
Ride-Along Program

405.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for specified individuals to experience the Berkeley Police Department first hand. This policy provides the requirements and the approval process for the Ride-Along Program.

405.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Berkeley Police Department Ride-Along Program is offered to Berkeley Police Aides, Public Safety Dispatchers, Citizen Academy participants, Berkeley High School Justice Academy participants, potential Berkeley Police Department employees, and individuals specifically authorized by the Patrol Watch Commander or Personnel and Training Sergeant. 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

405.2 PARTICIPANTS

Police Aides - Police aides will ride a minimum of 4 hours every other month with a Berkeley Police Officer. The aides are expected to make their own ride-along arrangements, obtaining approval from the Personnel and Training Bureau Sergeant no less than 3 days in advance of the selected ride-along date.

Public Safety Dispatchers - Public Safety Dispatchers will be permitted to ride-along with a patrol officer with the expressed permission of the on-duty Dispatch Supervisor or Communications Center Manager and the on-duty Patrol Watch Commander. Training is the primary reason for allowing dispatchers the opportunity to participate in the ride-along program. No dispatcher shall be allowed to participate in the ride-along program if his/her absence will result in a staffing shortage in the Communications Center. The ride-along shall not exceed four hours in duration.

Citizen Academy and BHS Justice Academy Participants - Citizen Academy and BHS Justice Academy Participants will be permitted to ride-along with a Patrol Officer with the expressed permission of the Justice Academy Liaison. The ride-along shall not exceed four hours in duration.

Potential Berkeley Police Department Employees - Police Officer and Public Safety Dispatcher candidates in the hiring process will be permitted to ride-along with a patrol officer with the expressed permission of the Personnel and Training Bureau Sergeant.

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Individuals Specifically Authorized by the Chief of Police or his/her Designee - Individuals shall submit their request, in writing, to the Chief of Police or his/her designee. The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, will render a decision based upon the totality of the circumstances.

It is the policy of the Department that only requests of an exceptional nature/circumstances will be approved for a ride-along.

405.3 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be scheduled by the Personnel and Training Sergeant. The Personnel and Training Sergeant will schedule a date, based on the availability and staffing of Patrol. If the ride-along request is denied, a representative of the Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

On the day of the ride-along, at the PSB, the participant will complete a Ride-Along 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 waiver form. The waiver form will be forwarded to the respective Watch Commander for review. Once the ride-along is completed, the Watch Commander will forward the waiver form to the Personnel and Training Bureau.

405.3.1 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved for a 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 Watch Commander or field supervisor may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

405.3.1 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.

405.3.2 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 Berkeley Police Department) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.F.2.).

405.4 OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The officer shall advise Dispatch 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

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out of the vehicle in a well-lighted place of safety. The officer shall advise Dispatch 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.

405.5 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) No ride-along shall be allowed in the Jail
- (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
- (g) The officer should explain beats and general procedures to the ride-along. Questions should be encouraged and every effort should be made to answer questions in an understandable manner
- (h) Officers should give the ride-along brief instruction in the use of the radio should the need for them to use it arise