

## Ride-Along Policy

### 409.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

#### 409.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Mountain View Police Department Ride-Along Program is offered to residents, students 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 15 years of age
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against the Department
- Denial by any supervisor

### 409.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be scheduled by a member of the Community Action and Information Unit. 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.

A Community Action and Information Unit representative will schedule a date, based on availability, at least one week after the date of application. The completed waiver will be submitted to the Community Action and Information Unit for approval. If approved, a copy will remain in the Community Action and Information Unit, and the applicant will be scheduled and notified. Field Supervisors will receive notification in the ride-along calendar system. A copy of the application will be forward to Records.

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

#### 409.2.1 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: Explorers, Chaplains, Reserves, volunteers, police applicants, and all others with approval of the Field Supervisor.

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.

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All persons (except Police Explorers) who are under the age of 18 will end their ride-along at midnight.

Ride-along requirements for Police Explorers are covered in the Explorer Program Rules and Regulations.

#### 409.2.2 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 blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the police vehicle. The Watch Commander or Patrol Lieutenant may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

#### 409.2.3 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 expressed 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.

#### 409.2.4 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 Mountain View Police Department) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.D.3.)

### **409.3 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 Community Action and Information Unit is responsible for maintaining and scheduling ride-alongs. Upon completion of the ride-along, the yellow form shall be returned to the Community Action and Information Unit with any comments which may be offered by the officer.

### **409.4 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

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- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, or handling any police equipment
- (c) The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time and the officer may return the observer 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 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 expressed consent of the resident or other authorized person