

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER	Number: 1-4
COMMUNITY RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM	Date: 05/21/10
VLEPSC Number:	Manual Number:
Replaces:	Effective Date: 05/21/10
Authorization: Chief Michael L. Marshall	Review Date: Annually

Note: This order is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer's 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 order, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

I. POLICY

This program is designed to allow students and other interested citizens to voluntarily accompany officers in order to gain direct knowledge of police work by observation of law enforcement activities.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to establish procedures for the Police Ride-Along Program.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Ride-Along Requests

1. Persons wishing to ride along should pick up ride-along forms at the department in person between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Completed request form and waiver shall be submitted to a shift supervisor.
2. Once the forms are completed and approved, they will be forwarded to the appropriate shift supervisor. Any request by the participant to ride with a particular officer will be noted on the form.

B. Beginning Tour

1. If no specific officer is requested by name by the observer, the shift supervisor will appoint the host officer.
2. Before the ride, the shift supervisor will insure that the observer is appropriately dressed; if not, ride-along approval may be cancelled at that time.
3. The host officer will instruct the observer on the procedures required while riding, which shall include:
 - a) Observer must follow directions of the officer
 - b) Observer may be required to appear as a witness in court.

- c) Observer may terminate the ride whenever he or she wishes.

C. Observer Conduct

1. Observers shall at all times remain under the complete control of the assigned officer and shall comply with all directions and requests.
2. Observers shall not interfere with investigations in any way by conversing with victims, suspects, or witnesses, handling evidence or police equipment, or participating in any police activity unless directed to do so by the assigned officer.
3. Should an observer fail to follow any of the above regulations, the assigned officer may terminate the ride-along session, explaining to the shift supervisor the reason for the termination as soon as is practicable. A memo shall be forwarded to the shift supervisor explaining the circumstances.
4. Should an observer indicate a desire to cease participating in the ride at any time, the officer shall return the observer to the point of origin as soon as possible.

D. Arrests, Transporting, Processing

If the host officer feels there are no hazards involved, the observer may accompany the officer during the arrest, transport, or processing of prisoners. The highest regard should be given to the safety of the observer. If the officer believes a problem may arise, the observer should be temporarily transferred to another officer or to the shift supervisor. This policy should be adhered to concerning any call for service, not only arrest, transporting, and processing.

E. Ending Tour

Upon completion of the ride, the host officer will return the observer to the department and thank him or her for his or her interest. The officer will ask the observer if he or she has any questions or suggestions, which the officer will either answer or forward via written memo to the Chief of Police.

F. Limitations

1. A person may not ride unless approval has been granted and the request form and waiver are complete and on file. Approval will be for one specific eight-hour period unless special limitations or extensions are granted by the Chief of Police.
2. Police spouses may participate in the Ride-Along Program. When both husband and wife agree, and approval has been granted, the spouse may accompany the officer for a limited period of time.
3. Normally, no more than one observer will accompany an officer at a time.
4. Juveniles must have the request form and waiver signed by a parent or guardian as well as special permission from the Chief of Police to participate in the Ride-Along Program.

5. No one will be allowed to observe police activities relating to raids or ride with a plain clothes officer without specific advance coordination and approval of the Chief of Police.
6. There is no “walk along” program as such. If an individual needs to participate on a foot patrol assignment, however, he/she should fill out the standard ride along form and will need the same approval and be subject to the same limitations.
7. Participants are limited to riding one time only. Requests for additional time should be submitted in writing to the Chief of Police and should state the reason for the request. Only after proper approval will the participant be allowed to participate again.