

<b>SUBJECT:</b> RIDE ALONG POLICY	<b>SECTION:</b> 102.04
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## GUIDELINE

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The Ride Along Program permits interested citizens to observe Reading Fire Department operations by riding with Command Officers or fire companies. The program is open to family members of Fire Department personnel, City officials, members of the press, visiting fire personnel from other cities, qualified Reading Fire Cadets, and on a limited basis, to the general public. Qualified medical personnel (i.e. base hospital coordinators and physicians) will be scheduled through the Emergency Medical Services to ride with ALS companies. Riders will not be scheduled on any Fire Department ambulance, utility or support vehicles. Observers must be at least 18 years; family members may participate as observers if they are at least 14 years old.

The Fire Chief will schedule citizen observers and official visitors to ride with fire companies. Observers should be scheduled at least one shift ahead of the planned date. The Fire Chief will notify the appropriate company as soon as the rider has been scheduled. This information will be entered on the company activity calendar.

Normally, citizen observers will be scheduled to ride between 1800 to 2300 hours. Exceptions to these hours will be at the discretion of the appropriate Fire Chief. Members of the general public will be scheduled to ride a maximum of only once annually. Observers will be advised that emergency activity may delay their return to quarters later than 2300 hours.

Company Officers are responsible for insuring that observers are appropriately attired and have observed good hygiene practices. Shorts, dresses, cutoffs and sandals are some of the items considered as inappropriate dress. Any observer failing to meet the appropriate dress and hygiene requirements, or failing to conduct themselves appropriately will be asked to leave the station by the Company Officer and be excluded from any future observer programs. The Company Officer will notify the observer of a no-smoking policy at the station. Observers must conform to all no smoking policies.

All citizen observers must sign a release form before being permitted to ride. The signature will be witnessed by the Company Officer, who will then sign his/her name on the line indicated. Completed forms will be filed in the alarm room. Citizen observers will then be issued a "Citizen Observer" I.D. badge which will be prominently displayed for the duration of the riding period. The badge will be retrieved by the Company Officer at the completion of the observer's stay. A safety vest will be assigned to the observer to be worn when required by Department procedures.

The Company Officer will brief the observer on the Fire Department's expectations for the riding period and assure that the observer is aware of all safety requirements (seat belts, vests, etc.). The Company Officer will explain to the observer the appropriate action to follow should the entire crew be away from the apparatus during a major incident, or an incident in which the observer is prohibited from being in the immediate area (hazardous or potentially hazardous areas).

Due to the sensitive nature of some EMS calls, the observer may be required to stay with the apparatus. It is the Company Officer's responsibility to insure that the observer has the opportunity to observe the incident where possible, but must not allow the observer access to a sensitive EMS situation that could embarrass the observer, the patient, or the patient's family.

Under no circumstance will fire personnel (or anyone else) ride in an unsafe position on any apparatus to accommodate an observer or for any other reason.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

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It is the Company Officer's responsibility to assure that all requirements of this management procedure are strictly followed.