

GENERAL ORDER



Title		
Ride-Along Program		
Topic	Series	Number
OPS	204	04
Effective Date		
March 28, 2024		
Replaces: GO-OPS-204.04 (Ride-Along Program), Effective Date November 3, 2022		

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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I. PURPOSE

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) offers a ride-along program that allows participants to ride with sworn members and observe the department's police activities. The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for the ride-along program.

II. PROCEDURES

A. Eligibility

1. All ride-along participants require prior approval. The [MPD ride along website](#) contains application instructions.
2. Applicants must generally be at least 14 years of age and fall into one of the following groups:

Ride-Along Eligibility	
District of Columbia residents	Members of the military
Persons recommended for participation in a ride-along by an MPD member	Students in an accredited law enforcement, criminal justice, or related program
District of Columbia civic organization members interested in law enforcement	Employees of a law enforcement agency whose position requires knowledge of law enforcement operations
Members of an organization engaged in a formal partnership with MPD	Individuals interested in employment at MPD
Members of the media approved by the Office of Communications director	Persons approved by the Office of Communications director or designee

3. Applicants must produce a valid identification card and submit to a Washington Area Law Enforcement System (WALES)/National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and MPD records management system (RMS) check before participating in a ride-along.
4. Approved participants, excluding those through formal partnerships, may ride up to four times in a 12-month period.

5. Applicants who do not meet the criteria provided in this order must obtain prior approval from the Office of Communications director or designee before submitting a ride-along application. Members of the media must receive approval of the Office of Communications director.
6. Upon approval, the Office of Communications director or designee shall notify each applicant of acceptance, any applicable restrictions, and the date, time, and district of the scheduled ride-along.
7. The Office of Communications director or designee shall deny the ride-along application of any applicants who do not meet the criteria set forth in this order or who do not exhibit behavior that is in the best interest of the department.
8. District watch commanders have the ability to approve same-day walk-in ride-along requests. Station personnel shall direct requesters to complete the [application](#). District watch commanders shall conduct the necessary background checks through WALES/NCIC and RMS and electronically submit all documentation to mpd.ridealong@dc.gov prior to the end of the shift.
9. Approved individuals working in a formal partnership role with MPD are eligible to ride with MPD for a six-month period from the date of approval. Approval is required every six months that the individual is working in a role that requires riding with MPD on a regular basis.
10. The Office of Communications director or designee shall review all ride-along applications, ensuring that participants working in a formal partnership with MPD remain in compliance with the six-month period. The Office of Communications director or designee shall maintain a log of all applicants, their schedules, and application expiration dates.

B. Protocol

1. The Office of Communications director or designee shall inform approved ride-along participants to respond to the designated district stations on the scheduled date and time of their ride-along and furnish their confirmation message and government-issued photo identification card to station personnel in order to verify their identity.
2. Ride-along participants shall not be permitted to ride when dressed in a manner or exhibiting conduct that will bring discredit to the MPD or District of Columbia. MPD prohibits open-toe shoes and revealing attire such as bathing suits and halter-tops, or clothing with derogatory, obscene, or offensive language or designs during a ride-along. Ride-along participants in a formal partnership with MPD shall wear their assigned uniform or dress in accordance with their agency's dress code.
3. Station personnel shall confirm ride-along approval and direct participants to remain in the station lobby until the assigned officer picks them up, unless directed otherwise by the watch commander. Ride-along

participants in a formal partnership with MPD and MPD volunteers may attend roll call.

4. Station personnel shall notify the watch commander of any rides already in progress or those scheduled for the upcoming shift. Watch commanders shall review the ride-along list for their shift and document each ride-along on the PD Form 150 (Tour of Duty Supervisor's Report).
5. Ride-along shifts typically run four or eight hours in length. The watch commander may adjust the exact length of the ride. Watch commanders shall designate the vehicle in which the participants will ride, ensuring that the vehicle is not a transport vehicle. Watch commanders may assign up to two participants to a single department vehicle.
6. Members assigned a ride-along shall ensure that participants do not use any electronic recording devices, video equipment, and photographic equipment during the ride-along, unless authorized by the Office of Communications director or their designee. The Office of Communications director or their designee shall ensure that affected members are notified through their command of the authorization for recording equipment. Members may decline to participate in a recorded ride-along.
7. Members shall inform the dispatcher of the beginning and end of a ride-along shift, including whether the ride-along is an adult or juvenile. Members accompanied by DC Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment (SAFE) Crisis Response Line advocates or MPD Volunteer Corps domestic violence liaisons shall advise the dispatcher of their presence so that they can be notified of applicable calls for service.
8. Members shall ensure that the ride-along participant wears his or her seatbelt and has a valid government-issued or school identification card in their possession at all times.
9. Members operating vehicles during a ride-along, absent exigent circumstances, shall refrain from responding to any code one assignments as the primary unit and shall not transport any prisoners, suspects, witnesses, or any individuals in their vehicle during the time that a ride-along participant is in the vehicle. Members shall be cognizant of the safety of the ride-along participant on all scenes and shall ensure that the participant does not interfere with police operations.
10. Members shall notify the watch commander if it becomes apparent that the participant's conduct is not in the best interest of the department. In such cases, the watch commander shall revoke the participant's authorization and notify mpd.ridealong@dc.gov.



Pamela A. Smith
Chief of Police

III. DIRECTIVE CONFORMING AMENDMENTS

Amendment #	Page	Description of Change	Effective Date of Change	Name and Title of Authorizing Member
1	1-3	Updated references from Strategic Engagement Office to the Office of Communications as referenced in Part II.A.2, Part II.A.5, Part II.A.6, Part II.A.7, Part II.A.10, Part II.B.1, Part II.B.6	12/31/24	Maureen O'Connell, Director, Policy and Standards Branch