

## Ride-Along Policy

### 405.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for citizens and Department applicants to experience the law enforcement function first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, and hours of operation for the Ride-Along Program.

#### 405.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Santa Ana Police Department Ride-Along Program is offered to residents, Department applicants and those employed within the City. Every attempt will be made to accommodate interested persons however any applicant may be disqualified without cause.

The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant and are not limited to:

- Being under 18- years of age unless the individual is a participant in the Police Explorer Program
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against the Department and/or the City
- Denial by any supervisor

#### 405.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The Ride-Along Program is available most days of the week, with certain exceptions. The ride-along times are from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Chief of Police, Bureau Commander, or Watch Commander.

### 405.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be scheduled by the Station Supervisor. The participant will complete a ride-along waiver form. Information requested will include a valid ID or California driver's license, address, and telephone number. If the participant is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must be present to complete the Ride-Along Form.

The Station Supervisor will schedule a date, based on availability, at least one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy will be forwarded to the respective Watch Commander as soon as possible for his/her scheduling considerations.

If a ride-along request is denied, a representative of the Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

#### 405.2.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception would apply to the following: Cadets, Explorers, RSVP, Chaplains, Reserves, police applicants, and all others with approval of the Watch Commander.

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An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along will be allowed in the officer's vehicle at a given time.

Ride-along requirements for police cadets are covered in the Police Cadets Policy.

#### 405.2.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride along is required to be suitably dressed in collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, T-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn clothing or blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps may not be worn in the police vehicle. The Watch Commander or field supervisor may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

#### 405.2.3 PEACE OFFICER RIDE-ALONGS

Off-duty members of this department or any other law enforcement agency will not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty officers without the express written consent of the Watch Commander. In the event that such a ride-along is permitted, the off-duty employee shall not be considered on-duty and shall not represent themselves as a peace officer or participate in any law enforcement activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

#### 405.2.4 RIDE-ALONG CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK

All Ride-along applicants are subject to a criminal history check. The criminal history check may include a local records check and a Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System check through CLETS prior to their approval as a ride-along with a law enforcement officer (provided that the ride-along is not an employee of the Santa Ana Police Department) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.F.2.).

### **405.3 OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY**

The officer shall advise the dispatcher that a ride-along is present in the vehicle before going into service. Officers shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Officers should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, and if feasible, let the participant out of the vehicle in a well-lighted place of safety. The dispatcher will be advised of the situation and as soon as practical have another police unit respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

The Station Supervisor is responsible for maintaining and scheduling all ride-alongs.

### **405.4 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG**

The assigned employee shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her in the conditions that necessarily limit their participation. These instructions should include:

- (a) The ride-along will follow the directions of the officer
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims, witnesses, or suspects, or handle or manipulate any police equipment

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- (c) The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time and the officer may return the participant to their home or to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of the officer's duties
- (d) Ride-alongs may be allowed to continue riding during the transportation and booking process provided this does not jeopardize their safety
- (e) Officers will not allow any ride-alongs to be present in any residences or situations that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim, witness or any other citizen
- (f) Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride along be permitted to enter a private residence with an officer without the express consent of the resident or other authorized person
- (g) The ride-along must understand and agree that officers are outfitted with Body Worn Cameras and their image may be captured on video. The ride-along must also understand and agree that this does not give the ride-along any rights to obtain copies of any BWC recording.
- (h) The ride-along shall wear the department provided Ride-along Identification Lanyard during the duration of the ride-along and while in the Police Administrative Building.