

**MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
PATROL DIVISION POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

**CHAPTER 12 - PROGRAMS  
PAT-12-01  
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**DATE  
January 17, 2012**

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**RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM**

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**POLICY**

In order to promote better understanding of law enforcement the Sheriff's Office shall have a Ride-Along Program allowing interested persons the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the department and its operation by riding as observers.

This program is not meant to include Regular Hire Deputies with the Marin County Sheriff's Office. All other persons will be classified as a ride-along.

**OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM**

The Ride-Along Program is designed to help interested persons to better understand the functions of a patrol deputy and the types of duties they perform. It is further hoped that it will establish lines of communication and encourage mutual efforts toward crime prevention programs within Marin County.

Prospective employees of the Sheriff's Office should be encouraged to participate in this program to acquaint themselves with the department.

Citizens of Marin County should also be encouraged to participate in the Ride-Along Program.

**PROCEDURE**

Rides may be subject to approval by the Patrol Division Watch Commander.

The Patrol Division Watch Commander or his designee may disqualify a ride-along applicant without cause.

The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant but are not limited to:

- Ride-along applicant is under the age of 18.
- Prior criminal history.
- Pending criminal action.
- Pending lawsuit against the Sheriff's Office.
- Denial by any supervisor.

The responsibility for scheduling a ride-along lies with the Duty Sergeant. At the earliest and most convenient time, the Duty Sergeant will notify the Watch Commander that there will be an observer riding with a patrol deputy in the vehicle.

The Patrol Division Duty Sergeant shall be responsible for determining that a completed waiver is properly signed, witnessed and submitted prior to allowing an observer to enter the assigned patrol car. The participant will complete a ride-along waiver form. Information requested will include a valid ID or California driver license, address and telephone number. If the participant is under 18 years of age, a

parent/guardian must be present to complete the ride-along form. Upon Completion of the ride, the form will be forwarded to the Records Division for filing.

A ride-along may be scheduled on any day of the week and any shift. The ride-along will be limited to four hours unless there has been prior approval by the Duty Sergeant in which case the ride-along may last up to eight hours.

The Patrol Division Watch Commander or his designee shall determine the number of persons participating in the ride-along. The number of observers allowed to ride during any one shift shall be limited by the local situations.

Participants will not be permitted to ride for a second or subsequent trip unless a six-month period of time has elapsed. Exceptions would apply to the following: Chaplains, Sheriff's Office applicants and any others with the approval of the Watch Commander.

Ride-Along Program participants shall be governed by the following rules:

- The minimum age for observers is 16 years of age. Those between 16 and 18 years of age must have the waiver signed by a parent or guardian and a member of the Sheriff's Office must witness the signature.
- Observers 18 years of age or older shall be required to sign and submit a ride-along waiver.
- Dress and Appearance: Observers should be reasonably clean and neat in appearance and attire. If a question arises as to whether an observer's attire meets reasonable standards, the Watch Commander shall make the decision as to whether or not the observer will be permitted to ride. The observer should wear warm clothing as appropriate.
- Identification: Observers shall be issued a clip-on type of plastic badge on which shall be printed the word, "OBSERVER." The badge shall be worn in view on the outer garment during the time spent on the ride-along.
- The observer should carry enough money to use public transportation or the telephone should it become necessary to be dropped somewhere. The observer should have someone available to call for transportation, if needed.
- The Observer shall follow all directions of the deputy.
- The Observer may at any time elect to terminate further participation in the Ride-Along Program. This request will be complied with as soon as practical.
- The observer shall not become involved in any investigation by handling evidence, by discussion with the victims, suspects or witnesses or by the handling of Sheriff's (police) equipment

Arrests, Transportation and Booking:

- Observers may accompany the deputy during the transportation and booking process if, in the deputy's opinion, it would not constitute a hazard to the observer or interfere with the investigation.
- No cameras, tape recorders or digital recording devices are allowed without permission from the Patrol Bureau Commander.
- There will be no weapons of any nature carried by any observer. If the ride-along is an active, full time peace officer with another agency, he may carry a firearm only after approval of the Watch Commander.

Deputy Responsibilities:

- The deputy shall advise the Communications Center of the fact that there is a ride-along observer in the patrol car when the observer begins the ride and when the observer is no longer participating in the program.
- The deputy shall instruct the observer on requirements while riding in the patrol car.
- The deputy shall inform the ride-along of the responsibilities of the observer as outlined in this order.
- At the beginning of the ride-along, the deputy shall describe to the observer how the patrol car operates as well as the equipment in the patrol car.

- If, in the judgment of the host deputy, they are entering into a dangerous situation, the deputy may, at his discretion, leave the observer at a safe place. The deputy shall notify the Communications Center of this decision.
- The deputy should let the ride-along observe as much activity as possible and should not restrict the observer to the confines of the patrol car unless the deputy feels there will be some danger or that the observer may interfere with the investigation. The observer's safety shall always be of primary concern.
- Deputies participating in this program shall respond to calls in an extremely safe manner and while en route shall attempt to brief the observer as to what information they are hearing on the patrol car radio. The deputy shall explain the call and the basic reason why the procedures are being applied. The deputy shall also instruct the observer as to where he or she shall sit or stand upon arrival at the scene of the call and during the deputy's handling of the call.
- Deputies will not allow any ride-alongs to be present in any residences or situations that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other citizen.
- Deputies will not allow the ride-along to enter any private property without the consent of the property owner or person who is in control of the property.

*Note:* Experience has shown that in some instances it is not advisable to keep the observer within the patrol car as the observer's safety can better be ensured being with the deputy.

If the rider displays an adverse attitude during the ride, the deputy may terminate the ride-along. The deputy will advise the shift supervisor and write a memorandum detailing the problem. The memorandum will be attached to the ride-along Waiver Form and will be filed in the Records Division.

Dispatching of Calls: If an observer is riding in a regular patrol car, the dispatcher shall be instructed to use discretion in giving "HOT" calls obviously involving danger to the patrol car carrying the ride-along.

## **RELATED STANDARDS**

## **AFFECTED DIVISIONS**

Patrol

## **DATE OF REVISIONS**

9/9/81

1/29/02 [Replaces GN-92-09]

## **BY ORDER OF:**

RICK NAVARRO, CAPTAIN  
BUREAU OF FIELD SERVICES