

40.1.4 Ride-Along Program

**Principle:** The Federal Way Police Department strives to improve communication and relations within the Federal Way community. One valuable method of achieving this mission is to allow citizens to ride with officers on patrol in order to enhance a citizen’s understanding of the role and duties of a police officer. The below described ride-along program has been created to accomplish this goal.

**Practices:**

**A. Who May Participate and Frequency:**

1. Civilians: Only Federal Way residents or persons that work in Federal Way will be allowed to participate in the ride-along program. A patrol commander may make an exception to this practice.
  - a. Civilians will only be allowed to ride once in a 12-month period.
  - b. Occasionally, a ride-along may be “auctioned” off at a charitable event – the arrangements for and approval of this occurs only through the Office of the Chief. The purchaser of the ride-along certificate will still follow all procedures and meet any requirements for the ride-along program.
2. Police Department Family Members: Family members over the age of 16 years old are allowed to participate in the ride-along program.
  - a. Family members may ride with prior permission of the on-duty supervisor. The appropriate supervisor will determine the frequency in which a family member may ride with an officer.
3. Non-Commissioned Staff / Volunteers: Non-commissioned staff and volunteers are encouraged to ride with officers in order to gain more general knowledge of police operations.
  - a. Non-commissioned staff / volunteers may participate in the ride-along program once per quarter.
4. Other City of Federal Way Staff and Council Members: Staff members and Council members are also encouraged to participate in the ride-along program.
  - a. Generally other City staff members and Council members will be limited to participating in the program once per quarter. A patrol commander may grant exceptions with prior approval.
  - b. Prosecutors are encouraged to participate in the ride-along program as frequently as possible because their participation improves the performance of both the Police Department and the Prosecutor’s Office.

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- 5. Police Applicants and Other Law Enforcement Professionals: Other law enforcement professionals that are considering applying to the Federal Way Police Department are encouraged to ride with our agency. Entry-level applicants that are currently on a Civil Service Register may ride with our agency.
  - a. If a police applicant is being recruited by an employee, he/she will be allowed to ride prior to gaining a position on a Civil Service Register.
  - b. If a law enforcement professional does not meet any of these requirements, they may still be allowed to ride with the approval of a patrol commander.

**B. General Guidelines:**

- 1. Scheduling: In order to schedule a ride-along, the requesting individual must complete a Ride-Along Waiver form and submit the request to ride at least one week prior to the desired ride-along date(s). A patrol commander may waive the advance requirements.
- 2. Minimum Age: The minimum age is 16 years old. Juveniles must have a parent and/or guardian sign the waiver.
- 3. Appearance: Riders are expected to be neat and clean in appearance. Clothing worn should be appropriately selected, as riders will be in full view of the public.
- 4. Length of Rides: Generally the officer assigned to host the rider will determine the length of the ride. A minimum of two hours is the guideline established. Officers may terminate the ride-along at any time for persons who are unruly, fail to obey instructions, distract the officer from his/her duties, or at the discretion of the officer assigned to host the rider.
- 5. Participation in Activities: The rider will not be allowed to actively participate (perform) law enforcement tasks and/or duties. Officers that have riders assigned to them should make every attempt to avoid exposing the rider to anticipated danger. Exceptions may be made for other law enforcement officers and in emergency situations.
  - a. Armed Riders: Only other law enforcement officers may be armed during a ride-along. A patrol commander must give prior approval for a law enforcement officer to be armed during a ride-along.
- 6. Media Devices: Riders are not permitted to carry/use recording devices, cameras, or other media devices. Exceptions may be made for media representatives. *Refer to Chapter 54 of this manual.*

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