



# Alexandria Police Department

## Directive 12.5



# RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

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### 12.5.01 POLICY AND PURPOSE

It is the policy of this Department to acquaint the *community* with their police officers. This program is meant to help *the community* understand the broad range of police duties and the vital role officers perform.

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines to govern the police Ride-Along Program.

### 12.5.02 *PARTICIPATION CRITERIA*

*To participate in the Ride-Along Program one of the following criteria needs to be met.*

- 1) *The participant must live or work in the City of Alexandria.*
- 2) *Be a family member or friend of a current police department employee.*
- 3) *Be an interpreter that has been vetted through the volunteer office.*
- 4) *Be a future Alexandria Police employee. These requests will be coordinated by the Personnel and Training Section staff through the Patrol Administration secretary.*
- 5) *Be a Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) employee.*
- 6) *Any person other than the above must be approved by a patrol commander.*

*All ride-alongs are to begin and end at Police Headquarters. The participant, unless they are sworn law enforcement, may not carry firearms or any other weapons and must go through the walk through metal detector in the lobby prior to beginning the ride-along.*

### **12.5.03 RESPONSIBILITIES/PROCEDURES**

- A. Persons desiring to ride-along with officers must submit a Ride-Along Release (APD-159) to the Patrol Administration secretary, who will review the information and forward the APD-159 *to the Information Services Section (ISS) to conduct a local check and an NCIC/VCIN check. Once the results of the records check is received from ISS, the Patrol Administration secretary will forward the* findings to the on-duty watch commander for approval. The watch commander will forward the approved APD-159 to the affected *watch* commander.
- B. If the officer, with whom the ride-along is requested, is assigned to a specialized unit, a commander in that unit must approve the ride-along and the completed APD-159 is to be routed through their chain of command to the Patrol Administration secretary. All other procedures and safety factors in this policy apply.
- C. All APD-159 forms must be submitted at least three (3) days prior to the desired ride-along date.
- D. The three (3) days prior approval requirement may be waived by the on-duty watch commander.
- E. Approval is contingent upon the number of requests for a particular date and time. The watch commander may suspend the program at any time, due to workload or other considerations. On-duty watch commanders or their designees may deny ride-along requests at their discretion.
- F. The ride-along must be approved by the watch commander or his or her designee, prior to the commencement of the ride-along.
- G. Restrictions on participation:
  - 1. Participants must be at least *thirteen (13)* years of age;
  - 2. Only one participant is allowed per vehicle;
  - 3. Participants are allowed only one ride-along every six months. Participants in the Citizen's Academy *and DEC employees* may be exempted from this restriction.
- H. Participants under eighteen (18) years of age must have a parent or guardian give their consent and sign the APD-159.

- I. Patrol supervisors are responsible for selecting the officer with whom a participant will ride.
- J. Assigned officers are responsible to review the completed APD-159, ensuring it is properly signed by the participant or a parent/guardian. Officers will then explain to each participant the safety guidelines outlined in 12.5.04.
- K. Assigned officers and their supervisors are responsible for exercising due care in protecting ride-along participants.
- L. In any incident involving possible liability, the assigned officer will notify a supervisor and initiate an Offense/Incident Report (APD-7).
- M. Officers will not leave the City with a ride-along participant without the approval of a supervisor.
- N. Once the ride-along has been completed, the assigned officer will forward the completed APD-159 to the Patrol Administration secretary.
- O. The Patrol Administration secretary will maintain all APD-159 forms (approved and denied) on file in accordance with the Library of Virginia Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. A copy of the APD-159 is attached as Appendix 12.5A.

#### **12.5.04 SAFETY FACTORS**

- A. Officers will not allow participants access to scenes of homicides, *death investigations, commercial robberies*, rapes, suicides, sex offenses, or serious crimes in progress. Participants may be excluded from other incidents as determined by the host officer.
- B. Officers will not allow participants to become involved in pursuits. If an assigned officer self-initiates a pursuit, it must be quickly given over to another unit or terminated.
- C. Ride-along participants are observers. Officers will not permit them to:
  - 1. Give any indication to anyone, by any means, that they are police officers;
  - 2. Leave the vehicle without the specific direction of the assigned officer;
  - 3. Accompany an officer inside a private home without the resident's permission;
  - 4. Accompany an officer into any private premises during the execution of a search warrant or arrest warrant;
  - 5. Assist in criminal interrogations;
  - 6. Assist at a crime scene except as specifically directed by the assigned officer; or
  - 7. Accompany an officer with an arrest into the booking area without first obtaining a pass from Control1 (Alexandria Office of Sheriff jail facility security).

- D. Officers will not allow participants to engage in any police action unless an emergency occurs where the officer would have to require citizen assistance.
- E. When the safety of a participant is in doubt (shooting in progress, man with a gun, etc.), the participant will be left at a safe distance. The officer will notify the dispatcher as to the location of the participant. As soon as practical, the officer will pick up the participant or make arrangements through a supervisor to have him or her picked up.
- F. Officers will advise the participant that any video or audio recording taken during a ride-along may become evidence and hardware used to take the recording may be seized for a criminal investigation.*
- G. No ride-along participant will be tasked with carrying any police equipment.*

**By Authority Of:**

**David Huchler**  
**Acting Chief of Police**