

# City of Virginia Beach Police Department

## Explorer Post Field Guide



### **A Guide for Department and Explorer Post Members**

- Virginia Beach Police Department information on the Explorer Post, its membership eligibility requirements, training and ride-alongs.

*This Field Guide is Prepared and Updated by the Virginia Beach  
Police Department Community Engagement Unit,  
Under the Approval of the Chief of Police*

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**Purpose**

To describe the eligibility for membership in the Law Enforcement Explorer Post, training for members, and guidelines for ride-alongs for Post members with the Virginia Beach Police Department.

**Program Description**

Law Enforcement Explorer Posts is a national program sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America and chartered by the Virginia Beach Police Department. The purpose of the Virginia Beach Police Department Explorer Program is to give the Explorer a better understanding and awareness of police work. Since the explorers are potential recruits for the department, it is the responsibility of the post advisors and all department personnel to fulfill the department’s obligation to the explorers for training and information. The Post Advisor is a member of the Community Engagement Unit and works with the Post members as a part of their duties. The post advisor will maintain all records and arrange all training for the post according to protocols set forth in the department’s general orders. The associate advisors of the Explorer Post, will be sworn police officer(s) of the Virginia Beach Police Department, law enforcement officers from other jurisdictions, or civilian(s) approved by the post advisor or his designee.

**Membership**

To apply for membership to this explorer post, all applicants must maintain a 2.0 grade point average in school, undergo an interview process conducted by CEU, and have no arrests or convictions for felonies or serious misdemeanors, and volunteer community service with the Post. Members must be at least 14 years old and in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Explorers must leave the post upon the age of 21. Potential candidates for the post should be directed to the Community Engagement Unit to apply for membership.

**Training**

The Post Advisor or his designee is responsible for scheduling all training courses for the post. The training will consist of but not be limited to:

First Aid/CPR/AED	Crime Prevention	Department Operations
Drill and Ceremony	Investigations	Basic Defensive Tactics
Basic Law	Emergency Preparedness	Traffic Direction (18 years and above)
Ethics	Public Speaking	

**Ride-Alongs**

The Explorer (ages 18-21), upon proper request and approval, are allowed to ride with a uniform officer in any of the precincts or bureau.

Procedures For Explorer Ride-Along - The explorer will contact the Post Advisor. The Post Advisor will be responsible for notifying the affected shift supervisor at least 24 hours prior to the shift that the explorer will be riding.

The explorer will be limited to two (2) Ride-Alongs per calendar month with the following conditions:

- Ride –Along participants are restricted to those 18 years and older per General Order 11.12, Ride Along-Program.
- The explorer will report to duty at the assigned precinct or bureau at least 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the assigned shift. The explorer will be in their Class A uniform and have in their possession a valid City Identification card. Wearing an incomplete uniform will be grounds for immediate removal from the Ride-Along Program.
- The explorer will not be permitted to take official police action unless specifically directed by the host officer or supervisor.
- Only one explorer will ride with each host officer at a time.
- The Explorer Ride-Along Program will be limited to day, evening, and power shifts only.
- The explorer will remain in the police vehicle unless directed to do otherwise by the host officer or supervisor.
- The explorer participates in the Ride-Along Program as an observer. Other duties may include:
  - Traffic/crowd control
  - Operate the radio
  - Complete routine paperwork that will not be used in any court action
  - Protect the crime scene
- At no time will the explorer be at risk or used in dangerous or undercover activities, in accordance with the Boy Scouts of America's policy on covert operations. Some specific functions to avoid are:
  - Interview/interrogate witnesses or suspects
  - Participate or be left in control of the arrest of any prisoner
  - Leave the police vehicle, unless instructed by the assigned officer
  - Assist at any scene, unless directed by the assigned officer
  - Be armed in any manner
  - Sign any arrest, offense report, accident report, traffic citation, or other legal documentation
  - Assist in providing cover for any possible crime in progress
  - Driving vehicles
  - Riding with any vice, narcotics, or organized crime division officer

## **Uniform Division**

### Responsibilities of Uniform Division Host Officers:

- The host officer must use discretion at all times and concern themselves primarily with the welfare and safety of the explorer assigned to the unit.
- The host officer will be permitted to handle all calls for service within his zone. The host officer should be mindful of his duty as host officer and the safety of the explorer.

- The host officer may allow the explorer Ride-Along participant to leave the police vehicle to better enable the participant to observe the nature of the call or assist him as outlined in this policy; however, the host officer shall maintain close supervision of the explorer when they are out of the vehicle and be alert for possible hazards.

### **Investigative Division**

Explorers will not be permitted to ride with Investigative Division personnel on a routine basis. Realizing there is a need for extra manpower in certain investigations; explorers may be utilized by the Investigative Division in certain controlled situations.

- Explorers may be assigned to the Investigative Division for use in neighborhood canvasses, distribution of fliers, searches for property and/or evidence, or other tasks designated by the investigative supervisor. Upon assigning such tasks, the investigative supervisor shall consider the safety of the explorer at all times.

### **Police Range**

Explorers may be allowed to use the police range under strict guidelines. The use of the police range will be held in accordance with range protocols and procedures. Prior to using the range, the Explorers will receive classroom training, which includes firearm familiarization, range safety, and a complete outline of the course to be fired.