

Ride-Along

416.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for a ride-along with Deputies of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, hours of operation and deputy responsibilities for ride-along.

416.2 POLICY

Ride-along opportunities will be provided to the members of the public, county employees governmental officials and members of this office to observe and experience, first-hand, various functions of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. The term "ride-along" includes riding as a passenger with a deputy on patrol or observing the work day of members engaged in other functions within the Office.

416.3 ELIGIBILITY

A ride-along is available to Montgomery County residents, business owners and students currently attending class in Criminal Justice. 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, the following:

- Being under 18 years of age
- Prior criminal history or known mental health issues.
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against this office or the county
- Physical disabilities or limitations which require more than a reasonable accommodation.
- Denial by any supervisor

416.4 AVAILABILITY

A ride-along or job observation is available only, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

416.5 REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE

Ride-along requests will be maintained by the Field Services Director, and scheduled by him/her. The applicant will complete and sign a waiver form. If the applicant is less than 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 number, birthdate, address and telephone number and email address

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The Field Services Director will schedule a date, based on availability.

If the request is denied, the Field Services Director will advise the applicant of the denial.

416.6 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
- Chaplains
- Reserves

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 office vehicles at a given time.

Ride-along requirements for office Explorers are covered in the Explorers Policy.

416.6.1 OFF-DUTY PARTICIPATION

Off-duty members of other law enforcement agencies, and employees of the county, will not be permitted to participate in a ride-along with on-duty members of this office without the express consent of the Field Services Director.

In the event that such participation is permitted, other law enforcement agency personnel or county employee shall not:

- (a) Represent him/herself as a member of this office.
- (b) Participate in any law enforcement activity.

416.6.2 CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK

All ride-along applicants are subject to a criminal history check, except those who are law enforcement. The criminal history check may include a local records check and any other authorized State or national check prior to approval of the ride-along or job observation.

416.6.3 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. The Supervisor may refuse a ride-along to anyone who is not dressed appropriately.

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416.7 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

The assigned deputy shall consider the safety of the ride-along or job observation participant at all times. The deputy shall maintain control over the participant and shall instruct the individual about the conditions that necessarily limit his/her participation. Instructions should include:

- (a) The participant will follow the directions of the deputy.
- (b) The participant will not become involved in any investigation, search, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, reading an individual's criminal history or other protected information, pursuit or handling any sheriff's office equipment.
- (c) Participation may be terminated at any time by the deputy if the participant interferes with the performance of the deputy's duties.
- (d) If the participant is on a ride-along, the deputy may return the participant to the point the ride originated.
- (e) Participants may be allowed to continue a ride-along during the transportation and booking process, provided it does not jeopardize their safety.
- (f) Deputy's 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 deputy of the public.
- (g) Participants who are not law enforcement officers shall not be permitted to accompany the office member into a private residence without the express consent of the resident or other authorized person.

The deputy assigned to provide a ride-along shall advise the telecommunicator that a ride-along participant is present in the vehicle before going into service. A deputy 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-lit safe public place.

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