

## Ride-Alongs

### 404.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

### 404.2 POLICY

Ride-along opportunities will be provided to the members of the public, County employees and members of this office to observe and experience first-hand various functions of the Talbot 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 such as Talbot Center.

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 402.2 Procedures](#)

### 404.3 ELIGIBILITY

A ride-along is available to Talbot residents, business owners, students currently attending class in Talbot and those employed within the County of Talbot. 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
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against this office or the County
- Denial by any supervisor

### 404.4 AVAILABILITY

A ride-along is available most days of the week, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Sheriff or Shift Sergeant.

### 404.5 REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE

Generally, ride-along requests will be maintained and scheduled by the Shift Sergeant. The applicant will complete and sign a ride-along waiver form. If the applicant is under 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's license number, birthdate, address and telephone number.

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All members will be familiar with, and have electronic and paper access to TSO Form 45 (revised 6-04), titled "Waiver of Claim and Release from Liability". This form will be used in all cases when a person has requested, and has been approved to participate in the ride along program. This form will be completed in its entirety and signed by the person participating in the ride along.

The Shift Sergeant will schedule a date, based on availability, generally one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy of the waiver form will be forwarded to the appropriate division as soon as possible for scheduling considerations.

If the request is denied, a representative of this office will advise the applicant of the denial.

#### **404.6 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
- Volunteers
- Chaplains
- Talbot County Sheriff's Office applicants
- Any others with approval of the Shift Sergeant
- Students enrolled in any office-approved dispatcher training course

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one member of the public will participate in a ride-along 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.

##### **404.6.1 OFF-DUTY PARTICIPATION**

Off-duty members of this office or any other law enforcement agency, 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 Shift Sergeant.

In the event that such participation is permitted, the off-duty office member, other law enforcement agency personnel or County employee shall not:

- (a) Be considered on-duty.
- (b) Represent him/herself as a member of this office or any other law enforcement agency.
- (c) Participate in any law enforcement activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

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### 404.6.2 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 Maryland Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) check prior to approval of the ride-along.

### 404.6.3 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to participate in a ride-along or 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 without the express consent of the Shift Sergeant. The Shift Sergeant or a supervisor may refuse a ride-along to anyone who is not dressed appropriately.

## **404.7 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The assigned office member shall consider the safety of the ride-along participant at all times. The member 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 office member.
- (b) The participant will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, reading an individual's criminal history or other protected information, or handling any sheriff's office equipment.
- (c) Participation may be terminated at any time by the office member if the participant interferes with the performance of the member's duties.
  - 1. If the participant is on a ride-along, the member may return the participant to the point the ride originated.
- (d) Participants may be allowed to continue a ride-along during the transportation and booking process, provided it does not jeopardize their safety.
- (e) Members 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 member of the public.
- (f) 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 member assigned to provide a ride-along shall advise the dispatcher 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 public place. The dispatcher will be advised of the situation and as soon as practicable have another office member respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

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

Upon completion of the ride-along, the member shall return the waiver form to the Shift Sergeant.