


- \* To check to verify if your rider application was approved call our Administrative Office 485-3714.
- \* Once approved – All ride-alongs must be set up in advance. You should call 485-3700 (only 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays) and ask to speak with the Watch Commander to set up any anticipated ride-alongs.

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	Subject: Ride-Along Program		Date Approved 03-13-2018	Effective Date 03-15-2018
	Reference Standards(s):		Supersedes No.	Previous Date: 9-22-2016
	Approved by: <i>Jeff Craig, Chief of Police</i>		Reviewed by: Captain of Patrol	
<p><b>I. Policy Statement:</b></p> <p>The Department has established a ride-along program to: 1.) acquaint individuals with the operations of the Victoria Police Department, as well as the law enforcement profession in general; and, 2.) foster interest in law enforcement as a career. It is critical that officers participating in this program present a professional appearance and attitude while performing this assignment.</p>				
<p><b>II. Purpose:</b></p> <p>This General Order is intended:</p> <p>2.01 To provide guidelines and standards to be followed in allowing observer-riders to accompany Police Officers during tours of duty; and</p> <p>2.02 Create a viable learning program that serves as an extension of our Crime Prevention efforts by providing an avenue for citizen education and insight into the Victoria Police Department.</p>				
<p><b>III. Eligibility and Approval:</b></p> <p>3.01 All civilians, including civilian employees of the Police Department, must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Exceptions to the age limit are Police Explorers, students interested in joining Police Explorers and students participating in school related (job shadowing) programs. All civilian riders:</p> <p>A. Must be of good moral character;</p> <p>B. Must meet CJIS / NCIC / TCIC guidelines for System Security clearance in a criminal justice facility, the standards of which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Must have no convictions or deferred adjudications for any offense above the grade of Class B Misdemeanor (Class A or Felony);</li> <li>2. Must have no convictions or deferred adjudications for a Class B Misdemeanor within the past ten years, based on the conviction (court) date;</li> <li>3. Must not be under indictment for any criminal offense until the disposition of the case;</li> <li>4. Must have no family violence convictions; and</li> <li>5. Must not have a recent arrest for a Class C misdemeanor or recent negative contact(s) with a law enforcement agency as determined on a case by case basis;</li> </ol> <p>C. Must complete and have approval of the Ride-Along Application / Waiver form (VPD Form # ADM-06 located on the shared G:&gt; drive and on the VPD website); Applications for participants younger than 18 years of age must have a parent or guardian signature.</p> <p>D. Must read and understand this General Order, which is also on the VPD website; and</p> <p>E. Must have permission of the Watch Commander.</p>				

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<p>3.02 VPD civilian employees are not required to complete a Ride-Along Application / Waiver form. All civilian employees will have signed for this policy, including Appendix A, which outlines the Ride-Along Information and Release as shown on the Ride-Along form.</p> <p>VPD civilian employees shall only ride-along with officers on their time off and not on City time. The only exception to this is during sanctioned Training as approved by their supervisor and the VPD Training Coordinator. In such cases, they would be paid by the City. The same supervisory / Training approval applies to riding along with the Fire Department.</p> <p>VPD civilian employees must also comply with Section IV (Dress) and Section V (Conduct) of this policy and may only ride-along if the Officer has obtained approval from the Watch Commander – see subsection 6.05. VPD civilian employees must also be signed in on the Ride-Along Sign-in Sheet (VPD Form # ADM-20) in the Patrol Lieutenant's office, prior to riding on their time off. See subsection 6.07.</p>		
<p>3.03 Off-duty officers (from other agencies) and those retired officers holding a current retired peace officers Certificate of Firearms Proficiency and a Retired Officer Photo Identification Card must meet the eligibility requirements in subsection 3.01 and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. If in uniform, must have approval of their agency supervisor;</li> <li>B. Are exempt from requirement or limitations of subsection 4.05 which indicates that no weapons or police-related equipment will be carried by the rider, except a flashlight, pen or pencil and paper; and</li> <li>C. Will have filled out the Ride-Along Application / Waiver and received approval according to subsection 3.04 following the computerized checks shown. (It is not necessary to re-run the computerized checks on VPD Retirees under this subsection.)</li> </ul>		
<p>3.04 All Ride-Along Applications must be sent to VPD Administration for appropriate background checks prior to allowing the individual to ride with an officer.</p> <p>Members of VPD Administration who approve Ride-Along applications must have the following computerized checks performed on the applicant to ensure that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements in subsection 3.01: (If the rider has prior last names, inquiries shall be made on each name.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. A check of the person through VPD's Records Management System;</li> <li>B. A query through TLETS to check the following which can be done as a "combination" query: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Driver's License (inquire with other states if applicable); and</li> <li>2. Wanted;</li> </ul> </li> <li>C. National Sex Offender History Check using the US Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website at: <a href="http://www.nsopw.gov">http://www.nsopw.gov</a>; and</li> <li>D. Criminal History check using Purpose Code C through TCIC/NCIC (OMINIXX). Civilian Police Academy checks may also be run in this manner since they ride-along as part of the VPD Crime Prevention program.</li> </ul>		

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<p>3.05 <u>Approval/Suspension of Ride-Along Privilege:</u></p> <p>A. All applications must receive final approval by the Chief of Police, Assistant Chief, Captain or a designee. Completed Ride-Along forms are scanned by Police Administration and placed in the Ride-Along folder on the G:&gt; drive for the applicable year. The originals and the scans are then kept according to Records Retention rules.</p> <p>B. Approval for participation in this program is given on a calendar year basis. The participant must initiate a new application each year for approval. Ride-Along forms approved throughout the year expire on January 2<sup>nd</sup> of the next year. Ride-Along forms approved in December will remain approved until January 2<sup>nd</sup> of the following year (13 months).</p> <p>C. Approval may be withdrawn at any time by the Chief of Police, Assistant Chief, or Captain in the interests of the Department. The Chief's Administrative Assistant should be made aware of this in order to ensure the form was removed from the "approved" folder of Ride-Alongs on the G:&gt; drive. The Chief's Administrative Assistant should then ensure that the form is moved to the "Riders – Not Approved" subfolder with a notation made on the Adobe scanned form.</p> <p>D. Exceptions to any of the requirements in this policy are only made by the Chief of Police or Assistant Chief.</p>		
<p>3.06 <u>Police Explorer Ride-Along Program</u></p> <p>Further guidance concerning the Police Explorer Ride-Along Program, to include dress and conduct, is found in the department's General Order governing the Police Explorer Program.</p>		
<p>IV. <b>Dress:</b></p> <p>4.01 Participants in the Ride-Along Program must present a neat, clean, and orderly appearance while engaged in the program.</p> <p>4.02 Dress may be casual; however, the following will NOT be worn:</p> <p>A. T-Shirts or other shirts without collars and sleeves, see-through shirts, shirts that expose the midriff or shirts with commercial advertising or inappropriate logos on them; (NOTE: Blouses designed without a collar are acceptable, if conservative; Civilian Police Academy and Chaplain polo-style shirts are acceptable.)</p> <p>B. Faded jeans or jeans with holes;</p> <p>C. Thong sandals, flip flops, crocs or open toed shoes;</p> <p>D. Hats or caps with logos or other advertising;</p> <p>E. Lycra/cotton Spandex or other excessively tight clothing; or</p> <p>F. Shorts, skorts, skirts/dresses, knee-pants or sweat/jogging suits.</p> <p>4.03 Jewelry may be worn; however, jewelry must be conservative. It is recommended that expensive jewelry not be worn.</p>		

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<p>4.04 Hair must be neat and well-groomed. Beards and mustaches are permitted if neat and well-groomed; otherwise, the rider must be clean-shaven.</p> <p>4.05 No weapons or police-related equipment will be carried by the rider, except a flashlight, pen or pencil and paper.</p> <p>4.06 If a rider wears clothing that is of questionable or controversial nature, the Watch Commander shall have the authority to deny or permit riding privileges.</p> <p>4.07 Deviation from this dress code for religious purposes may be granted by the Chief of Police, or a designee, on a case-by-case basis.</p>		
<p><b>V. Conduct:</b></p> <p>5.01 Persons participating in the Ride-Along Program will follow instructions given by officers while riding.</p> <p>5.02 Participants will not interfere in officers' investigations or handling of their duties.</p> <p>5.03 All incidents, information or activity that involves any police investigation is confidential and will not be discussed outside the Police Department without the permission of proper Police authority.</p> <p>5.04 No audio, video, or photos of evidentiary value may be taken. That is, of victims, witnesses, suspects, arrestees, evidence, crime scenes, crash scenes, etc. Riders shall not take photos or video of the police officers, police station, police vehicle or anything else related to the ride-along without permission of the Officer.</p> <p>If the rider/observer takes notes, no private information of victims, witnesses, suspects, arrestees may be documented. Also, exact locations of crimes and specific information regarding the elements of a crime or details at a call for service may not be documented that could be linked back to the particular incident.</p> <p>Usually this would be referring to those taking notes for a school paper or other type of news article but applies to any rider/observer.</p> <p>5.05 Riders/Observers shall not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, or discussions with victims or subjects.</p> <p>5.06 Participants in the Ride-Along program may become witnesses to incidents and, therefore, may be called upon as any other citizens.</p> <p>5.07 Participants will not handle any equipment in the patrol car without the direct instruction of the officer.</p> <p>5.08 The Ride-Along Program is expected to be an asset to the community and the department; therefore, any conflicts or disagreements encountered by the rider should be discussed with a police supervisor and reported to the Chief of Police in writing.</p> <p>5.09 Riders will not be picked up at any location other than the Police Department without express permission of the Watch Commander.</p> <p>5.10 Riders will not loiter at the Police Department in an effort to solicit a ride-along.</p>		

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<p><b>VI. Officer / Supervisor Responsibility:</b></p> <p>6.01 No officer will be required to volunteer to take a rider under this program except that officers may be assigned a rider from the Civilian Police Academy or to complete a police mission.</p> <p>6.02 Officers participating in this program must have approval from either Patrol Sergeant or Watch Commander.</p> <p>6.03 No officer on probation may have a rider during the term of the probation.</p> <p>6.04 Officers will be attentive to the fact that they represent the Victoria Police Department in this program. Officers will make every effort to conduct themselves accordingly, by being mindful of General Order 02.16 on Conduct and Performance.</p> <p>6.05 Officers taking riders will do so with the permission of the Watch Commander and will notify the Telecommunicators at the 911 Center that they have a rider so the TCO on the police radio will be informed.</p> <p>6.06 The number of times a participant may ride is left to the discretion of the supervisor.</p> <p>6.07 Officers/Supervisors shall be responsible for filling out the Ride-Along Sign-in Sheet (VPD Form # ADM-20) in the Patrol Lieutenant's office, prior to Ride-Along. For compliance with TCIC security, all riders must sign in and out on the Ride-Along Sign-in Sheet.</p> <p>6.08 Officers/Supervisors shall ensure that if the rider enters the 911 Center building, then the rider's access to the dispatch consoles must be restricted to limit the rider's exposure to criminal justice information. A good rule of thumb is that the rider should never stand or sit inside the semi-circle desk configuration which comprises the dispatch consoles.</p> <p>6.09 At the beginning of each year a Patrol Lieutenant or designee should forward the prior year of Ride-Along Sign-in Sheets (VPD Form # ADM-20) to the Supervisor of Records for retention.</p>		

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Appendix A

## Ride-Along Information and Release per VPD Ride-Along Application / Waiver (Form #Adm-06)

The Victoria Police Department is pleased that you have chosen to participate in our Ride-Along Program. The purpose of the program is to provide interested citizens with an insight into the line operations of the Department. It is our hope that you will find this experience both informative and enjoyable.

We would like you to be fully aware of the conditions and circumstances under which this program operates:

1. You will be assigned to ride with a Police Officer of this Department. He/she will be assigned to his/her normal duties and will respond to all calls for service to which he/she is assigned.
2. Police officers can be and often are assigned duties, which involve danger, and serious risks. The officer with whom you are riding is no different. He/she will not avoid or disregard duties which involve emergencies or danger simply because you are with him/her.
3. You are aware that the right front passenger airbag has been disconnected for safety reasons due to equipment mounted in the marked police units. Please initial in the space provided that you have read this statement.  
Initials Required Parent / Guardian Initials Required (if applicant under 18 yoa)
4. While every effort will be made to ensure your safety, the police officers first responsibility will be to carry out his/her assigned duties.
5. The police officer you will accompany will be happy to discuss his/her duties and responsibilities insofar as time permits. If, however, some emergency should arise, you must IMMEDIATELY AND WITHOUT QUESTION comply with any orders or directions given to you by the officer. This is for your own safety.

**RELEASE**

*THE STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF VICTORIA*

IN CONSIDERATION of permission which I have received to accompany one or more police officers of the Victoria Police Department of the City of Victoria, Texas, a municipal corporation, in the course of his or their duty, I, the undersigned do by these presents release the City of Victoria, its police officers, public officials, agents, servants and employees from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions and causes of action which I may hereafter have on account of any and all injuries and damage to me or to my property, or my death, arising out of or related to any happening or occurrence while I am accompanying any officer or officers of the Victoria Police Department on duty, or incidental thereto, and for the same consideration, I promise to release, and covenant not to sue the said City and the said persons, and agree to forever hold them and each of them harmless from any such liability, claims, demands, actions, or causes of action.

The terms hereof shall be of full force and effect on \_\_\_\_\_ to January 2, \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the conditions of this program as stated above as well as the Victoria Police Department policy regulating the ride-along program and hereby voluntarily assume all risk of loss, damage or injury to me or my property, including death, which may be sustained while or incidental to accompanying one or more Victoria Police Department police officers while on duty.

This release and agreement shall be binding upon me and my heirs, executors, administrators, personal representatives and assigns, and shall inure to the benefit of the said City, agents, public officials and persons herein designated, and their heirs, executors, administrators, personal representatives, assigns and successors in office.

I acknowledge receipt of the VPD Ride-Along Policy. By my signature I am authorizing and acknowledging that a Computerized Criminal History will be performed by the Victoria Police Department to verify my eligibility.