

**WATERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER**



JOANNA W. VITEK
CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date: January 12, 2009	Rescinds: Amends: N/A	Number: B - 110
Subject: Ride- Along		Re-evaluation Date: January 2012
Distribution: ALL PERSONNEL	Related CALEA Standards: None	

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

1. Purpose
2. Policy
3. Procedures

1. PURPOSE

- a. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the department's mandates with respect to citizen ride-along.

2. POLICY

- a. In an effort to enhance the mutual respect of police officers and the community we serve, the Watertown Police Department hereby establishes a ride-along program. This program will provide its participants with a greater understanding of law enforcement in our City. At the same time, through interaction between our officers and members of the community, lines of open communication will be established.

3. PROCEDURES

- a. Who can participate in the ride-along program:
 - i. All participants must be approved by the Patrol Captain to participate and must have signed and delivered to the Watertown Police Department its Release and Indemnity Agreement.
 - ii. Community members who are interested in broadening their knowledge of the police function within the City. This would include members of civic organizations, college students who are interested in the law enforcement field, and any other person authorized by the Patrol Captain.
 - iii. Media representatives who wish to conduct a ride along for purposes of developing a news story or other documentary. This category includes the print and electronic media. Media representatives must complete all documents required of any other participant. In addition, members of the media must have express written authorization from the office of the Chief of Police before recording, by any means (audio, video, film, and photo), any portion of the ride-along.
 - iv. Watertown Police Department Explorers are addressed under WPD General Order E-100.

- b. Application Process:
 - i. Applications for ride-along shall be available at the Watertown Police Department. Anyone who receives a ride-along application should be informed that they should return the application to the department once it is completed. Applicants must provide a photo-identification for verification when they return their completed application.
 - ii. Completed applications shall be forwarded to the Patrol Captain for review.
 - iii. Application Review will include a consensual record check and NCIC inquiry. An applicant who has a felony record or a misdemeanor record that involves moral turpitude or dishonesty may be excluded from participation in this program.
 - iv. Once approved, the applicant shall be notified and assigned a date for the ride-along.
 - v. Participants shall only be allowed to participate in this program once every 6 months unless given written authorization from the Patrol Captain.
- c. Reporting for Ride-along:
 - i. The ride-along program shall be scheduled between the hours of 0800-2300 hours, unless otherwise approved by the Patrol Captain.
 - ii. Participants should report to the police headquarter 15 minutes prior to their scheduled participation.
 - iii. The host officer shall meet with the ride-along participant. The ride along participant and the host officer shall review and sign the Watertown Police Department Release and Indemnity Agreement. The host officer must sign as a witness. Any participant who decides not to sign the liability waiver form shall not be allowed to participate in the program.
 - iv. The host officer shall review the rules of the ride-along program with the participant. In this review, the participant should be reminded that they may be called as a witness in court, if they observe a police event, which becomes subject to court action.
 - v. The host officer shall issue the participant a ride-along participant identification tag that the participant shall be required to wear on his or her outermost clothing.
 - vi. Completed forms will be turned into the Patrol Captain.
- d. Duties of the Participant:
 - i. Participants shall play no active role in the police function. They must only act as an observer unless otherwise directed by their host-officer.
 - ii. Participants shall not be allowed to operate any police equipment unless directed to do so by a police officer in an extreme emergency.
 - iii. Participants must remain in the police vehicle at all times until directed otherwise by the host officer.

- iv. Participants must not speak to victims, witnesses, prisoners or other persons associated with a police event. Should a witness, prisoner, victim, or other person speak to the participant, the participant should politely direct the person to speak to one of the officers present.
 - v. Participants shall not bring cameras or any recording devices without the express written permission of the office of the Chief of Police.
 - vi. Participants shall not enter any person's home while participating in the ride-along unless the host officer has asked and been granted express permission from the homeowner/occupant to allow the ride-along participant entry.
 - vii. Participants shall follow the instructions of the host-officer at all times during the ride-along.
 - viii. Participants shall not be allowed to carry any firearm or other weapon, even when otherwise authorized by law, while participating in the ride-along program.
 - ix. Participants should be dressed in comfortable, casual, but conservative clothing during the ride-along. (Pants and shirt/jacket for men, Pants and blouse/jacket for women) Participants who are inappropriately dressed, as determined by the supervising officer, shall not be allowed to participate in the program on the assigned date.
- e. Duties of Host Officer:
- i. Officers have a primary obligation to the welfare and safety of the ride along participant.
 - ii. Host officers may allow the participant to leave the police vehicle in order to better observe the police activity; however, where a participant has been allowed to leave the police vehicle, host officers shall maintain close supervision of the participant and not allow the participant to involve him or herself in the police activity.
 - iii. Host officers must never allow a participant to enter the home of any person unless the officer has first obtained the consent of the homeowner/occupant. In obtaining consent, the officer must specifically notify the homeowner/occupant that the participant is a "ride-along participant" and there is "no legal obligation" to allow the participant inside the dwelling.

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