

Ride-Along Policy

410.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Orange County Sheriff's Department ride-along program provides an opportunity for professional staff, Sheriff Explorers, and citizens to experience field-level law enforcement first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, and hours of operation for the ride-along program. In addition, this policy shall maintain a consistent means of approving and monitoring the ride-along program.

410.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Department's ride-along program is offered primarily to residents and those employed by, or who volunteer for the County to include Professional Staff, County Members, Sheriff Reserve Deputies, and Sheriff Explorers. Every attempt shall be made to accommodate interested persons. However, any applicant may be disqualified without cause.

The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant:

1. Being under the age of fourteen
2. Prior criminal history
3. Pending criminal action
4. Pending claim or lawsuit against the County and/or the Orange County Sheriff's Department
5. Denial by any supervisor

410.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The ride-along program is available on most days of the week depending upon the projected activity and workload of a pending shift. Ride-along times for non-sworn individuals with the exception of Adult Explorers (see Policy 410.2.5.5) shall be 0600 to 2300 hours. There shall be no time restrictions for non-department Peace Officers and/or sworn Members.

Exceptions to the ride-along policy may be made as approved by the Sheriff, Undersheriff, and/or an Assistant Sheriff.

410.2 CIVILIAN AND/OR PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RESPONDER PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, the ride-along request shall be processed and scheduled by the Command with which the participant desires to ride along. Ride-along applications may also be obtained through Professional Standards.

Participants must read and understand the ride-along policy/waiver. The participant then must complete and sign both the ride-along application and liability waiver forms. Signing and submitting the application/waiver authorizes the Department to conduct a criminal records check for non-Member civilian ride-along applicants. Records/criminal history checks shall be conducted by the Commander or his designee. Information requested shall include a valid government-issued

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identification, address, telephone number, and emergency contact information. If the participant is under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must be present to complete the ride-along application, liability waiver, and medical treatment consent form.

If the ride-along request is processed through Professional Standards, the completed application and waiver shall be forwarded to the appropriate Command for approval.

Approval shall be evaluated on a case by case basis pursuant to the needs of the Division, the Command, and the best interests of the Department. Any decision in question shall be reviewed and the Commander or his/her designee shall make the final decision.

If approved, a copy of the application and waiver shall be returned to the Professional Standards Division which will maintain both items for two years pursuant to the Department's records retention policy. An additional copy of the approved application shall be retained at the respective command with which the participant is requesting to ride-along.

Based on availability, the participant shall be scheduled for a ride-along date within approximately 30 days from the date of approval. Once an approved ride-along request is received, the receiving Commander or his/her designee shall make arrangements for the ride-along and notify the applicant of the granted approval and date of the ride-along.

If approved for a ride-along, PSRs shall wear their respective uniforms as authorized by their Command and/or Command Staff.

A ride-along application and Commander's approval shall be required for every new ride-along request, regardless of how many times in the past the individual has participated in the program. Each new ride-along request shall be at the discretion of the Commander.

If the ride-along is denied, a representative of the Sheriff's Department shall contact the applicant by telephone or e-mail and advise him or her of the denial.

410.2.1 REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR CIVILIANS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RESPONDERS

1. Ride-Along application and medical treatment consent form [signed] by a parent or guardian if participant is a juvenile. The juvenile's parent or guardian while in the presence of a Department ride-along coordinator must sign this form.
2. Ride-Along liability waiver [signed]
3. Ride-Along opinion survey
 - (a) The Sheriff's Member in control of the ride-along shall be responsible for providing a ride-along survey form to his or her ride-along participant. This survey may be completed at the conclusion of the ride-along and/or mailed to the Department at a later date.
4. All forms shall be maintained by the Professional Standards Division pursuant to the Department's records retention policy.
5. Individual Commands shall maintain copies as needed.

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6. Ride-along applications, liability waivers, and medical treatment consent forms may be obtained from the Document Center, located on the Department's Intranet.

410.2.2 RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CIVILIANS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RESPONDERS

1. Any person approved to ride-along is required to be suitably dressed in a collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks, and shoes. Sandals, T-shirts, tank-tops, shorts, ripped and/or torn clothing is not permitted. Hats and ball-caps shall not be worn in the patrol vehicle. The Department Commander or field supervisor may refuse a ride-along to anyone not properly dressed.
2. All ride-alongs shall be scheduled for a minimum of two hours. Wherever possible, the ride-along should begin at the scheduled briefing of the Sheriff's Member responsible for the ride-along participant.
3. Cameras, video, audio recorders, and/or other recording devices are not allowed during a ride-along. Cellular phones are permitted, but the video/audio recording feature is not to be utilized under any circumstances.
4. Consumption of alcoholic beverages before or during the ride-along is not permitted.
5. Ride-alongs may be scheduled anytime between 0600 and 2300 hours.
6. Spouses, legal dependents, and persons having a dating or close relationship with any deputy shall not be allowed to ride-along with the involved deputy.
7. Participants riding along in an official capacity may wear the approved uniform of their assigned job classification.
8. Unless authorized to do so, participants shall not review any official report or record of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.
9. A ride-along participant may be exposed to privileged and/or confidential information. To participate in the ride-along program the participant must agree to treat all matters they witness as confidential and not divulge any information other than to a properly authorized county, state and/or federal employee.
10. Uniform patrol includes, but may not be limited to the following: Marked vehicle street level patrol and Harbor Patrol.
11. Ride-alongs with Specialty Details (e.g. gang unit) require approval from Executive Command.
12. Ride-alongs with the Air Support Bureau require approval from Executive Command.

Note: Exceptions to any of the aforementioned rules and requirements may only be granted by the respective Commander.

410.2.3 OCSD PROFESSIONAL STAFF RIDE-ALONG

All professional staff desiring to participate in the ride-along program must obtain approval from their Commander, as well as approval from the appropriate Commander of the Division with which the Member desires to ride along. This shall be accomplished via intradepartmental memorandum

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(blue slip) on a one-time basis. The professional staff Member's memo should also indicate the staff Member has read and fully understands the ride-along policy.

Professional staff shall route their request through their Chain of Command. Once approved by their Commander, the form shall be forwarded to the appropriate Commander for approval. Professional staff shall be notified by e-mail as to the status of their request. Approval may be suspended if deemed necessary.

A new request must be approved, as described above, for each individual ride-along. Professional staff shall not be required to sign a liability waiver.

410.2.4 ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF RESERVES RIDE-ALONG

Pursuant to "POST" guidelines, Deputy Sheriff Reserves may ride-along and participate as authorized pursuant to their individual Reserve Status Level (Level-I, II, III).

Reserve Deputies desiring to participate in the ride-along program must have successfully completed the reserve academy and shall obtain the approval of their Commander as well as the approval of the appropriate Commander. This shall be accomplished by utilizing the Department authorized Ride-Along Request form located on the Intranet.

Reserve Deputies shall route their request through their chain of command. Once approved by their Commander, the form shall be forwarded to the appropriate Commander for approval. Upon approval by the Commander of the Division with which the Reserve requests to ride-along, the reserve deputy's name shall be placed on a list of approved ride-alongs and the reserve deputy shall be notified by telephone or e-mail of their approval. Approval may be suspended if deemed necessary. Reserves shall wear their respective uniforms as authorized by their Command and/or Command Staff.

410.2.5 SHERIFF EXPLORER RIDE-ALONG

Pursuant to Sheriff Explorer guidelines, Explorers must have successfully completed an Explorer Academy and be patrol ride-along certified. The Sheriff Explorer will need to secure ride-along approval via their chain of command, sign their respective liability waiver, and then submit a Department ride-along request as described above. If an Explorer is under eighteen years of age, the Explorer's parent must sign the ride-along liability waiver and Medical Treatment Consent form while in the presence of an Explorer Coordinator or Advisor. Explorers shall not be required to fill out a ride-along application.

1. The Explorer's Advisor must approve the ride-along and must be advised of the Deputy with whom the Explorer is scheduled to ride with.
2. Approval from the field supervisor in the area where the ride-along is taking place.
3. Sheriff Explorers shall wear their respective uniforms as authorized by their Command and/or Command Staff.
4. Explorers must have approved body armor to participate in a ride-along.
5. Adult Explorers may only ride from 0530 to 0200 hours. Minor Explorers may ride from 0530 to 2200 hours.

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6. Explorers may only participate in one ride-along every two weeks and may not ride with the same Deputy or Sheriff Member more than once per month.
7. Fraternalization between the Deputy (or any Sheriff's Department Member) and the Explorer, on or off duty, regardless of whether the Explorer is an adult, is prohibited.
8. The Explorer's Advisor must debrief the Explorer after every ride-along, to determine if all policies were followed and the Explorer acted appropriately.
9. If an Explorer acts inappropriately in any manner, the Deputy or Sheriff's Member must notify the Explorer's Advisor immediately.
10. Explorers may participate on a ride-along with a relative from the Department, twice a year. This ride-along must be approved by the Explorer Coordinator and the Department Member's Commander.

410.3 SWORN MEMBERS RIDE-ALONGS

Sworn Members of the Department shall only participate in a Departmental ride-along while the Member is on-duty and in lieu of their regularly assigned shift. The sworn Member must be free of any temporary work restrictions.

1. To participate in the Patrol Operations Command or Coroner's Division ride-along program, the Member must obtain written approval (intradepartmental memorandum) from their Commander as well as written approval from the appropriate Patrol Operations or Coroner Division Commander.
2. The intradepartmental memo shall not apply to Deputies in the Patrol Operations' Field Training Program (phase five).

410.3.1 NON-DEPARTMENT PEACE OFFICER RIDE-ALONGS

Peace Officers from outside law-enforcement agencies shall not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty Deputy Sheriff's, Deputy Coroners, or other Department Members (i.e. OCCL) without the expressed consent of the Department Commander. In the event that such ride-along is permitted, the Peace Officer shall wear civilian attire and complete the Department's liability waiver. The non-department Peace Officer riding-along may carry a concealed weapon as allowed by law and permitted pursuant to their agency's rules and regulations. The Peace Officer 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.

410.4 SHERIFF MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

A Sheriff's Member with a ride-along shall advise dispatch a ride-along is present before going into service. Sheriff's Members should use sound discretion when encountering potentially dangerous situations, and if deemed necessary, the ride-along participant may be left in a safe location prior to responding to the situation or confronting the danger in question. As soon as possible, dispatch should be notified as to the location of the ride-along participant. Dispatch shall, when possible, make arrangements for a non-involved deputy or other Member to respond and pick up the ride-along participant.

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410.5 CONTROL OF THE RIDE-ALONG PARTICIPANT

The assigned Sheriff's Member shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instructs the participant which conditions may limit their participation. These instructions should include but not be limited to the following:

1. The participant will follow any lawful direction of the assigned Sheriff's Member.
2. The participant will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, or handling any Department equipment.
3. The ride-along participant shall not interfere or obstruct a Sheriff's Member in the performance of his or her duties. If deemed necessary, the Sheriff's Member may at any time terminate the ride and return the participant to where the ride originated as soon as practicable.
4. The participant may be allowed to continue riding with a deputy during the transportation and booking process provided this does not jeopardize their safety.
5. The ride-along participants will be allowed to accompany a deputy into the jail and to observe the booking process, with the exception of the medical triage, which the ride-along participant should not be allowed to hear pursuant to (HIPAA) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act mandates.
6. A Sheriff's Member should not allow any ride-along participant to be present in any residence or situation that would unduly jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other citizen.
7. **Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride-along be permitted to accompany a Sheriff's Member when entering a private residence or private property not normally accessible to the public without the expressed consent of the resident or other authorized person.**
8. All ride-along participants shall abide by the ride-along policies and procedures as outlined in this material and the lawful and appropriate directions of the Sheriff's Member in charge of the ride. A ride-along can be terminated at any time with or without cause.

410.6 RIDE-ALONG PROCEDURES

Each person participating in a ride-along shall report to the designated location at the beginning of their ride-along shift. For Patrol or Coroner ride-alongs, each person shall contact the on-duty field supervisor or Supervising Deputy Coroner for the area they are riding in and be paired with a deputy for that area.

On-duty field supervisor shall ensure the ride-along is on the approved ride-along list and has the appropriate equipment. The name of the ride-along shall be added to the Watch List and dispatch shall be notified. A ride-along shall be denied if the person's name is not on the approved list or if prior notification from the Operations Commander is not received.

The deputy in charge of the ride-along shall document the name of the ride-along on their Patrol Daily Activity Log, via the CAD, in the appropriate area. Additionally, the deputy in charge of the

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ride-along shall ensure all equipment utilized by the ride-along participant is returned at the end of each shift. Only sworn Department Members should handle and or utilize Department equipment.

410.7 RECORDS RETENTION

All applications, liability waivers, and medical treatment consent forms for ride-alongs shall be forwarded to the Professional Standards Division, which shall retain the records in accordance with the Department's records retention schedule.