



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

NUMBER
126.00

SUBJECT
Ride-Along Program

EFF. DATE
09/26/22
Revised 09/21/22

TOPIC

Ride-Along Program

AUTHORIZATION

Jerome Gaines, Fire Chief

POLICY: This Department encourages interested citizens to familiarize themselves with the facilities, equipment, and operations of the Tallahassee Fire Department. This is accomplished by touring station facilities and participating in the department’s Ride- Along Program. (TFD Cadet Program participants should refer to SOP 136 for cadet ride along guidelines.)

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants will be required to have a criminal background check completed by the Department prior to participating. The following acts of conduct may disqualify a citizen from being approved to participate in the program:

A citizen, who is the subject of an active criminal investigation or prosecution, or convicted of a felony, shall not be permitted to participate in the program.

The Fire Chief, whose decision is final, will evaluate a citizen for participation in the program who has a prior arrest history for a misdemeanor.

Law prohibits denial of the privilege to participate in the program on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity, or any characteristic protected by law. The Department retains the right to deny participation to any citizen for the reasons specified herein and to disclose only such information as may be required by law.

PROCEDURE: Application and Program procedures are as follows:

A citizen who wishes to participate in the program must read this policy, complete, and submit both the Ride-Along Program Application and the Release and Waiver form, along with a copy of the applicant’s driver’s license. The Program Coordinator will then process these forms.

Applicants must be 18 years or older. Anyone under the age of 18, will be referred to the Cadet Program Coordinator.

Upon receipt of the results from the background check, the Program Coordinator will notify the applicant if he/she is approved to be a participant in the program. If approved, the applicant may schedule a ride-along by contacting the Coordinator.



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Only one ride along participant (regular or cadet) will be permitted per station during a shift. The Fire Chief may grant exceptions. Those participants that are fire certified, EMT certified, or interested in becoming a firefighter may schedule up to two ride-alongs per month. Those participants that are not fire certified, EMT certified, or interested in becoming a firefighter are limited to a total of 4 (four) ride-alongs, no more than one per quarter. Ride-alongs can be in 4, 6, or 8-hour increments.

Ride-alongs will be scheduled only at Stations 1, 3, 4, and 16 between the hours of 9:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday – Saturday, excluding holidays. If unable to participate on these days due to work commitment, exceptions will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Participants may ride once per shift at each of the four participating stations, i.e. Station 1 A Shift, Station 1 B Shift, Station 1 C Shift, Station 2 A Shift, etc.–Applications are good for one year and must be resubmitted in order to continue to participate in the program.

The on-duty Battalion Chief may, at his/her discretion, suspend a scheduled ride- along due to operational circumstances, i.e., riots, storms, disasters, etc.


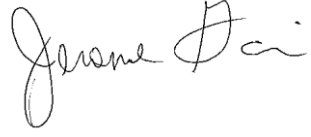
RIDE-ALONG PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Anyone participating in the Tallahassee Fire Department Ride-Along Program will adhere to the guidelines of the program.

Attire at all times will be long pants or jeans, a shirt with a collar or a plain tee shirt (other than white, gray, or red), walking shoes or boots, and if needed, a jacket. Ride-Along participants shall not dress in a manner that may cause them to be confused with Tallahassee Fire Department personnel, i.e., blue on blue clothing, blue BDU’s etc. Battalion Chief or assigned unit officer will make the final decision regarding any questions pertaining to suitability of attire. Personnel from other fire departments or other agencies shall not wear their agency uniform.

An identification badge shall be worn at all times to identify the person as a Ride- Along. The badge shall be turned in to the assigned unit officer and returned to the Captain’s office at the conclusion of the ride.

Ride-Along personnel are permitted in the day room, kitchen, truck room and rest rooms only. Offices are off limits unless accompanied by an officer. Dormitories and workout rooms are strictly off limits. Any computer use will be under the supervision of the assigned unit officer.

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A Ride-Along participant scheduled during lunch should bring a lunch in for that day or check with the on-duty shift about purchasing lunch, as it is not provided.

Ride-Along participants are expected to stay the whole time they are scheduled unless there is an emergency, at which time the assigned officer and the Battalion Chief should be notified.

Ride-Along personnel will follow directives from officers at all times and are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner.

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Battalion Chief

1. No confidential information will be discussed in the presence of a Ride-Along participant.
2. Assign participant to a unit and include the Ride-Along participant's name and officer to whom he/she is assigned on the duty roster.

B. Assigned Unit Officer

1. Check driver's license to properly identify participant as the one that is scheduled and provide participant a ride-along tag. This tag should be collected at the end of the ride-along and returned to the ride-along envelope.
2. Advise the participant that the occupant restraint system (seatbelts) must be used at all times while the vehicle is moving.
3. Advise the participant of what will be expected at the scene of an emergency, and that they will not be allowed to become directly involved at the emergency scene.
4. Monitor the Ride-Along participant and ensure that the Ride-Along guidelines are adhered to.
5. Report any problems or concerns to the appropriate Battalion Chief and Program Coordinator. If



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warranted complete a Ride-Along Incident Form and submit to the Battalion Chief and Coordinator.

6. The Ride-Along is not to participate in any emergency operations or to assist with any operations of fire apparatus (i.e. operating pump, grounds person, etc.).
7. Safety of the Ride-Along should be ensured at all times during emergency operations:
 - a. Maintain a safe distance from the emergency scene such that the Ride-Along's safety is not compromised.
 - b. On a fire scene, the participant should remain with the unit unless otherwise instructed.
 - c. On a medical call, the participant should remain at the distance instructed until such time an assessment of the situation is completed and the participant is redirected.

A Ride-Along participant may do the following activities:

- Assist in washing units
- Assist in station cleanup within designated areas
- Other duties at the discretion of the assigned unit officer or Battalion Chief
- Any lifting will be limited to under 20 pounds