



POLICY & PROCEDURE

ELKHART LAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM**

SCOPE: All Department Personnel
DISTRIBUTION: Policy & Procedure Manual

REFERENCE:

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INDEX AS: Intern Ride-Along Program
Ride-Along Program

PURPOSE: The Ride-Along/Intern Program of the Elkhart Lake Police Department is a community relations and education strategy. It allows citizens to learn about and observe police field operations by riding with a uniform patrol officer. The program may also include an opportunity to sit in and observe the Communications (Dispatch) Center functions or other special law enforcement details when available and applicable.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. RIDE-ALONG ELIGIBILITY
- II. APPLICATION PROCEDURE
- III. LIMITATIONS
- IV. FREQUENCY
- V. ASSIGNMENTS
- VI. CRIMINAL HISTORY/CITIZEN CONDUCT
- VII. DENIAL/TERMINATION OF OBSERVATION
- VIII. RIDE-ALONG RULES

IX. RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I. RIDE-ALONG ELIGIBILITY

- A. Any person wishing to ride along as an intern or observer requires the prior approval of the Chief of Police or his designee. While efforts should be made to accommodate those with legitimate purposes for riding along, the supervisor should evaluate the legitimacy of the request and the applicability of any limitations listed in the following sections.

II. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- A. A person wishing to participate in a ride-along must complete the "Ride-along Request" form as well as the "Rules, Policies and Procedures" and "Release and Waiver of Liability" forms.
- B. Together these completed documents are to be submitted to the Chief of Police or designee for review and consideration.
- C. The original, signed copies of the "Ride-Along Request" form, the "Ride-Along Rules, Policies and Procedures" form and the "Release and Waiver of Liability" form must be filed with the Administrative Office who will maintain a file of all ride-along records.

III. LIMITATIONS

- A. Liability Waiver. A Waiver of Liability must be presented to the assigned Patrol Officer before the ride-along begins.
- B. Waivers for those 17 and younger must also be signed by the minor's parent or guardian.
- C. Officers of other law enforcement agencies are not exempt from the waiver form requirement.
- D. In the case of interns who will be riding for an extended, but defined period of time, one waiver form will cover the extent of their internship.
- E. A copy of the rules, policies, and procedures for the Elkhart Lake Police Department ride-along program will be provided to and signed by the ride-along candidate/participant prior to the start of a ride-along.

IV. FREQUENCY

- A. Interns may ride as frequently as necessary for completion of the requirements of their internship.
- B. Family members of Elkhart Lake Police Department Members may ride upon completion of reading the "Ride-Along Rules, Policies and Procedures" and signing the "Release and Waiver of Liability" form.

- C. Members of other law enforcement agencies will not be limited in the number of shifts they may ride and only one waiver form will be required annually.
- D. Those 17 and younger shall be restricted to a maximum of a 4-hour ride-along scheduled between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- E. Unless excepted above, only one ride-along opportunity per participant is permitted in a 12-month period and shall not to exceed 8 hours in length.

V. ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Only one ride-along observer may ride in a vehicle at a time. The Chief of Police or Designee will assign ride-along observers only to those officers who have indicated a previous willingness to participate in the program, but when necessary, to accommodate scheduled observers; officers may be required to participate.
- B. The Chief of Police or designee shall have the final say as to the duration (not to exceed 8 hours) and scheduled time of the ride-along. The Chief of Police or designee shall also have the option of canceling previously-scheduled ride-alongs should manpower or shift activities (i.e., special events, planned training, etc.) conflict with having observers.

VI. CRIMINAL HISTORY/CITIZEN CONTACT

- A. Persons whose criminal history or past contact history with law enforcement as determined by a background/records check by this Department, is of such nature that it may create or escalate tensions with the assigned officer or potentially inhibit the effectiveness of police operations shall be prohibited.

VII. DENIAL/TERMINATION OF OBSERVATION

- A. A copy of the ride-along/observer rules will be given to each rider/intern before their ride-along.

Officers shall immediately report any interference with their duties or willful non-compliance with the instructions, rules or regulations on the part of the observer. Officers may terminate any observation that they feel inhibits the effectiveness of police operations.

VIII. RIDE-ALONG/OBSERVER RULES

- A. Dress/Grooming Standards.

1. Observers in the ride-along program must dress and groom themselves in an appropriate and business-like manner. The Officer is the final judge of the appropriateness of an observer's attire and/or grooming.

2. Suitable attire must be worn. Blue jeans and/or t-shirts are not acceptable.
3. Clothing that advertises any product, business, or organization, or contains any sign or symbol that is inflammatory in nature is not permitted.
4. Males will either be clean-shaven or will have neatly-trimmed beards or mustaches and hair will be neatly groomed.
5. Certified officers from other agencies may not wear their agency uniform or firearm and must comply with the other standards of attire and grooming for observers. Firearms may be carried by a certified officer from another agency if that officer is granted off duty carry authority by their employing agency and they are within the guidelines of that policy and authority.

B. Conduct Standards

1. Participants in the ride-along program are guests of the Police Department and must conduct themselves in an appropriately responsible manner.
2. Participants will:
 - a) Remain in the police vehicle and will not be allowed to become involved in the police officer's activities unless specifically directed to do so by the officer.
 - b) When the officer is required to enter any premise or part thereof that is not generally open to the public, the officer should, when practical and if accompanied by the ride-along observer, advise the person in control that an observer is accompanying the officer and obtain permission for the observer to enter the premise. If permission is expressly denied, the observer must remain in the police vehicle.
 - c) If the patrol officer or the participant decides that a dangerous situation exists which would compromise the participant's safety, the ride will terminate and the participant will be dropped off at a place of safety. Arrangements will be made for the participant's transportation back to the Police Department if the ride is terminated.
 - d) Obey, without question.
3. Observers will not:
 - a) Be under the influence of alcohol or have the odor of an alcoholic beverage on their breath.
 - b) Use profane or abusive language or behave in any manner that would provoke or escalate tensions.
 - c) Enter into any investigation or converse with any citizen, witness, or prisoner, concerning a police incident or investigation.

- d) Make known to unauthorized persons the identity of persons arrested, detained, confined in jail, or suspected of any offense.
- e) Operate or use any police equipment or vehicle or any police item, except in case of emergency or when requested to do so by a police officer.

IX. RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

- A. A ride-along candidate/applicant must complete and sign a “Release and Waiver of Liability” form provided by the Department. The “Release and Waiver of Liability” form must include the candidate’s full name, address and date of birth. The candidate must sign the “Release and Waiver of Liability” form.

Candidates under 18 years of age must have a parent or legal guardian sign the “Release and Waiver of Liability” form. Candidates under 14 years of age will not be allowed to participate in the Program unless approved by the Chief of Police.

Michael Meeusen
Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

Initial 06/01/2015