

Bowie Police Department - General Orders



TITLE: RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM	NUMBER: 605
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AUTHORITY Chief John K. Nesky	ACCREDITATIONS STANDARDS CALEA STANDARDS: 45.2.1	TOTAL PAGES 3
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I. POLICY

It is the policy and a goal of the Bowie Police Department to continue to improve communications between the police and the community. The citizen Ride-Along program is one method used in pursuit of this goal.

II. PURPOSE

Allowing citizens to Ride-Along with Officers of the Bowie Police Department enables the citizen to become better acquainted with the duties and responsibilities of the police. The purpose of this General Order is to provide guidelines for a safe and meaningful Ride-Along experience.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Eligibility

1. The following persons are eligible to participate in the Police Ride-Along Program:
 - a. Bowie residents eighteen (18) years of age or older;
 - b. Applicants for Bowie police positions;
 - c. Visiting law enforcement personnel;
 - d. City of Bowie employees;
 - e. Professionals and students in the field of Criminal Justice, the Social Sciences, or a related field;
 - f. Members of the news media and local government officials; and

2. The Chief of Police may authorize participation by any individual who does not fall within the eligibility requirements if it is determined that participation in the Ride-Along program would benefit both the individual and the Department.
- B. Prior to participation, a Ride-Along candidate must complete the Ride-Along application in its entirety.
 - C. Participation in this program is restricted to four hours, every six months unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
 - D. An Offense/Incident report will be initiated regarding any injury to a Ride-Along participant and the Sergeant will be advised as soon as practical.
 - E. Civilian participants shall not be armed when participating in the Ride-Along program. Certified off-duty Police Officers may be armed provided that their weapon is carried in compliance with the rules and regulations of their agency and is kept concealed.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- A. Applications
 1. Once completed, the form is forwarded to the designated Sergeant for review.
 2. Disapproved applicants will be notified of the disapproval.
 3. A copy of an approved application will be forwarded to the appropriate Officer.
 4. The application will then be filed.
- B. Assignment
 1. The Commander of Patrol will contact the applicant to schedule a mutually convenient date and time.
 2. Upon completion of the Ride-Along, the copy of the application will be forwarded to the Commander of Patrol for review and subsequent filing.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Citizen participants must be appropriately dressed and conduct themselves in a responsible manner during the Ride-Along.
- B. Prior to the beginning of the Ride-Along, the host Officer will conduct a brief orientation which should include the following:
 1. Safety equipment orientation (fire extinguisher, flares, etc.)

2. Police radio use protocol in the event the Ride-Along participant must use it.
3. Ride-Along safety protocol
 - a. The Ride-Along participant will remain in the police vehicle unless permission is granted for him/her to accompany the Officer.
 - b. Ride-Along participants must use seat belts at all times.
 - c. Certain police calls (including code 3 responses) are considered inherently dangerous and the Ride-Along participant may be dropped off at a safe place. After the call is completed, the Officer will ensure that the Ride-Along participant is picked up.
4. On the scene protocol

Questions concerning a specific incident may be discussed after it has been completed.

C. Ride-Along participants will not:

1. Accompany any Officer inside a victim's home without the approval of the victim;
2. Interfere in any way with the Officer's handling of a situation;
3. Accompany an Officer during a vehicular pursuit;
4. Participate in arrests, investigative stops, and other similar law enforcement activities;
5. Divulge any confidential information or circumstances which they may hear or see during the ride-along; and,
6. Consume any alcohol for at least six (6) hours prior to the scheduled start of the ride-along.

D. Revocation of Ride-Along authority

1. The host Officer has the authority to revoke a participant's authorization at any time if the participant's conduct or attire is not in the best interest of the Department. The Officer may also revoke authorization if the Ride-Along would present a danger to a citizen, the Ride-Along participant, or hinder or endanger the Officer in their performance of duty.
2. The host Officer will document the circumstances surrounding any revocation of authorization, and forward the report to the Sergeant.

E. The host Officer will be responsible for the completion of the reverse side of the application form, including the participant's comments. Both positive and negative comments should be solicited from the participant. If there is a problem which merits an immediate call or follow-up action, the Commander of Patrol will be notified.

(Attachment: BPD Form #49 Ride Along Program)

VI. EXPLORERS POST #1916 RIDE ALONGS

The purpose of Bowie Police Explorers Post #1916 is to provide a comprehensive training, competitive, service, practical, and recreational experience to young adults interested in a career in law enforcement or a related field. Toward that end, the objectives of the Ride-Along program are to offer qualified Police Explorers the opportunity to accompany a Police Officer on patrol to observe and gain practical experience with regard to the methods and techniques used in patrol operations and related services. This program also provides Explorers with valuable knowledge of the challenges and benefits of patrol operations and a better understanding of the importance of police services within the City of Bowie.

VII. POLICY

A. The policy and standard operating procedures contained herein for the Bowie Police Department (hereafter referred to as BPD), Law Enforcement Explorer Post #1916 (hereafter referred to as Post #1916), Ride-Along program have been approved by the Chief of Police and supplement the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the BPD.

B. Risk Management and Acceptance of Liability: The BPD recognizes the potential risks to participants involved with Post #1916 activities, to include personal injury and/or inadvertent involvement with dangerous situations. All BPD personnel, or approved volunteers, involved with Post #1916 will make every effort to minimize risk to Explorers through training, supervision, adherence to policy and standard operating procedures, and proactive risk management. As a condition of acceptance into Post #1916, the parents or legal guardian of every Explorer, or the Explorer if of legal age to do so, must sign a hold harmless and release form acknowledging they have been advised of the risk potential and waive any right to initiate a legal cause of action against the City of Bowie, the BPD, and Learning for Life/Law Enforcement Exploring, or any of their representatives.

C. Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment: Prior to participation in the program, the parents or legal guardian of every Explorer in Post #1916, or the Explorer if of legal age to do so, must sign a medical release form authorizing BPD representatives to approve emergency medical treatment.

D. Learning for Life/Law Enforcement Exploring Policies: The policies and standard operating procedures for BPD Post #1916 shall remain consistent with current policies established by Learning for Life/Law Enforcement Exploring with respect to Explorers driving police vehicles, covert activities, blood borne pathogens, Hepatitis B vaccination declination, or any future policies pertaining to Law Enforcement Exploring.

E. Participation limitations: Explorers under 16 years of age are not authorized to participate in the Ride-Along program. Explorers under 18 years of age may not accompany officers on a Ride-Along between 12 midnight and 6 AM. In order to ensure that Explorers partake in all activities of the Post, and to provide an equal opportunity for all members, Explorers will be limited to participating in the Ride-Along program based on the number of hours expended on other Post activities. Upon accruing eight hours of time involved in Post meetings, training, competition or other approved activities, an Explorer can spend an equal amount of time participating in the Ride-Along program. The Post Advisor, or his designee, can make an exception to this policy as needed.

VIII. TRAINING

A. Prerequisites for Explorers: As a prerequisite for participating in the Ride-Along program, an Explorer must have successfully passed the BPD Post #1916 basic training course, completed the required probationary period, and not be the subject of any disciplinary action (to include not being on academic probation for failure to maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA).

B. Specialized Training for Explorers: Prior to being designated as qualified for the Ride-Along program, Explorers will receive specialized training in methods and techniques used in patrol operations and related services, traffic control, crowd control, telecommunications procedures, and basic first aid/CPR. Additionally Youth Protection Personal Safety Awareness will be presented to Explorers during their basic training period, which will be reviewed prior to an Explorer being authorized to participate in the Ride-Along Program. The youth protection issues portion of the training will emphasize assertive and practical ways in which an Explorer can prevent and stop inappropriate behavior from adults or other Explorers. Explorers also will be provided with familiarization training on all patrol vehicle systems and equipment.

C. Officers: In order for an Officer to be considered for the program they must have completed their field training program and probationary period, and be in good standing with no pending disciplinary actions or other adverse matters. CBPD personnel approved for participation in the Ride-Along program must undergo an orientation that includes an overview of Law Enforcement Exploring, agency policy and standard operating procedures for Officers and Explorers. Officers must undergo the self-guided Youth Protection Training course for adults.

IX. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

A. Uniform: Explorers will report for a Ride-Along well groomed in a clean and pressed Class B uniform (unless otherwise notified), and their hat. Explorers should have other uniform items as dictated by weather or other factors (i.e. rain coat, coat, boots, etc.), along with a reflective vest or other approved reflective clothing item to be used when engaged in traffic control functions.

B. Authorized Equipment: Explorers will have with them on every Ride-Along a notepad, pen and pencil, flashlight, and whistle.

C. Prohibited Equipment: Explorers may not carry any offensive or defensive weapons; to include firearms, tasers, nightsticks, batons (collapsible or otherwise), saps, sap gloves, tactical flashlights (i.e., large metal or other heavy duty flashlights that may be used as a nightstick or baton), and knives with blades in excess of four inches, chemical repellents or electrical shock devices.

X. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. Reporting for a Ride-Along: Explorers will report for their Ride-Along at least 15 minutes before their scheduled time in their complete uniform and with the required equipment. Explorers must not have any prohibited equipment as defined in Section 3.3 of this policy.

B. Ride-Along Logbook/Release Records: A Ride-Along logbook will be maintained by Community Services Section. The logbook will contain the following information about the Ride-Along: date, start time, end time, Explorer's name, supervising officer's name and any comments deemed appropriate by the supervising officer. A records book will also be maintained that will contain a current list of Explorers qualified to participate in the Ride-Along program, along with a copy of their hold harmless and release form as well as their medical release form that permits BPD representatives to approve emergency medical treatment. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor of Community Services, or his/her designee, to make sure the logbook is maintained properly and the release records book is up to date.

A shift supervisor must sign the logbook approving all Explorer ride-along prior to the start time of the ride along.

C. Unacceptable Behavior on Ride-Along: Explorers may not eat or drink (except while on a break with supervising patrol officer); use tobacco products; use any electronic device such as a cell phone, personal

digital assistant, music device or game; or engage in any other behavior that would distract the supervising officer or interfere with the objectives of the Ride-Along program. The only exception to this policy is the use of a cell phone, or other communication device, in an emergency situation.

D. Prohibited Actions: Due to potential legal issues with federal and state statutes regulating criminal law and procedure, civil law, and privacy and confidentiality concerns, Explorers are not permitted to participate in interviews, interrogations, the handling or processing of evidence, or the intake or transfer of persons taken into custody. Further, Explorers are forbidden from responding to any opinion or judgment questions posed to them by the public (i.e., at a scene of a traffic accident someone asks, “Who do you think was at fault?” “What type of citation should be issued?” etc.). Conversations with citizens will be limited to comments made necessary by direct inquiry and do not require an opinion or judgment, or as otherwise directed by the supervising officer. If avoidable, Explorers should not be placed in situations where they may be called as a witness in a criminal or civil proceeding.

E. Supervision of Explorer: At all times during a Ride-Along the Explorer will adhere to the commands and direction given to him/her by the supervising officer or, in the supervising officer’s absence or incapacity, any other law enforcement officer. The Explorer shall, to the extent possible, remain in the patrol vehicle as an observer during a Ride-Along unless otherwise directed by the supervising officer or other law enforcement officer.

F. Permissible Activities on Ride-Alongs: Explorers, as directed by the supervising officer, may assist with telecommunications, traffic control, access control, and completion of incident report forms or any other activity that is considered by the supervising officer to be routine and low-risk for the Explorer.

G. Prohibited Activities on Ride-Alongs: Explorers are prohibited, due to the considerable potential for legal complications or for an aggressive or risk inherent response, from participating in arrests, felony-in-progress calls, high-speed traffic pursuits, foot pursuits, domestic crisis calls, civil unrest or drinking establishment disturbances, sobriety tests or any other high risk or legally precarious situation. Should, during the course of a Ride-Along, the supervising officer have enough advance notice of a high risk or legally precarious call as it relates to the Explorer, he/she will transport the Explorer to a safe location or make arrangements for the Explorer to be transported to a safe location.

H. Spontaneous Emergency on Ride-Along: Patrol operations and calls for service often involve spontaneous situations that require an aggressive and risk inherent response; or just as likely a routine call for service escalates into a situation requiring the same type of response. In that it is not possible to foresee every possible contingency for Explorers participating in the Ride-Along program the supervising law enforcement officer responsible for the Explorer must, based upon the circumstances presented, use his/her best professional judgment with respect to the safety and security of the Explorer.

As a general rule, if the supervising officer is confronted with such a situation and able, he/she should make arrangements for another law enforcement officer to transport the Explorer to the police station or other safe location. In some situations it may be safer for the Explorer to remain in the patrol vehicle. It is the responsibility of the Explorer to remain as uninvolved as possible during a spontaneous emergency. In the event the supervising officer is in need of emergency assistance, the Explorer will contact the police dispatch center by police radio or cell phone and relate as clearly as possible the location and situation. If the Explorer’s safety is in jeopardy, and he/she can be of no further assistance to the supervising officer or other law enforcement personnel, the Explorer should remove himself/herself from the immediate area and, without unnecessary delay, report to the police station. Subsequent to the spontaneous emergency, the supervising officer and the Explorer must each prepare a written report detailing the spontaneous emergency and the actions of the supervising officer and Explorer. This report must be prepared as soon as possible after the spontaneous emergency, but no later than 24 hours after the incident, and submitted to the Shift Commander and a copy to the Post Advisor.

XI. NOTIFICATIONS

A. Injuries/potential legal situations: The supervising officer, or any other BPD personnel or volunteer involved with Post #1916, must report to the Shift Commander and Post Advisor any injury that occurs to an Explorer, or any situation that may have legal consequences, arising from the Explorer's participation in a Ride-Along or any other Post #1916 activity. This report must be made as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the injury or incident.

B. Infractions of Policy: The supervising officer shall immediately terminate the Ride-Along for any infraction of this policy. Infractions of this policy, or any other BPD policy and procedure, by an Explorer must be reported to the Post Advisor as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the incident(s) so appropriate follow-up and/or disciplinary action can be initiated.