

Stowe Police Department

General Order: 1.21	Related General Orders:
Ride-Along Program	
This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.	
Applicable Vermont Statutes:	
Date Implemented: 03/15/2013	Date Revised:

I. **PURPOSE:**

1. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the department's mandates with respect to citizen ride-along.

II. **POLICY:**

1. In an effort to enhance the mutual respect of police officers and the community we serve, this department hereby establishes a ride-along program. This program will provide its participants with a greater understanding of law enforcement. At the same time, through interaction between our officers and members of the community, lines of open communication will be established.

III. **PROCEDURE:**

1. Who can participate in the ride-along program:
 - A. All participants must be at least 18 years of age and must have signed the Police Department waiver form.
 - B. A participant under the age of 18 who requests to participate in a ride-along must have approval from the Chief of Police. The application and release must be signed by the parent and the participant. This may include a student doing a school project, Scout project, etc.

- C. Community members who are interested in broadening their knowledge of the police function within the Town. This would include members of civic organizations, college students who are interested in the law enforcement field, and any other person authorized by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- D. Media representatives who wish to conduct a ride along for purposes of developing a news story or other documentary. This category includes the print and electronic media. Media representatives must complete all documents required of any other participant. In addition, members of the media must have authorization from the office of the Chief of Police before recording, by any means (audio, video, film, photo), any portion of the ride-along

2. Application Process:

- A. Applications for ride-along will be available at police headquarters. Applicants must provide a photo-identification for verification when they return their completed application.
- B. Completed applications shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police or his designee. Application Review will include a local check within the department's record management system and an NCIC check. An applicant who has a felony record or a misdemeanor record will be excluded from participation in this program, unless permission is granted by the Chief of Police.
- C. Once approved, the applicant shall be notified and assigned a date for the ride-along.
- D. Ride-along guests will not be allowed to ride during the scheduled tour of duty of an officer who is related to the guest without the permission of the Chief of Police.

3. Reporting for Ride-along:

- A. Participants should report to the police headquarters 15 minutes prior to their scheduled participation.
- B. If available a supervising officer shall meet with the ride-along participant. The ride along participant and the supervising officer shall review and sign the liability waiver form. The supervising officer must sign as a witness. Any participant who decides not to sign the liability waiver form shall not be allowed to participate in the program. Where no supervisor is available, the host officer shall go over and witness the signature on the waiver.

- C. When available a supervising officer shall review the rules of the ride-along program with the participant. In this review, the participant should be reminded that they may be called as a witness in court, if they observe a police event which becomes subject to court action.
- D. The supervising officer shall issue the participant a “ride-along” participant identification tag that the participant shall be required to wear on his or her outermost clothing.

4. Duties of the Participant:

- A. Participants shall play no active role in the police function. They must only act as an observer unless otherwise directed by their host-officer.
- B. Participants shall not be allowed to operate any police equipment unless directed to do so by a police officer in an extreme emergency
- C. Participants must remain in the police vehicle at all times until directed otherwise by the host officer.
- D. Participants must not speak to victims, witnesses, prisoners or other persons associated with a police event. Should a witness, prisoner, victim or other person speak to the participant, the participant should politely direct the person to speak to one of the officers present.
- E. Participants shall not use any cameras or any recording devices without the express permission of the Chief of Police or his designee.
- F. Participants shall follow the instructions of the host-officer at all times during the ride-along.
- G. Participants shall not be allowed to carry any firearm or other weapon, even when otherwise authorized by law, while participating in the ride-along program.
- H. Participants should be dressed in comfortable, casual but conservative clothing during the ride-along. Participants may not wear any clothing with any emblems or insignias on them and participant that is dressed inappropriately will not be allowed to participate in the program on the assigned date.

5. Duties of Host Officer:

- A. Host officers shall conduct their activities in a manner consistent with the efficiency of the police department as if the rider was not present.

- B. Host Officers, in their discretion may drop a participant off in an area of safety while responding to a dangerous police event in order to avoid exposing the participant to danger.
- C. Host officer shall be allowed to rove the entire Town in order to enhance the experience of the participant.
- D. Host officers may allow the participant to leave the police vehicle in order to better observe the police activity; however, where a participant has been allowed to leave the police vehicle, host officers shall maintain close supervision of the participant and not allow the participant to involve him or herself in the police activity.
- E. Host officers WILL NOT allow a participant to enter any person's home or business while conducting any official police business.

IV. DISCIPLINE:

1. Any violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action consistent with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, statute, Department policy or Town policy.

Issued by: _____

Donald Hull
Chief of Police