

**I. PURPOSE:**

To establish the necessary criteria and procedures for authorizing citizens to ride in Russellville Fire Department emergency vehicles. Only those persons with written authorization will be allowed to participate in the ride-along program. Priority will be given to interested recruits for the Russellville Fire Department.

**II. SCOPE:**

The Russellville Fire Department encourages community involvement in the operation of the Fire Department both during emergency and non-emergency related events. This allows citizens and students to ride as observers with fire department personnel for legitimate civic or educational reasons. The ride-along program shall be regulated through the Fire Department's Administration.

**III. BACKGROUND:**

The ride-along program allows an individual that meets the requirements of the ride-along policy, to respond to emergencies with the Russellville Fire Department during the ride along period. The program allows for the participant to witness the role of the firefighter and gain the knowledge of the profession and the importance of firefighters in our community.

**IV. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES:**

A. Eligible Participants

1. All persons wishing to participate in the ride-along program must be pre-approved by the Fire Chief or designee.
2. Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

B. Approval and Assignments

1. All requests for participation in the ride-along program must be referred to the Fire Department Administration office a minimum of 14 days prior to the event.
2. All persons desiring to participate in the program must complete the Ride-Along Request Form and Ride-Along Waiver/Confidentiality Form. The forms shall be submitted to the Fire Administrative office.

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3. Approved participants will be required to receive Russellville Fire Department training in HIPAA (patient confidentiality), Safety, and Infection Control. This may be conducted prior to the ride along with the on duty Battalion Chief or his designee.
4. Participants will be instructed where and when to report. The Battalion Chief shall be notified of the scheduled ride along. The Battalion Chief shall be responsible for the placement of the participant.
5. Every effort should be made to avoid delay, and the participant should begin the ride-along as near as possible to the scheduled time.
6. The fire department administration will maintain all records relating to the ride-along program, to include the original request and release forms of all ride-along participants for three years.
7. Ride-along participants shall have their name entered into the daily log as a ride-along. Their name shall also be listed in applicable fire and EMS reports for which they attend.

C. Participant Restrictions

1. Participants shall be limited to ride a maximum of 12-hours or portion thereof in any six-month period. Participants who desire to ride more than once in six months must make a specific request to the Fire Chief or designee, allowing a minimum of seven days' notice. These requests should be carefully screened before waiving this limitation.
2. Ride-along shall only be permissible between the hours of 0700-1900Hrs. (Except those currently in a school or hospital affiliated program).
3. Ride-along participants for fire incidents shall be considered an observer only, and shall be under the direct supervision of the Officer, or designee, during the ride-along. Participants shall be instructed to remain in the fire engine or motor vehicle at all times except when authorized to leave by the Officer.
4. All participants shall be considered an observer only, and shall be under the direct supervision of the Officer, or designee, during the ride-along.
5. Participants shall wear seat belts, in accordance with department policy.

6. The assigned Officer, or designee, shall take reasonable care to prevent the participant from becoming physically involved in or assisting in the following types of incidents:

- a) Crime Scenes
- b) Violent patients
- c) Patients with known infectious diseases
- d) Fire ground operations
- e) Situations involving or likely to involve the display or use of firearms
- f) Other activities or situations that are likely to increase the participant's risk exposure.

7. If the Officer, or designee, receives a potentially hazardous call or realizes that they may become immediately involved in a potentially hazardous situation, the observer should be instructed to remain in the Fire Engine. It is acceptable to leave the individual at the fire station.

8. At no time shall a participant become involved in assisting during an event of physical violence from another person. The participant has the right to use fire department communication devices to contact Fire dispatch for the purpose of requesting assistance.

9. No ride-along participant shall be allowed to carry any weapons during the ride-along, regardless of any weapons permits or licenses they may possess.

10. At no time will a rider be permitted to take pictures, use a video camera or any audio-visual recording device while on the scene of an incident. Requests for media ride-along will be dealt with separately through the Administrative office.

11. At no time will a rider be permitted to use any tobacco products while on the scene of an incident. Any tobacco use while not on an incident will be in a designated area with the permission of the officer or designee in charge.

#### D. Dress Requirements

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Participants shall be appropriately dressed when reporting for the ride-along assignment. The Officer shall deny participation to any person who is inappropriately dressed or who reports for the ride-along in a condition that would compromise the safety or best interest of the department, the assigned shift, or the participant.

1. Shoes: Closed toe with a good no-slip sole.
2. Pants: Long pants which sit at waist. Undergarments should not be visible when in normal standing position. (No Jeans)
3. Shirt: Solid color dress or polo-style (No t-shirts) Small designer logo permitted.
4. Participants from school or hospital programs may wear approved class uniforms.
5. Minimal jewelry. No nose, eyebrow, or facial piercings allowed
6. Hair: Long hair shall be pulled back and tied so as not to interfere with activities.

E. Participant Duties

All ride-along participants will be required to perform the following work assignments.

1. Assist with carrying equipment to and from incidents
2. Assist with minor cleaning and/or restocking of apparatus after incidents.
3. Assist crew members as needed under direction of the officer assigned to.

**V. FORMS:**

A. Ride-Along Application

B. Ride-Along Program Release/Indemnity and Privacy Agreement