

Ride-Alongs

405.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for a ride-along with members of the Lorain Police Department. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, hours of operation, and member responsibilities for ride-alongs.

405.2 REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE

Generally, ride-along and job observation requests will be maintained and scheduled by the Operations Commander. The applicant will complete and sign a ride-along or job observation waiver form. If the applicant is under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must be present to complete the waiver form. Information requested will include a valid state-issued identification card or driver license number, birthdate, address, and telephone number.

The Operations Commander will schedule a date, based on availability, generally one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy of the waiver form will be forwarded to the respective Watch Commander as soon as possible for scheduling considerations.

If the request is denied, a representative of the department will advise the applicant of the denial.

405.3 MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES

The department member shall consider the safety of the ride-along or job observation participant at all times. The member shall maintain control over the participant and shall instruct the individual about the conditions that necessarily limit the individual's participation. Instructions should include:

- (a) The participant will follow the directions of the department member.
- (b) The participant will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, reading an individual's criminal history or other protected information, or handling any police department equipment.
- (c) Participation may be terminated at any time by the member if the participant interferes with the performance of the member's duties.
 1. If the ride-along is in progress, the member may return the participant to the point the ride originated.
- (d) Participants may be allowed to continue a ride-along during the transportation and booking process, provided it does not jeopardize their safety.
- (e) Members will not allow participants to be present in any location or situation that would jeopardize the participant's safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other member of the public.
- (f) Participants who are not law enforcement officers shall not be permitted to accompany the department member into a private residence without the express consent of the resident or other authorized person.

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The member assigned to provide a ride-along shall advise the telecommunicator that a ride-along participant is present in the vehicle before going into service. An officer with a ride-along participant should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, such as a high-speed pursuit and, if feasible, let the participant out of the vehicle in a well-lighted public place. The dispatcher will be advised of the situation and as soon as practicable have another department member respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

Conduct by a person participating in a ride-along that results in termination of the ride-along, or is otherwise inappropriate, should be immediately reported to the Watch Commander. The member should enter comments regarding the reasons for terminating the ride-along on the waiver form.

Upon completion of the ride-along, the member shall return the waiver form to the Watch Commander.

405.4 POLICY

Ride-along opportunities will be provided to the members of the public, City employees, and members of this department to observe and experience, first-hand, various functions of the Lorain Police Department. The term "ride-along" includes riding as a passenger with an officer on patrol or observing the work day of members engaged in other functions within the Department, such as the Communications Center.

405.5 ELIGIBILITY

A ride-along is available to Lorain residents and business owners, students currently attending class in Lorain, and those employed within the City of Lorain. Efforts will be made to accommodate all interested persons. However, any applicant may be disqualified without cause from participating.

Factors that may be considered in disqualifying an applicant include, but are not limited to:

- Being under 15 years of age.
- Prior criminal history.
- Pending criminal action.
- Pending lawsuit against this department or the [city/county].
- Denial by any supervisor.

405.6 AVAILABILITY

A ride-along or job observation is available most days of the week, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Chief of Police or Watch Commander.

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405.7 PROCEDURES

Once approved, ride-along applicants will be allowed to participate no more than once every six months. An exception may apply to the following law enforcement-involved participants:

- Explorers
- Volunteers
- Chaplains
- Reserves
- Lorain Police Department applicants
- Any others with approval of the Watch Commander
- Students enrolled in any department-approved dispatcher training course

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one member of the public will participate in a ride-along or job observation during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along participant will be allowed in department vehicles at a given time.

Ride-along requirements for department Explorers are covered in the Police Cadets and Explorers Policy.

405.7.1 OFF-DUTY PARTICIPATION

Off-duty members of this department or any other law enforcement agency, and employees of the City, will not be permitted to participate in a ride-along with on-duty members of this department without the express consent of the Chief of Police.

In the event that such participation is permitted, the off-duty department member, other law enforcement agency personnel, or City employee shall not:

- (a) Be considered on-duty.
- (b) Represent themselves as a member of this department or any other law enforcement agency.
- (c) Participate in any law enforcement activity except as emergency circumstances may require at the direction of the road OIC or officer assigned to them.

405.7.2 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 any other authorized state or national check prior to approval (provided the ride-along is not an employee of the Lorain Police Department).

405.7.3 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to participate in a ride-along is required to be suitably dressed in a collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks, and shoes. Sandals, t-shirts, tank tops, shorts, and ripped or torn pants are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn without the express consent of the

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Watch Commander. The Watch Commander or a supervisor may refuse a ride-along to anyone who is not dressed appropriately.