

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURE**

DATE: MARCH 28, 2017
NUMBER: 6.15 - PATROL
SUBJECT: RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM
RELATED POLICY: [6.15](#)
ORIGINATING DIVISION: OPERATIONAL SUPPORT
NEW PROCEDURE:
PROCEDURAL CHANGE:
SUPERSEDES: DP 6.15 – 04/25/2014

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for the procedures and requirements associated with the Ride-Along Program.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. A ride-along is any third party who is not a sworn member of the San Diego Police Department.
- B. Some examples of third parties include citizens, media, Civilian Review Board members, and civilian members of the Police Department in training (i.e., dispatchers, etc.). This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list.

IV. BACKGROUND

- A. The Ride-Along Program serves a variety of purposes:
 - 1. It enables citizens to get a first-hand look at policing and to better understand the role of the police;
 - 2. It increases the opportunity for more effective problem solving; and,
 - 3. It enhances mutual understanding and cooperation and leads to an improved police/community relationship.
- B. The Ride-Along Program is a powerful tool that enables an officer to work constructively with citizens who live, work, or go to school in the officer's area of responsibility. It is not limited to persons who are supportive of the police. Indeed, some of the best experiences to date have come from ride-alongs in which the citizen has held a negative view towards police officers.
- C. This program is an opportunity to solve problems, exchange ideas, and dispel myths about police work.

V. PROCEDURES

- A. Initiation of the Ride-Along
 - 1. The area command's staff shall obtain the interested person's name, address, phone number, date of birth, and other information as required on the "Ride-Along Request" form and inform them that they will be contacted by the service area officer within 14 days. The Ride-Along Request form will be forwarded to the Command's Ride-Along Coordinator.
 - 2. Individuals requesting ride-alongs from field officers will be directed to call the appropriate area command unless the person is going to ride with the officer contacted. In that event, initiating officers will complete a Ride-Along Request form, have it approved by their supervisor, and then forward it to the Ride-Along Coordinator for processing prior to conducting the ride-along.
- B. Processing of Ride-Along Requests
 - 1. Each area command will designate a primary Ride-Along Coordinator and one or two alternates. Generally, the primary Ride-Along Coordinator shall be the assigned front counter officer. Only the designated Ride-

Along Coordinator or alternates may access, update, or modify the Ride-Along database.

2. On-duty civilian members, Department cadets who are participating in a ride-along for training purposes, and Citizens' Review Board members are exempt from the following process.
 - a. The Ride-Along Coordinator will conduct a background check of the requestor to ensure there is no criminal history that would cause safety concerns (e.g., priors for 243 PC, 245 PC, or other major violations). The Coordinator will also research the ride-along database to ensure that the citizen has not been on a ride-along within the last year.
 - (1) Supervisors will be consulted if an officer determines a citizen has an unacceptable criminal history.
 - (2) Supervisors will screen unacceptable requests and inform the citizen the request has been denied.
 - b. The Ride-Along Coordinator will input the requestor's information into the ride-along database, including those requests that have been denied.
 - c. When required, the Ride-Along Coordinator will ensure that the appropriate waiver authorization has been obtained.
 - d. All requests meeting the Program requirements will be forwarded to the appropriate service area supervisor to be assigned to an officer.
 - e. Once the ride-along is complete, the Ride-Along Coordinator will update the ride-along database.
 - f. The Ride-Along Coordinator will retain and file the original Ride-Along Request form. These forms will no longer be forwarded to Operational Support.
3. The service area supervisor will assign a ride-along request to an officer within the appropriate service area and ensure that the request is acted upon within 14 days of the date of the request.
4. At the conclusion of the ride-along, officers will return the completed Ride-Along Request form to the Ride-Along Coordinator.

5. Each area command is responsible for maintaining all Ride-Along Program records. As such, each area command will maintain a file of the original Ride-Along Requests in the Ride-Along Program database for a minimum of two years from the date of request. The ride-along database is an electronic means of capturing, storing, and retrieving the information provided on the Ride-Along Request form.
6. Participation in the Ride-Along Program by on-duty civilian members, Department cadets, and Citizens' Review Board members will be documented by their respective commands and the officer conducting the ride-along in the Officer's Daily Journal.

C. Requirements

1. All citizens who participate in the Ride-Along Program must be 18 years of age or older. The age requirement may be waived for juveniles of high school age at the discretion of the area captain or his/her designee.
2. Participants should either live, work, or go to school in the area command in which they ride. All ride-alongs will be picked up either in their service area or at the police facility.
3. Upon approval of the Recruiting Unit supervisor, a police recruit applicant may ride along even though the applicant does not live, work, or go to school in the area command. The Recruiting Unit supervisor will send a memo to the area command Ride-Along Coordinator explaining the reason for the ride-along, along with a completed Ride-Along Request form. The area command will acknowledge receipt of the request.
4. Any deviation from the ride-along procedures or the listed exceptions must be approved by the area captain or his/her designee.
5. All ride-along participants will be required to ride for a full shift unless there are extenuating circumstances that would prevent this.
6. Participants are limited to one full shift per year under this program.
7. Participants shall ride only with officers working uniformed assignments in marked vehicles.
8. Excluding those outlined above in section B.2., officers must have all participants, including visiting police or other officials, read and sign the "Authorization for Medical Treatment" and "Ride Along Waiver and Release of Liability" portions of the "Ride Along Request Form" prior to entering the police vehicle. Juveniles must have their parent or legal guardian sign the "Authorization for Medical Treatment" and "Ride Along Waiver and Release of Liability" portions of the "Ride Along Request

Form” prior to entering the police vehicle. The waiver forms can be found on the F drive at F:\Templates\Administrative \Ride Along Waiver and Release of Liability Form COMBINED MINOR ADULT.

9. Ride-alongs shall be listed as witnesses on arrests and/or crimes that they observe.
10. Officers should admonish ride-alongs regarding the possibility of being called as a witness in any arrest or incident that may occur during the ride-along.
11. Before going into the field, ride-alongs will be instructed in safety precautions such as the use of the radio and seatbelt, how to determine locations, and the unit designator the officer will be using.
12. Officers with ride-alongs will inform the lineup sergeant prior to lineup.
 - a. The name and phone number of the ride-along and the unit he/she will be riding in will be listed on the Daily Work Schedule and emailed to Communications Division and the Watch Commander’s Office.
 - b. Officers will also enter all ride-along information into the MCT/AFR at the beginning of the shift.
13. A "Ride-Along" identification sticker will be worn by ride-alongs on their outermost garment at all times during the shift. Law enforcement ride-alongs may wear their police identification card or badge.
14. The Ride-Along identification stickers will be maintained at each area station.
15. At the conclusion of the ride-along, officers will make some brief comments in the space provided on the Ride-Along Waiver form and return it to the Ride-Along Coordinator at the end of shift.
16. It is the area captain's responsibility to hold a regular inspection to ensure compliance with these procedures.

D. Special Concerns Involving Ride-Alongs

1. In the event of injury or any other emergency involving a ride-along, existing Departmental Procedures shall prevail. They shall be handled like any other citizen, except:

- a. The officer shall notify the Watch Commander's Office and Communications immediately by radio, phone or MCT.
 - b. The Watch Commander shall call City Claims and notify the area captain as soon as possible.
2. The ride-along shall not be permitted to:
- a. Attend the squad conference unless cleared in advance by the officer's supervisor.
 - b. Be present during interviews with criminal suspects or informants.
 - c. Be immediately present at the scene of such calls as rape, child molest, or any other situation that may cause embarrassment for the victim, the ride-along, or both.
 - d. Ride in a police vehicle without wearing the seatbelt.
 - e. Enter the station locker rooms.
 - f. Have access to confidential material such as criminal records.
 - g. Drive any police vehicle.
 - h. Enter any residence that an officer enters under exigent circumstances. (Officers should exercise discretion and allow a third party to enter a residence only after obtaining permission from the owner.)
 - i. Enter a home during the execution of a search warrant. This policy protects the homeowner's Fourth Amendment rights. Any violation of the policy may result in an officer losing his/her qualified immunity and subject that officer to personal civil damages.