


NORTHAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT Administration & Operations Manual		
Policy: Ride Along Program		AOM:O-510
Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards Referenced:		Issuing Authority <hr/> Jody Kasper Chief of Police
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Table of Contents

I. Introductory Discussion.....	1
II. Eligibility Requirements.....	2
III. Procedures.....	2
IV. Host Officer Rules	2
V. Participant Rules.....	4

I. Introductory Discussion

The Northampton Police Department *Ride Along* Program allows genuinely interested persons the opportunity to ride on patrol with an on-duty police officer. The purpose of this program is to:

1. Provide members of the community with an insight into the work experience of the officers of the Northampton Police Department; and
2. Help foster and develop a strong relationship between the Police Department and the community of Northampton.

II. Eligibility Requirements

A. Persons selected for the *Ride Along* program may include:

1. 18 years old, unless approved by Chief of Police or designee.
2. Citizens interested in Law Enforcement.
3. College students conducting research.
4. Police officers from other jurisdictions.

5. Northampton Police Officers' family members or significant others.
 6. Any person approved by the Chief of Police or their designee.
- B. All requests to participate in the *Ride Along* program shall be referred to the Chief of Police or their designee. The final decision to allow any individual to participate lies with the Chief of Police
 - C. The Northampton Police Department will complete background checks for all persons requesting participation in the Ride Along program. This check will consist of but not be limited to the following:
 1. Northampton Police records check.
 2. Board of Probation check.
 3. Interview of applicant by Chief or designee.

III. Procedures

- A. Once approved, the Chief of Police or his their designee will assign the date and time for the ride along. There will only be one (1) Ride Along per shift.
- B. At the time of the scheduled Ride Along, the participant will report to the Station Officer who in turn will notify the Officer-in-Charge (OIC). If not previously assigned, the OIC will assign an officer to act as a Host Officer for the ride along.
- C. All citizens participating in a ride along shall complete a *Covenant Not to Sue, Promise to Release* form. If the participant is under the age of eighteen, the parent or guardian section must also be completed.
- D. Prior to the start of the ride along, the participant must present the completed forms to the OIC. The original of these documents will be stored with this policy in the AOM files.
- E. While participating in a ride along, the participant will not become involved in police activity unless requested to do so by the police host. The Host Officer will only make such a request in an extreme emergency situation.
- F. While involved in a ride along, participants may obtain information that is of a sensitive or personal nature. This information should not be released. The participant will be advised that he/she is expected to keep this information confidential.

IV. Host Officer Rules

- A. Officers who are acting as *Host Officers* will **not** become involved in motor vehicle pursuits while the ride along participant is in the cruiser, nor shall they respond to potential high-risk incidents with a ride-along participant. The Host officer shall not be involved in the service of an arrest warrant at a residence or the execution of a search warrant.

- B. Host Officers will be responsible for the safety of the ride along at all times.
- C. The Host Officer will be responsible for reporting any problems relating to the ride along to the Officer-in-Charge.
- D. Host Officers will be courteous and professional when dealing with the participant.
- E. If the Host Officer receives a radio call that is of a dangerous nature (i.e. robbery in progress, etc.) they will leave the participant at the nearest safe location. They will then notify the OIC of their actions.
- F. The Host Officer will assure that the Ride Along participant completes all related paperwork.

V. Participant Rules

- A. Participants will report to the Northampton Police Department one half hour prior to the assigned *Ride Along* time. This is to ensure that the ride along Host Officer is available to conduct the ride along.
- B. Participants will be under the direct control of your Host Officer. The Participant will follow their commands explicitly. Immediate response is required for the safety of both the participant and the Host Officer.
- C. Participants must dress appropriately; business casual including comfortable footwear, long pants, proper shirt, or jacket is required. Loud or outlandish clothing should be avoided, and jewelry kept to a minimum.
- D. For participant safety and the safety of all involved in this program, **no** firearm or any other type of weapon shall be carried by the participant at any time during the ride along.
- E. No recording devices of any type shall be allowed unless approved in advance by the Chief of Police and notification made to the Host Officer.