

Ride-Along Policy

410.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for citizens to experience the law enforcement function first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, and hours of operation for the Ride-Along Program.

410.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The UCSC Police Department Ride-along Program is offered to residents, students and those employed within the University and community members. 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 18 years of age (Exceptions may be made with the concurrence of the chief of police and with parental approval)
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against the Department
- Denial by any supervisor

410.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The Ride-along Program is available on most days of the week, with certain exceptions established by the supervisor handling the request. The ride-along times may be approved for any time of the day deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police, Division Commander, or shift supervisors.

410.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, the shift supervisor will schedule ride-along requests. 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 shift supervisor will schedule a date, based on availability.

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.

410.2.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Participants will be limited to two ride-alongs. Ride-alongs are not to be used for socializing with acquaintances.

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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410.2.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

The Watch Commander or field supervisor may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

410.2.3 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.

410.2.4 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 University California Santa Cruz Police Department) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.D.3.).

410.3 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 this location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

410.4 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
- (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

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- (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
- (g) The ride-along participant shall be advised that s/he is expected to refrain from expressing approval or disapproval of an officer's actions to any arrestee, victim, or witness, etc. The participant may feel free to ask questions of the officer later, in private. Participants will not be allowed to take cameras, any weapons or firearms, tape recorders or other recording devices during the ride-along except when approved by the chief of police.
- (h) Any participant exhibiting signs of drug and/or alcohol influence will be denied approval to ride-along.
- (i) Participants shall be instructed to stay in the patrol unit unless advised to exit by the officer.
- (j) Participants shall be advised that they may witness a criminal act or arrest, which may require their presence in court. If a ride-along participant witnesses any arrest or incident during the course of the ride-along, the officer shall include the name of the ride-along participant and their statement in any arrest or incident reports.