

	Operational General Order	11.12 Ride Along Program	PAGE 1 OF 5
	SUBJECT		EFFECTIVE DATE
	<b>Virginia Beach Police Department General Order</b> <b>Chapter 11 - Patrol Operations</b>		<b>11/01/2016</b>
			ORIGINATOR/REVIEW
DISTRIBUTION	CALEA:		Uniform Division
ALL			
BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:		<i>James A. Coonan</i>	

**Purpose**

To establish guidelines for the Department concerning the Ride-Along Program.

**Policy**

The Ride-Along Program has been established to develop a sense of mutual respect and understanding between the police and citizens from the community. The ride along program has 5 categories that afford citizens opportunities to ride along. Additionally, students enrolled in city Sponsored activities may be afforded an opportunity to take a ride in a police vehicle as opposed to participating in a full shift ride along.

**Private Citizens**

This category will include citizens from within the community requesting to ride in police vehicles for the purpose of broadening their experience and knowledge of the police function. Members of civic organizations and college students expressing an academic interest or need to participate as an observer of police activities may also participate.

All private citizens will be required to complete a Ride-Along application. Participants should clearly express their reason for requesting the ride-along as well as what knowledge they hope to gain from it. Following the approval of the request and prior to participation in the Ride-Along Program, the private citizen must sign the liability release form, as well as any other required departmental document.

Only persons 18 years or older are permitted to participate in the Ride-Along Program.

**Non-Sworn Public Safety Personnel**

This category shall include personnel employed by the City of Virginia Beach and assigned to public safety functions.

1. All requests for participation by non-sworn public safety personnel will be directed to and coordinated within the guidelines of this general order by the precinct or bureau commanders. Requests will be submitted on a Ride-Along application via the member’s divisional commanding officer and forwarded to the precinct or bureau commander.
2. Requests must be forwarded to the precinct or bureau commanders at least three working days prior to the desired time of assignment to provide for coordination of the assignment.
3. Non-sworn public safety personnel will be exempt from the liability provision of this order and will not be required to sign a liability release form as a condition for participation.

### **Other Law Enforcement Personnel**

This category shall include any full-time law enforcement officer employed by a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency displaying appropriate identification.

1. Authorization for law enforcement officers to participate in the Ride-Along Program will be granted as a courtesy of the department.
2. The provisions of this order will not be applicable to law enforcement officers from other jurisdictions that are acting in an official capacity and participating jointly in an investigation with members of the department.
3. Law enforcement officers not involved in official investigations and wishing to ride in police vehicles will be required to complete a Ride-Along application and sign a liability release form prior to riding.

### **Members of the News Media**

This category shall include all members of the news media representing radio, television, and newspapers who are employed full-time by their respective agencies and who possess a valid press pass.

Members of the news media will be required to complete a Ride-Along application and sign a liability release form prior to being assigned to a police unit, as well as any other departmental document, and must have their employer's authorization.

Assignments and subsequent activities of persons authorized to participate in the Ride-Along Program will be limited to, and conform with, the conditions and requirements set forth in this general order.

### **Police Explorers**

Members of the Virginia Beach Police Department Explorer Post 911 (ages 18 and older) are permitted to participate in the ride along program as provided by the rules and policies of the Explorer program.

### **Police Chaplains**

Members of the Virginia Beach Police Department Police Chaplain Program are exempt from the provisions of the policy.

### **City Sponsored Activities**

Students enrolled in City Sponsored activities may be permitted to ride in police vehicles. This will not be the same as a ride along which allows participants to ride an entire shift.

### **Applications**

The prospective Ride-Along participant will complete an application (PD-151), which may be obtained from any of the four police precincts or Special Operations. The participant then returns the completed application to the precinct in the area in which they reside. Should the applicant not reside in the City of

Virginia Beach, or a specific need to ride with another command is identified and approved, the applications may be filed at the command in which the applicant intends to ride.

A record check of all individuals requesting to participate in the Ride-Along Program will be conducted and noted on the application. One or more felony or misdemeanor convictions involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, infamous or notoriously, disgraceful conduct will prohibit the applicant from participating in the program. Any other concerns revealed during the record check will be subject to review and approval or disapproval by the Precinct Commander or Lieutenant. Upon the approval of the Precinct Commander or Lieutenant, the Sergeant having responsibility for the shift and area that the participant is to observe will notify the participant of the approval and arrange for the ride along.

When the participant arrives at the precinct or bureau, the liability waiver form will be completed and the applicant's name placed on the precinct or bureau roster beside the name of the officer with whom the participant will ride. Additionally, the rules and regulations shall be read and explained to the participant and acknowledged by signature.

The participant must wear a clip-on Ride-Along identification badge on the outermost garment of his wearing apparel to identify him as a Ride-Along participant.

Precinct or bureau commanders will retain the Ride-Along application at the command as required by the Library of Virginia Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. The command will ensure that the names of those participating in the Ride-Along program, as well as the dates they participated, are entered into the Ride-Along Master List which shall be checked prior to approving any Ride-Along requests.

### **Limitations and Conditions for Participation**

All persons requesting and subsequently receiving authorization to ride in police vehicles will participate in a passenger/observer capacity only. Limitations and conditions applicable to assignments and activities of the participants are as follows:

1. Participants will not be permitted to take part in any official police action, unless specifically directed by a police officer, to assist in conducting investigations, make arrests or other related activities initiated by or assigned to the officer in charge of the police vehicle and responsible for providing such services.
2. Participants will not be permitted, unless specifically directed by a police officer, to operate any police motorized equipment, transmit over the police communications system, handle firearms of any type, or use any other equipment while assigned to the police vehicle.
3. It is recognized that unusual circumstances might exist which would subject the participant to undue danger and hazardous conditions. In such cases, the officer in charge shall exercise discretion applicable to existing conditions and shall have the prerogative of temporarily discharging the participant at a suitable location while responding to and pending the completion of such assignment.
4. This policy restricts a citizen from participating in a ride-a-long with an officer who is a member of his/her family or an officer with whom they are closely acquainted with. Persons considered closely acquainted to Department members include: a close friend, neighbor or a social acquaintance.

## **Rules Governing the Program**

1. All participants must be at least 18-years of age.
2. The participant must report to the precinct or facility of the officer that he or she is scheduled to ride along with. Under no circumstances will the participant be picked up at any other location. Participants should be scheduled to ride along in a unit from the precinct in which they reside unless a specific need to ride elsewhere is identified and approved.
3. Participants (other than Federal or Virginia Certified Law Enforcement Officers) shall not be allowed to carry any type of weapon.
4. The use of cameras and/or recording equipment is prohibited unless approval has been given to the participant by the precinct/bureau commander.
5. A person is not permitted to participate in the Ride-Along Program more than twice within a 12-month period, unless special permission is received from the Operations Division commander.
6. Only one participant should be assigned to a unit at any one time.
7. Participants must be properly attired in order to ride.
8. Any exception to these rules will be considered on individual merit by the Deputy Chief of Operations.

## **Host Officers**

### **Selection of Host Officer**

- The Commanding Officer, or designee, of the various precincts or bureaus of the Virginia Beach Police Department, Operations Division, shall select host officers.
- A particular host officer will be selected from the shift on which the Ride-Along Program will be operated.

### **Responsibilities of Host Officer**

Following the introduction of the host officer to the participant, the host officer will conduct an abbreviated tour of the precinct or bureau as well as E911 Emergency Communications Division. Also, the rules and regulations shall be read and explained to the participant and acknowledged by the rider's signature.

The host officer must use discretion at all times and concern himself primarily with the welfare and safety of the observer in his police unit.

The host officer will be permitted to cover the entire area of the precinct in which he is assigned or, in the case of the Special Operations, he is free to cover the entire city. The host officer may respond to calls of a routine nature for observation, but should be mindful of his duty as host officer and the safety of the observer. The host officer will not respond to emergency calls involving a situation known to involve an ongoing violent act, or any other situation that may obviously pose a threat to the safety of the ride along participant, but may respond to other calls. The host officer must be sure that others have responded and secured the situation first, as a precautionary measure.

The host officer may allow the Ride-Along participant to leave the police vehicle to enable him to better observe the nature of the call; however, the host officer shall maintain close supervision of the participant when he/she is out of the vehicle and be constantly alert for potential hazards to the participant.

This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.