

## Ride-Along Policy

### 406.1 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.

#### 406.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Shasta County Sheriff's Office Ride-Along Program is offered to residents, students and those employed within the County. 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 15 years of age
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against the Sheriff's Office or County
- Denial by any supervisor

#### 406.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The Ride-Along Program is available on most days of the week, with certain exceptions.

### 406.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be scheduled by the Watch Commander. 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.

The Watch Commander will schedule a date, based on availability, at least one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy will be forwarded to the respective Watch Commander as soon as possible for his/her scheduling considerations.

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

Upon approval of a ride-along, either by the Administration Sergeant or by a Watch Commander, a copy of the application/waiver shall be forwarded to the given substation the rider will be reporting to. The application and waiver shall be placed into a binder at the given substation either Burney, CSL or Patrol Operations for recording purposes. If the original application/waiver are not through the Administration Sergeant, the Watch Commander shall make a copy of the application/waiver and forward the original to the Sheriff's Main Office/Records Division.

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Upon approval of a ride-along, information will be given out in roll-calls and via a CAD announcement whenever there is a rider. This information will include which officer the rider is with, a clothing description of the rider and that the rider will be displaying a ride-along identification card.

After the conclusion of the ride-along, the watch commander shall complete the ride-along application by filling in the date/time and hours the participant spent on the ride-along.

### 406.2.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception would apply to the following: Cadets, Explorers, RSVP, Chaplains, Reserves, sheriff's applicants, and all others with approval of the Watch Commander.

An effort will be made to ensure that 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 deputy's vehicle at a given time.

Ride-along requirements for sheriff's cadets are covered in Policy Manual § 1048, "Sheriff's Cadet Program."

### 406.2.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride along is required to be suitably dressed in collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, T-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the sheriff's vehicle. The Watch Commander or field supervisor may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

### 406.2.3 PEACE OFFICER RIDE-ALONGS

Off-duty members of the Sheriff's Office or any other law enforcement agency will not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty deputies 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. Sheriff's Office employees must be dressed in civilian clothing.

Only sworn peace officers authorized by their employing agency to carry firearms off-duty may possess a firearm during a ride-along. Either written authorization by their employer on department letterhead or providing a copy of their departmental identification card attached to the waiver will allow authorization to carry a firearm.

A. Sworn peace officer riders will comply with the ride-along dress code. (see Section 410.2.2).

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B. Information will be given out in roll-calls and via a CAD announcement whenever there is an armed rider. This information will include which officer the rider is with, a clothing description of the rider and that the rider will be displaying a ride-along Identification card.

C. Armed ride-along officers should never be assigned to cover or assist in any way unless their own safety or the safety of other officers is in jeopardy.

D. Armed ride-along officers should never take the place of back-up from other SCSO units.

E. Armed ride-along officers' firearms shall be carried concealed on their persons.

### **406.2.4 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 Shasta County Sheriff's Office) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.F.2.).

### **406.3 DEPUTY'S RESPONSIBILITY**

The deputy shall advise the dispatcher that a ride-along is present in the vehicle before going into service. Deputies shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Deputies 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 sheriff's unit respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

The Watch Commander is responsible for maintaining and scheduling ride-alongs.

### **406.4 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 deputy
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, or handling any sheriff's equipment

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- (c) The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time and the deputy may return the observer to their home or to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of the deputy'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) Deputies 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
- (f) Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride along be permitted to enter a private residence with a deputy without the expressed consent of the resident or other authorized person

All ride-along participants will be required to display a ride-along identification card which will be displayed at all times on a lanyard. The Watch Commander will issue the ride-along ID card to the participant at the beginning of the ride-along and ensure the ID card is returned at the completion of the ride-along. The ID card is not required for uniformed SCSO employees.

Each station will be given 4 numeric identification cards which will enable the Watch Commander to better track and record during an established check out system. Example: (Burney) 4-CR-1, thru 4-CR-4, (CSL) 5-CR-1 thru 5-CR-4 and (Patrol Ops) 3-CR-1 thru 3-CR-4.