

WINTER HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER 45.4

CITIZEN RIDE-A-LONG PROGRAM

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: CFA 14.15

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 3, 1997

RESCINDS: G.O. 45.4 September 1, 2015 and all applicable Amended/Temporary Orders prior to October 29, 2018

LAST REVISED DATE: October 29, 2018

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This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I.** Authorized Passengers
 - II.** Citizen Ride-A-Long Program
 - III.** Restrictions
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POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Winter Haven Police Department to encourage citizen awareness of the job responsibilities and duties of a police officer through a Citizen Ride-A-Long Program.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines and procedures for persons wanting to participate in a Citizen Ride-A-Long with a member of the Winter Haven Police Department.

SCOPE

This General Order shall apply to all department members.

PROCEDURE

I. Authorized Passengers

- A.** No unauthorized passengers will be transported in Departmental vehicles. Authorized passengers include Police Department or other City employees, visiting officials, persons being carried under emergency circumstances or being carried in the normal routine of business.
- B.** The following individuals may be transported as passengers in police vehicles:
 - 1.** Persons lawfully arrested.

2. Persons who are to aid and assist in accomplishing a police mission.
3. Persons representing the news media may be transported with prior approval by the Chief of Police.
4. Immediate family of department members. Immediate family members are defined as spouses, children, parents, brothers and sisters of an employee. Prior approval must be obtained from a Bureau Commander.
5. Personnel of the Winter Haven Police Department not normally assigned to the Patrol Division may be passengers for training and/or City business purposes, and; department volunteers.

II. Citizen Ride-A-Long Program (CFA 14.15a)

- A. Persons participating in the Citizen Ride-A-Long Program may be transported in police vehicles. Participants in this program must be at least 16 years of age and the participant must fill out the proper paperwork and meet at least one of the following requirements:
 1. Must be a full time member with the City of Winter Haven.
 2. Represent a governmental or social service organization that operates within the boundaries of Polk County.
 3. Must be an immediate family member of a Department member.
 4. Must be an applicant for either the Department or Reserve Officer program.
 5. Other persons approved by a Bureau Commander.
- B. Each citizen participant must fill out a Citizen Ride-A-Long form and obtain authorization from a Bureau Commander or designee prior to the ride-a-long. (CFA 14.15b)
- C. A criminal history check will be conducted on every person prior to the ride being approved. A copy of the check will be attached to the ride form. Any person determined to have a felony or serious misdemeanor record will be denied participation in the program. Criminal history checks do not need to be conducted on Departmental members, Explorers or Reserve Officers.

III. Restrictions (CFA 14.15e)

- A. Citizens and governmental officials may ride until midnight (2400 hours) unless prior approval to extend that hour is obtained from a Bureau Commander.
- B. It is recommended that citizen ride-a-long participants ride with a Department Field Training Officer or a senior officer as assigned by the Watch Commander.
- C. At no time will a participant in the Citizen Ride-A-Long Program ride with an officer that is on probation.
- D. A citizen participating in the Citizen Ride-A-Long Program may ride one time within a 30-day period.

- E. At all times, the actions of the participant shall be under the direction of the officer with whom the participant is riding.
- F. Participants are prohibited from assisting in criminal interrogations and physical confrontations involving arrests unless directed to do so by the officer with whom the participant is riding.
- G. Participants shall not leave the police vehicle, except upon specific instructions from the officer providing the ride along experience.
- H. Citizens who have received approval to ride shall be asked when they present themselves to the officer, "Are you armed with a firearm or weapon?" If the answer is yes, they shall be required to remove any firearm or weapon prior to entering the police vehicle. Any citizen who wishes to ride shall be subject to a search prior to beginning the ride. This does not apply to other law enforcement officers.

IV. Responsibilities of Officers (CFA 14.15c)

- A. Instruct the passenger on the requirements of the Citizen Ride –A-Long Program.
- B. Ensure the passenger does not have access to sensitive material or information.
- C. Officers will not engage in motor vehicle pursuit if the passenger is a civilian.
- D. Ensure the passenger does not use cameras, video or audio recording devices during any portion of the ride-along; and
- E. Not allow the passenger to enter a crime scene or a traffic crash scene, or handle any evidence.

V. Supervisor Responsibilities (CFA 14.15d)

- A. The on duty patrol supervisor may deny the passenger's request to ride if the prospective rider appears to suffer from a medical or emotional condition that could place the passenger, officer or civilian member at risk of illness or injury.
- B. The on duty supervisor may temporarily suspend the Ride-Along for the remainder of the shift due to a(n):
 - 1. Critical Incident;
 - 2. Natural Disaster;
 - 3. Riot; or
 - 4. Operational need.

APPROVED



**Charles E Bird
CHIEF OF POLICE**