



Ride-Along Program

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POLICY [\(Return to TOC\)](#)

This agency's Ride-Along Program was designed to provide citizens with an opportunity to better understand the agency's mission and operations. This policy provides the requirements, approval process and applicable guidelines for the program.

DEFINITIONS [\(Return to TOC\)](#)

PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL [\(Return to TOC\)](#)

1. The ride-along program is designed for:
 - a. Agency employees.
 - b. Professionals and students in the field of criminal justice or social science.
 - c. Members of the recognized news media.
 - d. City or state officials.
 - e. Active participants in this agency's Citizens' Police Academy.
 - f. Community leaders and members of recognized community organizations within Biddeford.
 - g. Any individual who is deemed to have an interest or desire for greater knowledge in the field of law enforcement such as candidates or potential candidates for employment.

B. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS [\(Return to TOC\)](#)

1. For an application to be considered, the applicant:
 - a. Must be age 18 or older.
 - b. Must display a valid photo drivers' license or photo state identification card.
 - c. Must pass a criminal history check.
 - d. Must not have a conviction for a misdemeanor or felony crime.

- e. Must not have a formal charging instrument pending against them by this state or by the federal government that is punishable by imprisonment.
- f. Must not be currently under investigation by any law enforcement agency.
- g. Must not have filed a civil lawsuit against the City of Biddeford, this agency, or any current or former employee of this agency.
- h. Must not have filed a civil lawsuit against any municipal, county, state or federal governmental entity or governmental employee.
- i. Must not have any unpaid fines, fees, parking tickets, citations, or be delinquent in payment of court mandated child support.

C. APPLICATION PROCESS [\(Return to TOC\)](#)

1. Those individuals interested in participating in the Ride-Along Program must complete all forms included in the [Ride-Along Program Packet](#).
2. The Recruiting Manager or designee, shall review all applications and applicable documents, obtain a NCIC Non-Sworn Criminal History Background Check – Purpose Code C (used when the SOQ is for official duties in connection with law enforcement), and make initial contact with the applicant.
 - a. In the absence of the Recruiting Manager or designee, the process will be completed by a Sergeant or a command staff member.
3. Applicants must be given a copy of this written directive so that they are aware of all the conditions and requirements for the program.
4. The Recruiting Manager or designee will forward their recommendations to the Support Services or Patrol Commander for review.
5. The Support Services or Patrol Commander may have final approval of the application; however, the Chief of Police may be briefed for final approval as needed. The application will be returned to the Recruiting Manager or designee with the final decision. The Support Services Commander, Patrol Commander, or Chief of Police may approve or deny an applicant's participation with or without cause or explanation.
6. The Recruiting Manager or designee shall contact the applicant with the final decision and if approved, will schedule the ride-along as the schedule allows.
7. The application and associated ride-along paperwork will be maintained by the Recruiting Manager or designee.

D. RIDE ALONG PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES [\(Return to TOC\)](#)

1. All ride-along participants:
 - a. Must have completed and signed all required documents prior to the ride-along.
 - b. Shall report to the Biddeford Police Department for the scheduled ride-along.
 - c. Shall not be allowed to participate in a scheduled ride-along if participant appears to be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or drug when reporting.
 - d. Shall not be allowed to participate in a scheduled ride-along due to unsafe weather conditions.
 - e. Shall not be allowed to operate any police equipment unless directed to do so by the host police officer during an extreme emergency.
 - f. Shall conduct themselves in a civil and courteous manner at all times.

- g. Shall not represent themselves as law enforcement officer or personnel in any form either verbally or visually.
- h. Shall not interfere with police officers in the performance of their duties.
- i. Civilian participants shall not carry any object(s) that might be considered a weapon (even if legally authorized by law).
- j. Only Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA) certified and sworn law enforcement officers are permitted to carry a weapon. Participants must disclose that they will carry a weapon on their applications.
- k. Shall wear comfortable, casual, and conservative attire and are expected to be clean and dressed appropriately to accompany a police officer. Shorts, miniskirts, tank tops, t-shirts, halter-tops, sandals or similar attire is not permitted.
- l. Shall wear an agency issued civilian identification tag on a lanyard at all times during the ride-along. MCJA certified and sworn officers shall display their police credentials on their belt or on a lanyard at all times during the ride-along.
- m. Shall be under the direct control of the host officer. Participants must remain in the police vehicle when at the scene of law enforcement activities unless otherwise instructed or permitted by the host officer.
- n. Are not permitted to enter private property without the permission of the property owner or person who is in control of the property; the host officer may seek such consent if the host officer deems it appropriate.
- o. Are not permitted to photograph or otherwise record video and/or audio during the ride-along.
- p. Shall not engage in any conversation with or make any verbal comment to prisoners, suspects, witnesses or any other parties contacted by any police officer.
- q. Are required to keep all information contained in any database, report, audio recording, or other record of this agency confidential. This includes keeping names, addresses, and/or telephone numbers listed in Biddeford Police Department databases, as well as personally identifying information learned during the ride-along confidential and may not be disclosed in any manner.
- r. May request the termination of the ride-along at any time.
- s. May become a witness if the participant observes an incident during the ride-along including testimony in court if necessary.

E. HOST OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES [\(Return to TOC\)](#)

- 1. Host officers:
 - a. Are not permitted to engage or participate in vehicle pursuits with civilians in police vehicles.
 - b. Shall not respond to emergency calls until or unless responding officers have determined the scene to be safe. In cases where the host officer's response is necessary, the host officer shall take steps to drop the participant off at a safe location, which is open to the public before proceeding to the call.
 - c. May terminate the ride-along at any time when cleared through the on-duty supervisor.
 - d. Shall inform dispatch that they have a civilian rider every time they go into service during a ride-along.

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- e. Shall document any injury to a participant, no matter how slight, and shall immediately notify the on-duty supervisor. The supervisor shall ensure that the injury is examined by an emergency medical care provider and completely document the incident, including photographs when deemed applicable.