IV.A);
 2. Must hold a valid CPR certification;

3. Must possess a valid Florida Driver's License;
4. Must be proficient in Tampa Police Department radio procedures and be able to utilize and understand all signals and codes used by the Tampa Police Department; and
5. Must have passed the Ride-A-Long Examinations as provided in Section IV.A.3.

Supersedes 607, dated 1/22