



PAWNEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
SHERIFF DARRIN VARNELL

Policy # Ride-Along Policy	Related Policies:
<i>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 The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Oklahoma Statutes:	
CALEA Standard:	

- I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to set forth The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office's mandates with respect to citizen ride-along.
- II. **Policy:** In an effort to enhance the mutual respect of deputies and the community we serve; The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office hereby establishes a ride-along program. This program will provide its participants with a greater understanding of law enforcement in Pawnee County. At the same time, through interaction between our deputies and members of the community, lines of open communication will be established.
- III. **Procedures:**
 - A. **Who can participate in the ride-along program:**
 - a. All participants must be at least 18 years of age and must have signed The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office waiver form.
 - b. Community members who are interested in broadening their knowledge of the law enforcement function within Pawnee County. This would include members of civic organizations, college students who are interested in the law enforcement field, (citizens' police academy participants, if implemented), and any other person authorized by the Sheriff. (Or other designated person)
 - c. 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 express written authorization from the office of the Sheriff before recording, by any means (audio, video, film, and photo), any portion of the ride-along.

IV. Application Process:

- a. Applications for ride-along shall be available at The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office. Personnel assigned to the headquarters should inform anyone who receives a ride-along application that they should return the application to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office once it is completed. Applicants must provide a photo-identification for verification when they return their completed application.
- b. Completed applications shall be forwarded to Office of the Sheriff for review.
- c. Application Review will include a record check and NCIC inquiry. An applicant who has a felony record or a misdemeanor record that involves moral turpitude or dishonesty may be excluded from participation in this program.
- d. Once approved, the applicant shall be notified (phone or mail option) and assigned a date for the ride-along.
- e. Participants shall only be allowed to participate in this program once every 12 months unless given written authorization from the Sheriff.
- f. Ride-along guests will not be allowed to ride during the scheduled tour of duty of an officer who is, in some way, related to the guest.

B. Reporting for Ride-along:

- a. The ride-along program shall be scheduled between the hours of 0800-2300 hours, unless otherwise approved by the Sheriff or their designee.
- b. Participants should report to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office 15 minutes prior to their scheduled participation.
- c. The sergeant or other 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 sergeant or other 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.
- d. The sergeant or other 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.
- e. 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.

C. 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 agency equipment unless directed to do so by the officer in an extreme emergency
- c. Participants must remain in the 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 law enforcement 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 deputies present.

- e. Participants shall not bring cameras or any recording devices without the express written permission of the office of the Sheriff.
 - f. Participants shall not enter any person's home while participating in the ride-along unless the host officer has asked and been granted express permission from the homeowner/occupant to allow the ride-along participant entry.
 - g. Host deputies must never allow a participant to enter the home of any person unless the officer has first obtained the consent of the homeowner/occupant. In obtaining consent, the officer must specifically notify the homeowner/occupant that the participant is a "ride-along participant" and there is "no legal obligation" to allow the participant inside the dwelling.
 - h. Participants shall follow the instructions of the host-officer at all times during the ride-along.
 - i. 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.
 - j. Participants should be dressed in comfortable, casual, but conservative clothing during the ride-along. (Pants and shirt/jacket for men, Pants and blouse/jacket for women) Participants who are inappropriately dressed, as determined by the supervising officer, shall not be allowed to participate in the program on the assigned date.
- D. Duties of Host Officer:** Deputies have a primary obligation to the welfare and safety of the ride along participant. Deputies shall not respond to emergency calls until initial responding deputies have determined the scene to be safe. In cases where a response is necessary, the officer should take steps to drop the rider off at a safe location (i.e. store, gas station etc.) which is open before proceeding to the call.
- a. Host deputies may allow the participant to leave the vehicle in order to better observe the activity; however, where a participant has been allowed to leave the vehicle, host deputies shall maintain close supervision of the participant and not allow the participant to involve him or herself in the activity.