

**WEST MELBOURNE POLICE DEPARTMENT
WEST MELBOURNE, FLORIDA**

GENERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE DIRECTIVE

TITLE: CIVILIAN OBSERVER / RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

NUMBER: 30.00-12

EFFECTIVE: 2/08/12

REFERENCE:

RESCINDS: 30.00-11

DISTRIBUTION: "A"

ATTACHMENTS:

A CIVILIAN OBSERVER / RIDE-ALONG APPLICATION FORM

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish a Civilian Observer/Ride-Along Program for the West Melbourne Police Department and to acquaint all employees and the ride-along applicant with the policies and guidelines of the program.

POLICY

These guidelines and procedures are established to allow members of the community to accompany on-duty police officers in police vehicles and observe police activities in order to better understand and appreciate the daily challenges and risks, as well as the opportunities for service that come with police work. It is the intention of this program that ride-along observers have the opportunity to witness as much activity as possible. The Chief of Police or his/her designee reserves the right to deny a ride-along applicant at any time.

PROCEDURE

30.00.01 Civilian Observer Responsibilities

1. Persons desiring to participate in the ride-along program must apply in person at the West Melbourne Police Department. An application package may be obtained at the police department or online at www.westmelbournepolice.org.

2. The applicant must read this entire policy, fill out the application form and sign the Release and Waiver portion of the form. The signature must be notarized by the Desk Officer or other notary.

3. As part of the application package, each applicant will receive a Civilian Ride-Along Information Handout that includes the following information:

a. Please ensure that you have read and understand the attached Civilian Observer/Ride-Along Program Policy and that you meet the eligibility criteria.

b. Meet with the Desk Officer on duty to sign the "Release and Waiver" portion of the application form and the Desk Officer will notarize it for you.

c. Please arrive at the West Melbourne Police Department approximately fifteen (15) minutes before your scheduled appointment.

d. Please understand that the officer you have been assigned to may need to complete any in-progress police business before returning to the station to meet with you. He/she must also re-arrange his/her patrol car to accommodate a passenger. Therefore, appointment times are only approximate.

e. Wear appropriate attire as outlined in the attached policy, and check your personal hygiene. Applicants who show up in inappropriate attire, wearing excessive perfume or cologne or whose personal hygiene is unacceptable to the host officer will not be allowed to ride-along.

f. No ride-along observer will be allowed to carry a weapon of any kind on a ride-along. There is no exception to this policy regardless of your occupation or possession of a permit to carry a concealed firearm.

g. The use of cameras or recording devices is not permitted during the ride-along.

h. Cell phone usage, including personal calls, texting, social networking, etc., shall be kept to a minimum and only as needed.

4. The ride-along observer must obey all lawful directions by the host officer or any other member of the West Melbourne Police Department.

2/08/12
Brian K. Lock
Chief of Police

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5. The ride-along observer is strictly prohibited from becoming involved in any investigation in any way, including handling evidence, talking with witnesses or participants in crimes, or handling police equipment. Exception: the ride-along observer may use the police radio to summons help if the host officer is in trouble or incapacitated and unable to call for backup.

6. The ride-along observer has a responsibility to appear as a witness in court if the need arises.

30.00.02 Desk Officer Responsibilities:

1. The Desk Officer will ensure the applicant has an application package including the application form, the Civilian Ride-Along Information Handout, and a copy of this policy.

2. Question the applicant to ensure he/she meets the minimum qualifications.

a. Ensure he/she is at least eighteen (18) years of age by checking for a current driver's license or ID card. No person under eighteen (18) years of age will be allowed to participate in the ride-along program unless authorized by the Chief of Police.

b. Ask the applicant if he/she has any felony arrests, misdemeanor convictions within the past two (2) years or pending felony or misdemeanor cases. If so, the applicant is not.

c. Ask the applicant if he/she has had any reckless driving convictions, DUI convictions, a suspended driver's license with knowledge, or any criminal traffic convictions within the past two (2) years. If so, the applicant is not eligible.

d. Ask the applicant if he/she has participated in our ride-along program within the past twelve (12) months. *No person will be allowed to participate in the ride-along program more than one time in a 12-month period. Exception: The Operations Division Commander or his/her designee may approve more frequent participation for a student participating in a legitimate school-related project/program or for other reasons he/she may deem appropriate.*

3. If the applicant appears to meet the minimum criteria listed above:

a. Instruct him/her to read the policy in its entirety and to fill out the application completely.

b. Notarize the applicant's signature on the application's Release and Waiver section.

c. Forward the completed application to the Desk Sergeant.

4. Applicants that do not meet the minimum eligibility criteria will not be allowed to participate in the program. Explain their ineligibility and thank them for their interest in our program.

30.00.03 Desk Sergeant Responsibilities:

Once the notarized application/waiver is completed, the Desk Sergeant will:

1. Review the application, conduct a background check, and ensure the applicant has no felony arrests, no misdemeanor convictions within the past two (2) years, and no pending felony or misdemeanor cases. Additionally, the applicant should not have any reckless driving convictions, DUI convictions, a suspended driver's license with knowledge, or any criminal traffic convictions within the past two (2) years. If any of these conditions exist, the applicant is not eligible.

2. If the applicant does not meet the background criteria, contact him or her and advise that the request has been disapproved. The applicant will be thanked for his/her interest in our department.

3. If the applicant meets all criteria, forward the application to the Patrol Sergeant assigned to manage the Civilian Observer/Ride-Along program.

30.00.04 Responsibilities of the Patrol Sergeant Assigned to Manage the Ride-Along Program:

1. A ride-along applicant may not ride until the Release and Waiver form is properly filled out and signed. Do not schedule the ride along until this document is completed and in your possession.

2. Schedule the ride-along and coordinate the schedule with the applicant and the host officer. If the applicant cannot be reached on the first attempt, at least three (3) attempts shall be made and documented in the interoffice section of the application form.

3. Do not schedule an officer for more than one ride-along observer at a time.



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4. If possible, honor the ride-along observer's request for a specific host officer. If not possible, he/she may be rescheduled for a later date or assigned to ride with a different officer on duty.

5. Ensure the assigned host officer understands and carries out his/her duties and responsibilities regarding the ride-along program.

30.00.05 Host Officer Responsibilities:

1. A person with an unacceptable appearance will not be permitted to participate in the ride-along program. Examples of clothing limitations include but are not limited to the following:

- a. No sleeveless or mid-drift shirts.
- b. No shirts endorsing any products.
- c. No shirts containing lewd or derogatory comments.
- d. Closed toed shoes only. No sandals, flip-flops or backless shoes.
- e. No shorts or mini-skirts.
- f. Pants and jeans should not show signs of wear such as holes, tears, or frays.
- g. No ball caps.

2. The host officer may choose not to allow a person with unacceptable personal hygiene or excessive perfume or cologne to ride-along.

3. When the host officer chooses not to allow a ride-along applicant to ride for any reason, he/she shall explain his/her decision, in a written memo, to the Sergeant responsible for the ride-along program.

4. The host officer must advise dispatch of the presence of the ride-along passenger to include race and sex, and must introduce the passenger to the other members of the squad as soon as practical.

5. The observer may ride at any time in any area, if convenient to the Department and if conditions permit. The observer should not be restricted to the confines of the cruiser unless the officer feels that he/she will be in danger or that he/she will or may interfere. The waiver form is good for only one ride-along for a maximum of six (6) hours.

6. The host officer, Sergeant or observer may terminate the ride at any time and the request to do so will be complied with as soon as possible.

7. The officer participating in the program shall respond to all calls in a safe manner and, while en route, attempt to brief the ride-along observer as to what is transpiring in regards to radio transmissions and procedures being applied to the call and why the procedures are necessary. The officer should also instruct the ride-along observer as to what is expected of him/her upon arrival on the scene.

8. If, in the judgment of the officer(s), they are entering a dangerous situation, they may, at their discretion, leave the ride-along observer in a safe place. Experience has shown in programs such as this, that at times it is advisable to keep the citizen with the cruiser. On occasion, the ride-along observer may be able to aid the officer. If, however, the officer feels that it is necessary to leave the ride-along observer, every effort shall be made to pick him/her up as soon as possible. If the ride-along observer is left, the officer must advise dispatch of the location.

9. After the ride-along, the host officer will thank the ride-along observer for his/her interest in the Department.

REVISED: WSW

FILED 30.00

APPROVED:

CHIEF BRIAN K. LOCK



WEST MELBOURNE POLICE DEPARTMENT---POLICY AND PROCEDURE DIRECTIVE

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**WEST MELBOURNE POLICE DEPARTMENT
CIVILIAN OBSERVER / RIDE-ALONG APPLICATION FORM**

Date: _____ Applicant Name: _____
(FIRST) (MIDDLE) (LAST)

Address: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Telephone: _____ Occupation: _____

Briefly explain why you wish to participate in the Ride-Along Program: _____

RELEASE AND WAIVER

I, _____, for and in consideration of the City of West Melbourne allowing me to participate in a Police Ride-Along Program which entitles me to be present in a West Melbourne Police Department patrol car during the actual working hours of police officers on patrol, to be present in the West Melbourne Police Station, and to be permitted to observe the activities of the Police Department, do hereby agree as follows:

1. I acknowledge and understand that in participating in this program, I am exposing myself to all risks usually associated with police activity and that I expressly assume such risk.
2. I further understand that while participating in this program, I will be assigned to one or more police officers and I further agree that at all times I will obey the commands of those officers or their superior officers.
3. For myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, I do hereby remise, release and forever discharge the City of West Melbourne and its agents, officers and employees of and from all manner of action and actions, cause or causes of action, suits, debts, claims, damages or injuries, whatsoever in law or equity which I might have against the City of West Melbourne, its agents, employees and officers by reason of any cause or thing whatever.

I have read the Release and Waiver and the Civilian Observer/Ride-Along Program Policy and Procedure Directive. I understand and will comply with both during my observation ride and agree to have a background investigation completed. I have attached a copy of my current and valid driver's license or state-issued ID card with this form.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

PARENT/GUARDIAN, IF APPLICANT IS UNDER AGE 18

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF BREVARD

Before me this day personally appeared _____ who says that he executed the above instrument of his own free will and accord, with full knowledge of the purpose therefore.

Sworn to and subscribed in my presence this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Notary Public

Notary Stamp:

My Commission Expires: _____

BELOW FOR INTEROFFICE USE ONLY - PLACE ID NUMBER AND DATE IN BLANKS UPON COMPLETION OF EACH BACKGROUND CHECK

FCIC/NCIC: _____	DATE SGT REC'D: _____	APPROVED: _____	DENIED: _____
BULLET: _____	PHONE CONTACT: _____	DATE/TIME: _____	RESULTS: _____
DAVID: _____		DATE/TIME: _____	RESULTS: _____
WARRANTS: _____		DATE/TIME: _____	RESULTS: _____
DATE SENT TO SGT: _____	SQUAD/OFFICER ASSIGNMENT: _____	DATE/TIMES: _____	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

This is Attachment "A" to Directive 30.00

CIVILIAN OBSERVER/RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

9/19/11
Brian K. Lock
Chief of Police





WEST MELBOURNE POLICE DEPARTMENT CIVILIAN RIDE-ALONG INFORMATION

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6. No ride-along observer will be allowed to carry a weapon of any kind on a ride-along. There is no exception to this policy regardless of your occupation or possession of a permit to carry a concealed firearm.
7. The use of cameras or recording devices is not permitted during the ride-along.
8. Cell phone usage, including texting, social networking, etc., shall be kept to a minimum and only as needed.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN OUR DEPARTMENT

This is Attachment "A" to Directive 30.00

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9/19/11
Brian K. Lock
Chief of Police

