

GENERAL ORDER

August 2017

Immediately

III-04

Distribution: All Employees

Subject: **RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM**

Index as: Civilian Ride-along Ride-along Program

Accreditation Standards: 44.2.5, CFA 14.15

Cross Reference: G.O. III-17, Pursuits

G.O. II-3, Release of Information to the Public and News Media

YRS SOP I-04, Public Safety Cadets

Replaces: City Rules and Regulations of the Personnel Management System, Section 6-5, B.

G.O. III-4, Ride-along Program (December 13, 2019)

This Order consists of the following sections:

- I. Purpose
- II. Authorized Ride-along Participants
- III. Application Process
- IV. Scheduling and Officer Assignment
- V. Procedures
- VI. Trainee/Cadet Ride-along

I. PURPOSE

The Ride-along Program offers a learning experience enabling participants to observe police patrol procedures and fosters mutual respect between the public and the St. Petersburg Police Department. For cadets and students, the program may supplement classroom training through observation and discussion.

II. AUTHORIZED RIDE-ALONG PARTICIPANTS

A. Police Officers from other agencies. These persons may wear their own concealed protective vests and must declare they intend to do so when they are scheduled.

B. Department Chaplains or other clergy and members of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team.

C. Department employees (including trainees/cadets) and active volunteers who would benefit from the experience.

D. Students of criminal justice or law enforcement programs with a letter provided by the school confirming current enrollment.

E. Public Safety Cadets in compliance with YRS SOP I-04, Public Safety Cadets.

F. Immediate family members of Officers as defined by City Rules and Regulations of the Personnel Management System, Section 6-5, B. These persons shall ride in districts other than those to which their Officer family member is assigned.

G. St. Petersburg Police Department Officer candidates who are being processed through PASS (Police Applicant Screening Service) or the City Employee Relations Department.

H. Graduates of the Citizen's Police Academy, Wish Academy, Volunteer Road Patrol Academy, or other program(s) sponsored by the Department.

I. Other persons based upon their position in the community, employment, or specific need, including members of the following:

1. City boards and organizations.
2. Crime Watch coordinators.
3. Neighborhood associations.
4. Citizens Review Committee.
5. Leadership St. Pete.
6. Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA).

J. Members of the media.

1. These participants must receive approval from the Assistant Chief, Uniform Services Bureau to ride along.

2. Notes of a general nature may be taken, but specific records must be released following established procedures for public record requests as defined in <J:\Research\GeneralOrders\II Administrative General Orders\II-03 Release Of Information To The Public and News Media.pdf>.

3. No video cameras, photographic cameras or audio recorders are permitted without prior written approval of the Assistant Chief, Uniform Services Bureau.

4. At no time, will members of the media accompany police personnel into a private residence or a business that is not open to the public.

K. All Ride-along participants, except Department civilian employees, **Public Safety Cadets**, members of City boards and members of the Department's CISM Team, will normally be restricted to one occasion. Exceptions shall be determined by the Assistant Chief, Uniform Services Bureau.

III. APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Persons participating in the Ride-along Program must be authorized by the Assistant Chief, Uniform Services Bureau, or designee. Anyone requesting to participate must have a purpose, not just a desire to ride.

B. Ride-along participants must be at least sixteen (16) years old.

C. The Major, Uniform Support Services, or designee, shall coordinate a basic background check unless the information is currently on file.

1. The check will include a search of NCIC, FCIC and CJIS records; The Uniform Support Major or designee shall reasonably verify the information (DOB, SSN, address, student's school) provided by the applicant, prior to scheduling the ride.

2. Applicants who typically have a completed background check on file include:

- a. Department employees.
- b. Commissioned officers of the Armed Forces.
- c. Enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces who are currently serving in a law enforcement or security classification (e.g. Army Military Police, Air Force Security Police, Navy Shore Patrol, etc.).

- d. Applicants who have passed the polygraph test phase of pre-employment processing.
- e. Public Safety Cadets.
- f. Sworn Officers from other criminal justice agencies.

D. All Ride-along participants, except Department civilian employees and Public Safety Cadets, must sign <J:\Forms\Ride A Long Hold Harmless.pdf> before each ride. The completed agreement will be forwarded to the office of the Major, Uniform Support Services, or designee, for processing and scheduling.

E. All Ride-Along participants will complete online CJIS Security Training (minimum of Level 1) prior to scheduling their ride along. This will be coordinated/verified by the Uniform Support Major, or designee.

F. Specific safeguards should be taken by members to lock the computer from access to sensitive or confidential data in the event a Ride-along participant is left alone in the vicinity of such information.

G. All Ride-along participants will be given a copy of the Hold-harmless Agreement, the Ride-along Program Rules and Guidelines (<J:\Forms\Ride A Long Rules.pdf>) and the Ride-along Program Questionnaire (<J:\Forms\Ride A Long Questionnaire.pdf>) before each ride.

H. Upon completion of the Ride-along, participants will be requested to complete and return the Ride-along Program Questionnaire to the major, Uniform Support Services as soon as possible. This form will be used to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

IV. SCHEDULING AND ASSIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEE

A. The Major, Uniform Support Services, or designee, shall schedule Ride-along participants at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance, whenever possible.

B. A Supervisor of the respective unit, during the shift where a participant has been scheduled, will assign employees to the participants on a voluntary basis whenever possible. If no volunteers are available, the Supervisor will assign an employee from a seniority list.

1. The Major, Uniform Support Services is responsible for maintaining a Department-wide seniority list in the event an employee must be assigned. The list will be available on the computer network for access by any supervisor.

2. Supervisors shall forward to the Major, Uniform Support Services the name of any employee who is mandatorily assigned.

3. A supervisor has the discretion to skip someone on the list if reason(s) to do so exist. However, the employee skipped over will remain on this list and will be reconsidered for the next assigned Ride-along.

C. No employee shall be assigned a second or subsequent Ride-along until the list has been exhausted.

D. Solo probationary Officers will not be assigned a Ride-along participant.

V. PROCEDURES

A. The assigned employee is responsible for the immediate supervision of the Ride-along participant and should keep in mind the participant will be expecting information and direction.

B. The assigned employee shall make the safety of the participant a primary concern.

C. Officers with a Ride-along shall provide direction to the participant during motor vehicle stops.

D. Officers assigned to respond to an in-progress felony or misdemeanor, may elect to either:

1. Direct the participant to remain in the vehicle, or

2. Drop the participant off at an open and well-lighted place of business. If the Officer chooses this option, they will also immediately notify their Emergency Communications Dispatcher of the situation, and a Sergeant or other Officer will be dispatched to pick up the participant and transport them to headquarters.

E. Officers shall not participate in vehicular pursuits until they have complied with this Order unless the Ride-along is a trainee or cadet.

F. During late reported misdemeanors, felonies, and non-hazardous civil matters or other incidents, the participant shall follow the assigned employee's direction.

G. The participant is an observer with no police powers. They are always under the direct command, authority, and responsibility of the employee to whom they are assigned.

H. The participant shall follow the assigned employee's direction(s) and shall not interfere with the activity of any Police Officer or civilian employee of the Department.

I. The participant is not permitted to carry any weapon or firearm, even if they possess a concealed weapons permit. Sworn peace officers from other law enforcement agencies shall not carry any weapons, including weapons issued by their employer.

J. The participant may take notes during the Ride-along; however, the use of video or audio recorders or photographic cameras will not be permitted unless authorized in writing by the Assistant Chief, Uniform Services Bureau, or designee. This authorization will be noted on the hold harmless agreement.

K. The participant is required to wear acceptable business attire and uphold the appearance standards of the Department. Participants deemed inappropriately dressed will not be allowed to ride or will have their ride terminated at the discretion of the Watch Commander.

L. A participant acting inappropriately will not be allowed to ride or will have their ride terminated at the discretion of the Watch Commander.

VI. TRAINEE/CADET RIDE-ALONG

A. Trainees/cadets shall be scheduled for participation in the Ride-along program by the Training Division, with input from the Assistant Chief, Uniform Services Bureau, or designee.

B. All trainee/cadet participants are required to wear their uniform of the day while riding.

C. Trainee/cadet participants shall take notes during their Ride-along. Their notes/observations shall be used during classroom critiques or in the preparation of reports.

D. Trainee/cadet participants are permitted to ask the assigned officer any questions they feel are appropriate.

E. For training purposes, trainee/cadet participants may prepare draft police reports of incidents which occurred during their ride-along. The actual report shall be prepared and signed by the assigned officer.

F. The assigned Officer will not require or allow trainee/cadet Ride-along participants to perform any police officer function, i.e. operating police vehicles, directing traffic, using the radio, etc., except when necessary in an emergency.

G. Officers with a trainee/cadet Ride-along may engage in a pursuit when all requirements of <J:\Research\GeneralOrders\III Operational General Orders\III-17 Pursuit of a Vehicle or Boat.pdf>.

H. Any unusual occurrences involving the trainee/cadet shall be reported in writing, through the Chain of Command to the Major, Training Division, by the assigned Officer prior to the completion of their tour of duty. Matters of an emergency or serious nature shall be reported verbally as soon as possible, and then followed up in writing.

I. Except in very serious cases, trainee/cadet Ride-along participants will not routinely be expected to appear for any court proceeding as a result of their Ride-along experience. They should not automatically be added to the witness list unless their testimony is essential to the prosecution of the case.

Anthony Holloway
Chief of Police