

Ride-Along Policy

410.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the administration of the ride-along program. The Vancouver Police Department recognizes the need and benefit for the Department, citizens, lawful residents or others with approval from the Office of the Chief, to observe police operations on a firsthand basis.

410.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

Certain guidelines and procedures are established for the protection of the rider, the police officer, and the City of Vancouver.

1. Riders will be at least 16 years old and must have a guardian's permission if they are younger than 18 years old.
2. Riders will have no felony convictions.
3. Riders will not be the suspect in criminal investigations.
4. Riders who appear to have recently consumed alcoholic beverages or intoxicating drugs are prohibited from riding with a police officer.

The precinct lieutenant has the discretion to allow or not allow participation on a case by case basis. The entire Ride-Along packet must be completed and signed by the applicant prior to the ride-along to include the Emergency Contact, Ride-Along Request, Liability Release, and Participant Rules for the Ride-Along.

Citizens and lawful residents are allowed to participate in the ride along program once every six (6) months. This can be amended by the precinct lieutenant.

410.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

A. Ride-along packets can be obtained at a precinct.

- (a) The rider will fill out the form completely to include a copy of their ID and it will be received by a police service technician (PST).
 - (a) The PST will check the ride-along system to verify the last time the rider participated in a ride-along.
- (b) The Records Division will check RMS to see if the rider is a suspect in any crimes/ investigations, an NCIC III check, local criminal history check and a wants and warrants check will be completed as well.
- (c) The packet will then be forwarded to a precinct lieutenant who will review and assign it to a patrol sergeant for issuance to an officer.
 - (a) If a request is made by a member of the Department the ride-along packet will still be filled out, and a records check will still be completed.
 - (b) Family members and friends of officers requesting to go on a ride-along are subject to the same procedures as (a).

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- (c) Once reviewed the NCIC III check will be disposed of.
- (d) Once the ride-along is completed, the patrol sergeant will give the completed form to a PST who will scan and attach the packet into the ride along database.
 - (a) If needed the officer should include any information that would preclude the rider from any future participation in the program.

410.2.1 ASSIGNED OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Both the rider and the officer will sign the liability waiver. The officer will ensure that the sergeant has been given the paperwork.

- (a) Officers will advise dispatch of the start and end of their ride-along's participation.

The assigned officer must weigh situations for potential hazards when responding to calls. Riders are not to be exposed to situations known to involve extraordinary danger or extreme hazards (e.g., person with a gun). In such extra-hazardous situations, a rider should be let out of the vehicle a safe distance away from the scene or the rider should be told to remain in the patrol vehicle once at the scene. If the rider is let out, the officer must make notification where the rider was let out, when feasible. The shift supervisor, or assigned officer, is then responsible for coordinating alternative transportation for the rider.

410.2.2 RIDER RESPONSIBILITY

The rider must be dressed in an appropriate and professional manner. The shift supervisor will have the final determination if the clothing of the rider is appropriate.

Unless the rider is a sworn member of this Department or another law enforcement agency, the rider is prohibited from carrying weapons of any kind during the ride-along program.

A rider is an observer who is to avoid participating or becoming involved in police work unless otherwise directed. The ride-along will follow the officer's direction. Failure to do so will immediately terminate the ride-along, and may prohibit future participation in the program. Unless otherwise directed, the rider is prohibited from:

- (a) Operating a patrol vehicle or any other departmental equipment.
- (b) Riders may not photograph, audio or video record, or stream any portion of the ride-along without permission of the Office of the Chief.
- (c) Acting as an agent for the Department or otherwise performing any police-related duty.
- (d) Approaching any vehicle on a traffic stop or approaching any residence, building, or other situation where the potential for violence exists or a crime is in progress.
- (e) Entering any crime scene of a serious nature (such as a homicide) and/or touching, possessing, tampering with, or otherwise having contact with any evidence.

410.2.3 EMPLOYEE RIDE-ALONGS

New employees in training can benefit by exposure to the patrol functions of the department. Therefore, at the direction of the Vancouver Police Department Training Unit, and in coordination

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with the shift supervisors, new employees can participate in a ride-along for the duration of a full workday.

Employee ride-alongs do not need to abide by the restrictions in regards to the to the frequency of ride-alongs, but cannot arrange them without the approval a supervisor in the VPD Training Unit.

There are several restrictions that apply:

- (a) Participants should be in appropriate civilian attire but shall wear an internal ballistic vest if one has been issued. They will also have their VPD issued ID with them.
- (b) The primary goal of the ride-along shall be for education, so participants should avoid getting involved in any police action.
- (c) Participants must immediately follow directions of the officer they are riding with, and the ride along may be terminated at the discretion of the officer at any time. The officer will further notify their supervisor for the reason of the ride-along termination.

410.3 AUDIT

Records will be purged in accordance with applicable law and policy.