

University of Central Florida Public Safety and Police
General Order-617
Ride-Along Program



Effective Date: July 1, 2005

Review Authority: Main Campus Patrol Division
Commander

Revision Date: March 7, 2023

Annual Review: June

Rescinds: General Order 5001

Scope: All Public Safety and Police Personnel

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Policy Statement: The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for citizens to experience the law enforcement function first hand. This directive provides the guidelines and procedures to include: eligibility requirements to participate in the Ride-Along program, application, approval, and scheduling process, expectations and requirements of the observer for or the Ride-Along Program. The objective of the Public Safety and Police is to protect lives and property, educate the community, and provide a safe environment for the educational process. It is important for the community to understand the functions of the Department. To assist in this endeavor, the Ride-Along Program is established to provide opportunities for citizens of our community and visitors to observe policing firsthand and, through personal interaction, become better acquainted with the duties and responsibilities of our agency and personnel.

617.01 Eligibility Requirements: The University of Central Florida Police Department Ride-Along Program is offered to most interested persons with a few limitations. All applicants must meet the following criteria:

- a. Be at least 18 years of age.
- b. Complete the [Ride-Along Packet](#).
- c. Applicants must pass a background check.
- d. Complete Security Awareness Training.

The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant and are not limited to:

- a. Not a current subject of a criminal investigation
- b. Have no pending criminal charges
- c. Have not been convicted of a felony or violent misdemeanor
- d. Have not committed any violation involving moral turpitude as defined by the Criminal Justice Standards & Training Commission (CJSTC).
- e. Have no pending lawsuits against the Department

Applicants must receive approval from a Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee prior to participating in the Ride-Along Program. Any applicant may be denied without cause from participating in the program.

617.02 Application Process: Any person who requests to participate in the Ride-Along Program shall be directed to the police department website to complete an online interest form at <https://police.ucf.edu/ride-alongs>. Interest Forms will be reviewed by the Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee. After



successful initial screening, required forms will be sent to interested riders. The Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee shall review the Ride-Along Application for completeness and conduct a criminal history and Department records check. After successfully completing a background investigation, Communications will e-mail the applicant the online Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Level 2 Security Awareness Training. The Communications Manager or designee shall be responsible for creating and deactivating the account in CJIS Online for the applicant. The applicant must complete the Security Awareness training before participating in the ride along program. The applicant will have 30 days to complete this training. If the applicant cannot complete the training within the 30 days, the coordinator will deny the request for the ride-along and the applicant will need to start the application process over to take part in the Ride-Along Program.

The Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee shall notify the applicant that they have been approved or denied to participate in the program. The applicant's contact information shall be forwarded to a Patrol Sergeant for scheduling. The following are special circumstances that may permit limited exceptions to the application process:

- a. Non-sworn employees, when in a non-paid status and while acting as a private citizen, are bound by the Ride-Along Program Policy.
- b. Employees, when on duty and as part of their official duties, are exempt from the application process and time restrictions and shall comply with the other requirements and restrictions.
- c. Licensed Mental Health Counselors riding along from Devereux Behavioral Health in an official capacity working in conjunction with us are exempt from the application process and time restrictions, but shall comply with the other requirements.
- d. The UCF Office of the President and other UCF Department Heads, are exempt from the application process and time restrictions, but shall comply with the other requirements.
- e. All other exceptions shall be evaluated by the Chief of Police or his designee and decided on a case by case basis.
- f. All riders exempt under this section shall report to the Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee for further instructions.

617.03 Availability: The Ride-Along Program is available on most days of the weeks, with certain exceptions. The ride-along times are normally from 0700hrs. to 0400hrs. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Main Campus Patrol Commander (or their designee). Participation in the program is limited to one time every six (6) months, unless approved by Main Campus Patrol Commander. No more than two citizen observers shall be permitted to ride on a shift at any given time, unless part of a special detail, i.e. DUI Enforcement or if approved by shift supervisor based on staffing. Citizen rides will be scheduled in the following order:

- a. Departmental Needs
- b. Dispatchers, Victim Specialist, Recruits, Interns, Mental Health Clinician, etc.
- c. Media Observers (with Public Information Officer approval)
- d. Law Enforcement Observers
- e. Agency Applicants
- f. Standard Observers (priority for students, faculty and staff)

617.04 Standard Observer Requirements and Restrictions: The Ride-Along Program is for observation opportunities only. Maximum of six hours per ride along. Exceptions to the above requirements may be granted by the Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee. Riders shall not be permitted to carry any weapon to include firearms, batons, OC spray, electronic control devices, etc. Exceptions may be given to sworn officers from other agencies at discretion of Main Campus Patrol Commander. Riders shall be

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dressed appropriately in business casual attire which include, but not limited to, traditional dress shirts, knit shirts with collar, blouses, sweaters, jackets, and slacks or jeans that do not have holes in them. Foot wear should be conservative and comfortable, foot wear like tennis and hiking shoes are acceptable. Participants shall be neatly groomed. Inappropriate attire includes:

- a. Shorts or cutoff jeans
- b. Tank tops or halter tops
- c. Clothing bearing any sign or symbol that advertises any product, business, or organization.
- d. Clothing with any badge, insignia, or a uniform.
- e. Clothing with offensive designs, logos, slogans, letters, or fit
- f. Flip flops, open or slide-on sandals
- g. Clothing intentionally provocative or offensive

One small bag or purse, which is subject to search by any officer, is permitted to be carried inside the patrol vehicle during the citizen ride. While participating in the program the rider must obey any lawful order, direction or instruction from any police officer and shall remain in the department vehicle unless otherwise directed. The rider shall act as an observer only. The rider shall not take any enforcement activity. The rider shall not involve themselves in any police matter.

Riders shall be escorted at all times when in the Department. If an officer leaves/exits the patrol vehicle he or she shall secure their computer when a citizen is in the vehicle. Riders may be subpoenaed to court to testify as a witness in regards to their observations during particular incidents. Riders must wear a seat belt at all times while in the police vehicle and while the vehicle is in operation.

No tobacco use of any kind is permitted in the police vehicle or at any time during the citizen ride. Riders shall not be permitted to ride with a Community Service Officer. Riders shall not be permitted to ride with officers on probation. Riders shall not be permitted to ride with canine officers. Riders shall not be allowed to ride with an officer who resides with, or is related to them.

617.05 Sworn / Retired Law Enforcement Observers: The law enforcement official must be currently employed by a Federal, State, County or local law enforcement agency and must not be on suspension or administrative leave. The officer/deputy will not ride in uniform and must comply with the dress requirements for standard observers listed above. The officer/deputy must keep his/her weapon concealed inside of a holster in compliance with any rule, regulation, or policies of their employing department.

The officer/deputy will not draw or use his/her weapon unless emergency conditions exist. An emergency condition will be defined as those circumstances in which the observer, an officer, or a citizen is in imminent danger of great bodily injury or death. The officer/deputy will maintain an observer status and will not engage in any enforcement action. Sworn Law Enforcement Observers need to complete the following forms:

- a. Rider Program Application,
- b. Release of Responsibility form, and
- c. Security Awareness Acknowledgment for Non-Criminal Justice Personnel.

No CJIS Security Awareness Training is required upon verification that they already hold a higher level than required by communications.

617.06 Officers Responsibilities: Officers is responsible for the following:

- a. Review the rules with the rider and instruct the rider any violations of the Ride-Along Program may be cause for the ride to be terminated,



- b. Notify Communications when the rider begins the ride-along and at the completion of the ride-along,
- c. Treat all riders professionally,
- d. Answer questions asked by the observer completely and factually to the best of their knowledge,
- e. Be willing to discuss the Department's profession and commitment to the community, and
- f. Be mindful of their personal conduct and actions while in the presence of the observer.

If the officer believes there is a potential for problems during transportation of a prisoner; the observer shall be temporarily transferred to another officer or returned to the police department. Code 3 responses, vehicle pursuits, and certain police calls are inherently dangerous. The officer should use sound judgment and may decide to drop the observer off at a place of safety, if practical, before continuing. A place of safety for example could be a gas station or any other open business that is well lit. If this occurs, the officer should advise UCFPD Communications that the observer was dropped off, the location, and request someone to pick up the observer and return them to the police department. The ride-along may be continued at a later time in the shift or terminated at this time. The officer may terminate the citizen ride at any time for safety reasons, if it interferes with the performance of the officer's duties, another violation of the citizen ride agreement, or any other reason deemed appropriate by the officer. The officer will advise their supervisor for the reason(s) the citizen ride was terminated. The officer terminating a citizen ride shall submit a memorandum to the Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee explaining the reasons for the refusal or termination.

617.07 Patrol Supervisor Responsibility: Supervisors are responsible for the implementation of the Ride Program. Their responsibilities shall be as followed:

- a. Confirm all rider forms have been completed,
- b. Confirm the rider is, in fact, the person authorized to ride,
- c. Confirm the rider has completed the Security Awareness Training,
- d. Confirm no more than two riders per shift,
- e. Confirm the rider is appropriately dressed to ride,
- f. Interview and brief concerning the Police Department functions and the Ride Program, and
- g. Confirm the rider is assigned to an eligible officer.

The supervisor has the discretion to refuse to allow a person to participate in the ride program or terminate a ride-along in progress if it is in the best interest of the Department. The supervisor refusing or terminating a ride-along shall submit a memorandum to the Main Campus Patrol Commander or designee explaining the reasons for the refusal or termination.

617.08 Injury to the Rider: In the event, a rider is injured officer shall:

- a. Notify the Patrol Supervisor immediately,
- b. Render first aid and call for medical assistance if necessary,
- c. Initiate an incident report to document the injury,
- d. Gather statements from any witnesses, and
- e. Preserve or collect any evidence relevant to the incident.

Patrol Supervisor shall:

- a. Immediately respond to the scene and assess the situation,
- b. Confirm medical attention is rendered if needed,
- c. Confirm the incident is properly documented, and
- d. Notify the on-call Commander.

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617.09 Records: The approved or denied application requests, Release of Responsibility form, and Security Awareness Acknowledgment for Non-Criminal Justice Personnel shall be forwarded to Records and retained in accordance with records retention schedule.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carl A. Metzger", is written over a horizontal line.

Carl A. Metzger
Chief of Police