

Ride-Alongs

404.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for a ride-along with members of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Police Department. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, hours of operation and member responsibilities for ride-alongs.

404.2 POLICY

Ride-along opportunities will be provided to the members of the public, County and Commission employees and members of this department to observe and experience first-hand various functions of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Police Department. The term "ride-along" includes riding as a passenger with an officer on patrol or observing the work day of members engaged in other functions within the Department such as Security Operations Center.

404.3 ELIGIBILITY

A ride-along is available to Sanitary District residents, business owners, students currently attending class in the Sanitary District, Commission employees and County government employees. Efforts will be made to accommodate all interested persons. However, any applicant may be disqualified without cause from participating.

Factors that may be considered in disqualifying an applicant include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being under 15 years of age
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against this department or the Commission
- Denial by any supervisor

404.4 AVAILABILITY

A ride-along is available most days of the week, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Chief of Police or Patrol Commander.

404.5 REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE

Generally, ride-along requests will be maintained and scheduled by the Patrol Commander. The applicant will complete and sign a ride-along waiver form. If the applicant is under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must be present to complete the waiver form. Information requested will include a valid state-issued identification card or driver's license number, birthdate, address and telephone number.

The Patrol Commander will schedule a date, based on availability, generally one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy of the waiver form will be forwarded to the appropriate section as soon as possible for scheduling considerations.

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If the request is denied, a representative of this department will advise the applicant of the denial.

See attachment: [GUIDELINES FOR RIDE ALONG](#)

404.6 PROCEDURES

Once approved, ride-along applicants will be allowed to participate no more than once every six months. An exception may apply to the following law enforcement-involved participants:

- Explorers
- Volunteers
- Chaplains
- Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Police Department applicants
- Any others with approval of the Patrol Commander
- Students enrolled in any department-approved dispatcher training course

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one member of the public will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along participant will be allowed in department vehicles at a given time.

Ride-along requirements for department Explorers are covered in the Explorers Policy.

404.6.1 OFF-DUTY PARTICIPATION

Members of any other law enforcement agency, and employees of the Commission, will not be permitted to participate in a ride-along with on-duty members of this department without the express consent of the Patrol Commander.

In the event that such participation is permitted, the off-duty department member, other law enforcement agency personnel or Commission employee shall not:

- (a) Be considered on-duty.
- (b) Represent him/herself as a member of this department or any other law enforcement agency.
- (c) Participate in any law enforcement activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

404.6.2 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 Maryland Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) check prior to approval of the ride-along.

404.6.3 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to participate in a ride-along is required to be suitably dressed in a collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, t-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn pants are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn without the express consent of the

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Patrol Commander. The Patrol Commander or a supervisor may refuse a ride-along to anyone who is not dressed appropriately.

404.7 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The assigned department member shall consider the safety of the ride-along participant at all times. The member shall maintain control over the participant and shall instruct the individual about the conditions that necessarily limit his/her participation. Instructions should include:

- (a) The participant will follow the directions of the department member.
- (b) The participant will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, reading an individual's criminal history or other protected information, or handling any police department equipment.
- (c) Participation may be terminated at any time by the department member if the participant interferes with the performance of the member's duties.
 - 1. If the participant is on a ride-along, the member may return the participant to the point the ride originated.
- (d) Participants may be allowed to continue a ride-along during the transportation and booking process, provided it does not jeopardize their safety.
- (e) Members will not allow participants to be present in any location or situation that would jeopardize the participant's safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other member of the public.
- (f) Participants who are not law enforcement officers shall not be permitted to accompany the department member into a private residence without the express consent of the resident or other authorized person.

The member assigned to provide a ride-along shall advise the security officers/dispatcher that a ride-along participant is present in the vehicle before going into service. An officer with a ride-along participant should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, such as a high speed pursuit, and if feasible, let the participant out of the vehicle in a well-lit public place. The security officers/dispatcher will be advised of the situation and as soon as practicable have another department member respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

Conduct by a person participating in a ride-along that results in termination of the ride, or is otherwise inappropriate, should be immediately reported to the Patrol Commander. The member should enter comments regarding the reasons for terminating the ride-along on the waiver form.

Upon completion of the ride-along, the member shall return the waiver form to the Patrol Commander.