

Ride-Along Policy

412.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for citizens to experience the law enforcement function first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, and hours of operation for the Ride-Along Program.

412.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Azusa Police Department Ride-Along Program is offered to residents, students, those employed within the City, or other individuals approved of by the Watch Commander. Every attempt will be made to accommodate interested persons however any applicant may be disqualified without cause.

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

- Being under 15 years of age
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against the Department
- Denial by any supervisor

412.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The Ride-along Program is available on most days of the week, with certain exceptions established by the on-duty Watch Commander. The actual hours for citizen ride-alongs are not restricted by policy. The availability and scheduling for ride alongs may be approved by the Chief of Police, a Division Commander, or Watch Commander.

412.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be scheduled by a Community Services Officer assigned to the Patrol Division. The participant will complete a ride-along application and waiver form. Information requested will include a valid ID or California driver's 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. The application is forwarded to the Records Bureau.

A Records Bureau representative will conduct a records check on the applicant and forwards the application to the Community Services Officer assigned to the Patrol Division. That Community Services Officer then schedules a date and time, based on availability, for the ride along to occur. A copy of the approved application will remain with the Community Services and a copy will be forwarded to the respective Watch Commander as soon as possible, for his/her scheduling considerations.

If the ride-along is denied after the request has been made, a representative of the Police Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

Azusa Police Department

Azusa PD Policy Manual

Ride-Along Policy

412.2.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception would apply to the following: Cadets, Explorers, RSVP, Chaplains, Reserves, police applicants, and all others with approval of the Watch Commander.

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along will be allowed in the officer's vehicle at a given time.

Ride-along requirements for police cadets are covered in Policy Manual § 1048, "Police Cadet Program."

412.2.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride along is required to be suitably dressed in collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, T-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the police vehicle. The Patrol Lieutenant or field supervisor may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

412.2.3 PEACE OFFICER RIDE-ALONGS

Off-duty members of this department or any other law enforcement agency will not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty officers without the expressed consent of the Watch Commander. In the event that such a ride-along is permitted, the off-duty employee shall not be considered on-duty and shall not represent themselves as a peace officer or participate in any law enforcement activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

412.2.4 RIDE-ALONG 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 a Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System check through CLETS prior to their approval as a ride-along with a law enforcement officer (provided that the ride-along is not an employee of the Azusa Police Department) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.F.2.).

412.3 OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The officer shall advise the dispatcher that a ride-along is present in the vehicle before going into service. Officers shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Officers should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, and if feasible, let the participant out of the vehicle in a well-lighted place of safety. The dispatcher will be advised of the situation and as soon as practical have another police unit respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

The Community Services is responsible for maintaining and scheduling ride-alongs. Upon completion of the ride-along, the yellow form shall be returned to the Community Services with any comments which may be offered by the officer.

Azusa Police Department

Azusa PD Policy Manual

Ride-Along Policy

412.4 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG

The assigned employee shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her in the conditions that necessarily limit their participation. These instructions should include:

- (a) The ride-along will follow the directions of the officer
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, or handling any police equipment
- (c) The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time and the officer may return the observer to their home or to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of the officer's duties
- (d) Ride-alongs may be allowed to continue riding during the transportation and booking process provided this does not jeopardize their safety
- (e) Officers 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
- (f) Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride along be permitted to enter a private residence with an officer without the expressed consent of the resident or other authorized person