
Ride-Along Policy

410.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

410.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Elk Grove Police Department Ride-Along Program is offered to residents, students, applicants, 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:

- (a) Being under 15 years of age
- (b) Prior criminal history
- (c) Pending criminal action
- (d) Pending lawsuit against the Department
- (e) Denial by any supervisor

410.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The Ride-Along Program is available on most days of the week, with certain exceptions. The ride-along times are consistent with the officer's assigned shift. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Chief of Police, Division Commander, or Watch Commander.

410.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

A participant may submit, to the Field Services Administrative Assistant or designated person, a Ride-Along Request Form (completing all information requested) and a signed waiver. If the participant is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must review and sign the ride-along form and waiver.

Generally, ride-along requests will be scheduled by the Field Services Administrative Assistant or designated person, after approval from the Watch Commander. The applicant will be contacted and the ride along will be scheduled based on availability.

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

410.2.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Once approved, ride-along participants will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. Exceptions would apply to the following: Explorers, VIPS, Chaplains, Reserves, police applicants, and all others with approval of the Watch Commander.

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All efforts will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given shift. No more than one ride-along will be allowed in the officer's vehicle at a given time.

410.2.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride along is required to be suitably dressed in a collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes; no obvious logos. Sandals, T-shirts, tank tops, shorts, tennis shoes, 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 field supervisor may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

410.2.3 PEACE OFFICER RIDE-ALONGS

Off-duty employees 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.

When the peace officer ride-along requests to carry a firearm, authorization from the Watch Commander must first be obtained.

If authorization to carry a firearm is granted, the peace officer ride-along will display, to the Watch Commander or authorized designee, the appropriate credentials from his/her respective agency and disclose the type of concealed weapon he/she is carrying during the ride-along.

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 preliminary 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 Elk Grove Police Department) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.F.2.).

410.3 OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The officer shall provide a copy of the ride-along form to Dispatch and 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 Field Services Administrative Assistant or designated person is responsible for maintaining and scheduling ride-alongs. Upon completion of the ride-along, the form with officer's signature on the second page shall be returned to Field Services Administrative Assistant or designated person.

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410.4 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG

The assigned employee shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her of the conditions that will limit their participation. These instructions should include:

- (a) The ride-along will follow the directions of the officer
- (b) Camera and tape recorders are NOT allowed to be carried on ride-alongs
- (c) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, or handling any police equipment
- (d) The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time
- (e) The officer may return the observer to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of the officer's duties
- (f) Ride-alongs may be allowed to continue riding during the transportation and booking process provided this does not jeopardize their safety
- (g) 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
- (h) 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

410.5 DISPATCH CENTER OBSERVERS (SIT ALONG)

The Dispatch Center is vital to public safety operations and dispatchers routinely process sensitive, confidential, and restricted information. Therefore, the Dispatch Center is a restricted area for visitors.

Except as provided below, persons not employed by the City of Elk Grove are expressly prohibited from entering the Dispatch Center without proper approval.

- (a) Authorized representatives of allied Public Safety Agencies
- (b) Authorized tours approved by the Elk Grove Police Department and escorted by an employee
- (c) Screened applicants for employment with the Elk Grove Police Department
- (d) Authorized vendors and contractors
- (e) Family members and friends of employees as approved by the Dispatch Supervisor, Communications Bureau Manager, or the Support Services Captain

All persons not meeting the above criteria, shall complete a Dispatch Center Sit Along Application and submit to the Dispatch Supervisor. Applicants will be subject to the same eligibility for a Patrol Ride Along and screened in the same manner for approval. A Dispatch Supervisor must approve all sit along applicants.