

Ride-Alongs

405.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for a ride-along with members of the Missoula Police Department. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, hours of operation and member responsibilities for ride-alongs.

405.2 POLICY

Ride-along opportunities will be provided to the members of the public, City employees and members of this department to observe and experience, first-hand, various functions of the Missoula Police Department. The term "ride-along" includes riding as a passenger with an officer on patrol or observing the work day of members engaged in other functions within the Department.

405.3 ELIGIBILITY

A ride-along is available to Missoula residents and business owners, students currently attending class in Missoula, potential applicants, those employed within the City of Missoula. The Chief of Police may authorize a ride-along for circumstances outside the above listed availability. Efforts will be made to accommodate all interested persons. However, any applicant may be disqualified without cause from participating.

Factors that may be considered in disqualifying an applicant include, but are not limited to:

- Being under 16 years of age.
- Prior criminal history.
- Pending criminal action.
- Pending lawsuit against this department or the City.
- Denial by any supervisor.
- If the citizen is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

405.4 AVAILABILITY

A ride-along or job observation is available most days of the week, depending on staffing and call volume. Generally, only one rider will be allowed at any given time.

405.5 REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE

Generally, ride-along and job observation requests will be maintained and scheduled by the Patrol Lieutenants.

The applicant will complete and sign a ride-along or job observation waiver form. If the applicant is under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must be present to complete the waiver form. Information requested will include a valid state-issued identification card or driver's license number, birthdate, address and telephone number.

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The Patrol Lieutenants will schedule a date, based on availability, generally one week after the date of request.

If the request is denied, a representative of this department will advise the applicant of the denial.

405.6 PROCEDURES

Once approved, ride-along applicants will be allowed to participate no more than once.. An exception may apply to the following law enforcement-involved participants:

- Citizen's Law Enforcement Academy participants
- Volunteers
- Chaplains
- Reserves
- Missoula Police Department applicants
- Any others with approval of the Shift Commander

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one member of the public will participate in a ride-along or job observation during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along participant will be allowed in department vehicles at a given time.

405.6.1 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 Montana Department of Justice Criminal Justice Information Network (CJIN) check prior to approval of the ride-along.

405.6.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to participate in a ride-along is required to be suitably dressed.

405.7 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The assigned department member shall consider the safety of the ride-along or job observation participant at all times. The member shall maintain control over the participant and shall instruct the individual about the conditions that necessarily limit his/her participation. Instructions should include:

- (a) The participant will follow the directions of the department member.
- (b) The participant will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, reading an individual's criminal history or other protected information, or handling any police department equipment.
- (c) Participation may be terminated at any time by the member if the participant interferes with the performance of the member's duties.

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1. If the ride-along is in progress, the member may return the participant to the point the ride originated.
- (d) Participants may be allowed to continue a ride-along during the transportation and booking process, provided it does not jeopardize their safety.
- (e) Members will not allow participants to be present in any location or situation that would jeopardize the participant's safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other member of the public.
- (f) Participants who are not law enforcement officers shall not be permitted to accompany the department member into a private residence without the express consent of the resident or other authorized person.
- (g) Participants are not permitted to use cameras or recorders without the express permission of the Chief of Police.
- (h) Participants will not leave a patrol vehicle at the scene of police activity without first having the permission of the member.

An Officer with a ride-along participant should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, such as a high-speed pursuit and, if feasible, let the participant out of the vehicle in a well-lit public place. The communications operator will be advised of the situation and as soon as practicable have another department member respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

Conduct by a person participating in a ride-along that results in termination of the ride, or is otherwise inappropriate, should be immediately reported to the Shift Commander.