

PALM BEACH GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT

RIDE ALONG PROGRAM

POLICY AND PROCEDURE 3.3.3

Effective Date : 01/22/08	Accreditation Standards: CALEA CFA	Review Date: 07/01/2014
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PURPOSE: To control and administer the department's Ride-Along Program; allowing citizens to ride in police vehicles as passengers/observers.

SCOPE: This policy and procedure applies to all persons desiring to participate in the department's Ride-Along Program.

REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY: Patrol Operations Bureau

POLICY: The Department's Ride-Along Program for citizens and other law enforcement persons is a means to enhance police-community relations and awareness of those environments in which officers operate to ensure public safety. Authorized participants are required to adhere to the guidelines and regulations set forth in this directive.

PROCEDURES

1. PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY

- a. All citizens' request to participate in the program will be directed to the Patrol Sergeant assigned to the shift for which the ride-along is requested.
- b. Patrol Sergeants will ensure that a records check, including NCIC, FCIC, PALMS, and drivers license, will be completed on all requestors prior to authorizing them for a ride-along. A search of prior ride-along records should be completed prior to authorizing a future ride-along to ensure that this policy is not violated.
- c. The Patrol Sergeant authorizing the citizen ride-along MUST ensure that a liability form is completed by the citizen prior to the ride and that all documentation is properly filed with the Records Section when the ride-along is completed.

2. ELIGIBILITY OF PARTICIPANTS

- a. All participants must be at least 18 years of age. Active PBGPD Police Explorers and citizens currently enrolled in an accredited program of study associated with or aligned with a criminal justice career are exempt, but must be at least 16 years of age. Documentation with parental approval is required to verify enrollment.

- b. To be eligible for a ride-along the citizen must submit their request in writing at least two days in advance of the date and shift time they wish to ride. A walk-in ride-along may be authorized by the on-duty supervisor after a criminal history check.
- c. The citizen may not have any felony record in their criminal history check.
- d. The citizen will not have participated in a ride-along 30 days prior to their current request. Exception may be granted, in advance, by the Patrol Operations Bureau Major or his designee.
- e. Any citizen request for ride-along participation may be rejected if such participation would not serve the best interest of the City, Police Department or community.
- f. Full-time members of a recognized news media organization may participate in the Ride-along program.

3. REQUIREMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

- a. Citizens authorized to participate in the ride-along program will do so in a passenger/observer capacity only. A citizen ride-along will be limited to a four hour period.
- b. Ride-along participants are under the direct control of the officer to whom they were assigned.
- c. Participants on a ride-along may not:
 - i. take any part in any police action,
 - ii. assist in conducting investigations,
 - iii. operate any police vehicle,
 - iv. handle or possess any firearm or weapon,
 - v. perform any police task or function, nor
 - vi. use any police equipment.
- d. Members of an officer's family may participate in the Ride-Along Program, but are prohibited from riding with that officer or during the officer's scheduled work shift. This prohibition extends to any other person to which a familial relation may exist. Exceptions may be granted by the Chief of Police.
- e. A ride-along is limited to Patrol Operations, but may be authorized for other units with permission granted by the requested Bureau Major, Assistant Chief, and/or Chief of Police. The 30 day rule remains in effect unless exempted.
- f. Whenever possible participants will be assigned to ride with an officer of the same sex.
- g. Officers having objection to a Ride-along assignment shall state such prior to accepting a participant and shall have authority to terminate a ride-along if experiencing difficulty with the participant. Any such instances shall be forwarded to the shift supervisor via memo; immediately.
- h. Communications will be advised of all ride-along assignments and participants, to include emergency contact information for the ride-along.
- i. Ride-along assignments will begin and end at the Police Department, unless pre-empted by the officers' need to respond to a call that would expose the participant to significant danger. In such cases, the officer will advise Communications that they are discharging the passenger at a secure location while responding to or handling the call.
- j. No more than two citizens will be assigned per shift at any one time. Requests will be handled on a first come first serve basis.
- k. These requirements shall be met by City of Palm Beach Gardens employees, excluding police department members.
- l. These requirements apply to law enforcement personnel from other jurisdictions that are not actively investigating within this jurisdiction or otherwise acting in an official capacity. Firearms may be carried by sworn law enforcement persons.

4. DRESS CODE AND IDENTIFICATION

- a. All ride-along participants are required to dress in appropriate attire. A collared shirt and slacks are suggested. Attire which at the Patrol Sergeant's discretion does not meet at least the Department's business casual uniform policy will not be acceptable for the ride-along.

- b. All ride-along participants shall display a Department issued observer ID on their outer clothing to alert other officers and the public of their status.
- c. Law enforcement personnel from other jurisdictions, while a ride-along participant, may carry a concealed badge for ID purposes. No authority shall be displayed unless serious circumstances warrant it.

5. POLICE EXPLORER PARTICIPATION

- a. Explorer participation in the Ride-Along Program requires the Explorer:
 - i. be in good standing with the Palm Beach Gardens Police Explorers,
 - ii. be at least 16 years of age,
 - iii. to have completed probation,
 - iv. to hold a current CPR certificate,
 - v. to provide a waiver/release form signed by the Explorer and their parent/guardian,
 - vi. complete the Explorer class on ride-along procedures, to include:
 - 1. Post and ride-along guidelines
 - 2. Police officers daily activities
 - 3. Limitations and high-risk calls drop-off
 - 4. Familiarization with police vehicles and equipment
 - 5. Specific duties during a ride-along
 - 6. Dress and required equipment
 - 7. Rules of conduct
- b. Upon completion of all requirements, the Post Advisor, via memo through his chain of command, will notify the on duty supervisor of the date the Explorer may participate in a ride-along.

6. POLICE EXPLORER PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- a. Explorer ride-along participation is voluntary and then only as an observer.
- b. Any Explorer participation in the ride-along program must be approved by the Post Advisor. Authority to ride and assignment of a ride-along rest with the on-duty Patrol Sergeant.
- c. Explorers may ride between 7am and 11pm.
- d. Frequency of individual Explorer ride-along participation will be monitored by the Post Advisor.
- e. An Explorer must complete 16 hours of day shift riding with acceptable evaluations prior to being authorized for night rides.
- f. Explorers may ride with officers who have volunteered to participate in the program. Explorers will not ride with tactical or undercover officers.
- g. Explorers will dress in their complete uniform and possess a flashlight, whistle, traffic vest, code/signal card, notebook and pen during ride-along.
- h. Explorers will be under the supervision of the assigned to officer. The officer may terminate the ride-along at any time; if so, the reason will be stated in the officer's ride evaluation of the Explorer. Evaluations will be completed at the end of each ride and submitted to the Post Advisor.
- i. Explorer use of patrol car equipment is restricted to the instructions of the assigned officer.
- j. Explorers will be dropped at safe locations should the need arise for the assigned officer to respond to a dangerous call. Under **NO** circumstances should an Explorer be placed or place themselves at risk during a ride-along.
- k. Explorers are required to complete a patrol activity sheet for their ride. The sheet will be submitted to the Post Advisor.

7. POLICE EXPLORER RIDE-ALONG CALL RESPONSES

- a. Calls an Explorer may participate in:
 - i. Traffic and Crowd control
 - ii. Motorist assistance

- iii. Non-court action paperwork completion
- iv. Acting as an interpreter
- v. First aid
- vi. Crime prevention
- vii. Crime scene protection
- viii. Lost person searches
- b. Calls an Explorer may not participate in:
 - i. Interviews of suspects or witnesses
 - ii. Prisoner control
 - iii. Completion of any arrest, offense or accident report, traffic citation or court action documents.
 - iv. Driving vehicles
 - v. Pursuits or crimes of violence
- c. Specific activities to be avoided:
 - i. Leaving the police vehicle unless instructed
 - ii. Being armed in any manner
 - iii. Explorers are not to be utilized in any capacity where a uniformed officer would be required.
- d. High-risk call procedure
 - i. In case of a high-risk call, the officer may return the Explorer to the station or may stop at the first safe/convenient location to drop off the Explorer so another unit or the emergency contact can pickup the Explorer.
 - ii. In the case of an immediate emergency, the Explorer must remain in the police vehicle until the officer advises the situation is safe for them to exit.
 - iii. Under **NO** circumstances should an Explorer be placed or place themselves at risk during a ride-along.
- e. Officer Criteria for Explorer Ride-Along
 - i. Officer participation is voluntary.
 - ii. Explorers may ride with non-probationary officers only.
 - iii. Prior to ride-along participation, volunteer officers will receive orientation on the rules and guidelines of the program by the Explorer Post Advisor.

INDEX AS:

- RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

RESPONSIBILITY INDEX:

- CHIEF OF POLICE
- PATROL OPERATIONS BUREAU
- EXPLORER POST ADVISOR
- RECORDS SECTION
- COMMUNICATIONS

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APPROVED:

Stephen J. Stepp
Chief of Police

01/22/08
Date