



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE**

RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

DIRECTIVE NO:

FC 1132

EFFECTIVE DATE:

January 07, 2026

REPLACES:

FC 1132 dated February 20, 2001

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:

CALEA Standards: **41.2.1**

PROPONENT UNIT:

Patrol Services Bureau

AUTHORITY:

Marc R. Yamada, Chief of Police

If a provision of a regulation, departmental directive, rule, or procedure conflicts with a provision of the contract, the contract prevails except where the contract provision conflicts with State law or the Police Collective Bargaining Law. (FOP Contract, Article 61).

I. ELIGIBILITY

A. The following persons are eligible to participate in the Police Ride-Along Program:

1. County residents **18** years of age and older in the district in which they reside. **The participant completes an Application Waiver, giving** written consent, prior to participating in the Ride-Along Program. An exception will be given to those people participating in the Leadership Montgomery Program, **the Hispanic Community Academy**, and the Citizen Academy.
2. Visiting law enforcement personnel, department employees, and MCP Explorers.
3. A relative of an active or retired department employee.
4. Professionals and students in the fields of Criminal Justice and the Social Sciences.
5. Members of the news media and officials of the county government.
6. County government employees in the district in which they are employed.

7. **Permitting those in the process for MCPD or considering MCPD for employment.**
- B. Participation in this program is restricted to once every six- months unless otherwise approved by the district/unit commander. Members of the department's **Community Volunteer Section, Police Cadets, and Police Officer Candidates** are exempt from the six-month restriction at the discretion of the district/unit commander.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

A. Ride-Along Application

Persons interested in the program must complete “Ride-Along Application,” in order to obtain the required approval to participate in the program. The **application** will be forwarded to the **District Community Operations Supervisor**. **The MCPD Ride Along Application can be located on the Montgomery County Police/pol/index website; search for the “How do I?” box, select “Ride Along Program” and complete the instructions for the form. (A thirty-six-hour window is needed to review, process, and assign applicants to the program.)**

B. Approval

1. Criminal history and wanted checks will be conducted on adults and juveniles (for juveniles, contact **Special Victims Investigations Division** for criminal history and Warrant Control Section for wanted checks), prior to the ride-along. **Police Explorer** applicants are excluded, as this process will have been completed prior to **their participation in the ride along program**. Whenever it is determined that a ride-along applicant has a criminal history, the application will be forwarded to the district/unit commander for review. The district/unit commander will have the final authority to approve/deny **any** application. If approved, the host officer will be advised of the nature of the criminal history prior to the start of the ride-along.
 2. Ride-along applications will not be approved unless the applicant presents valid identification. This identification will also be required prior to commencing the ride-along.
- C. The ride-along officer should be notified by the officer’s supervisor prior to the ride-along in order to afford the officer the opportunity to prepare for the assignment. The ride-along officer will receive, via the **District Community Operations Supervisor**, a **copy of the ride along application and waiver**, completely filled out.
- D. A visitor’s badge **should** be issued to the participant and worn on the participant's outermost garment whenever the participant is inside of a police facility. (Refer to FC **320**, “Department Security and Police Credentials.”)
- E. Except as permitted by a collective bargaining agreement, any person, not a sworn Montgomery County police officer, is prohibited from attending any department roll call.

Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis with authorization from the district/unit commander.

III. BRIEFING OF THE RIDE-ALONG PARTICIPANT

- A. Prior to the ride-along commencing, the host officer will review the guidelines for ride-along participation with special emphasis on:
 - 1. Safety equipment and procedures attendant to the police vehicle.
 - 2. **When the police unit is required to respond to a serious incidents which might present danger to the guest rider and *there is a necessity to drop off the ride-along participant*, the procedure is to contact ECC in the event the officer is unable to return for the ride-along because of involvement at the incidents scene. **The police unit should explain the reason for the guest rider drop-off, conveying the officer safety concerns. Officers should drop off the ride-along participant in a safe location, (i.e. not the side of the road.)****
 - 3. Prior to entering a private residence, officers will introduce the ride-along participant to the property owner or leaseholder. If the property owner or leaseholder does not permit the ride-along participant entry, the ride-along will wait for the host officer off the property.
 - 4. The proper use of the police radio in the event the ride-along guest must use it.
 - 5. Holding all questions and comments concerning the manner in which a call is handled until completion of the immediate assignment so as not to compromise the officer.
 - 6. **Ride-alongs are not permitted to use any electronic recording devices or disclose information about police incidents on social media, consistent with the required signed waiver.**
- B. If desired, the officer will take the participant on a tour of the **district** police facility.
- C. Procedures
 - 1. After approval, the district/unit commander will notify the shift sergeant who will assign the ride-along.
 - 2. Officers will brief the participant in accordance with section III.A.
 - 3. Law enforcement officers outside the state of Maryland and civilians who possess handgun permits will not be permitted to wear, carry, or transport a firearm while on the ride-along.
 - 4. At the conclusion of the ride, a debriefing session will be held by the participating officer with the guest to ensure that any questions regarding police work raised during the ride along have been answered.

5. At the completion of the ride-along, a copy of the application and **waiver**, completely filled out, will be filed at the unit level. The **application and waiver** will be retained at the unit level for a minimum of one year after the ride-along, and purged from the unit files at the end of the calendar year following the year that the ride-a-long occurred (e.g., ride-along takes place 06-30-**24**, the file **should** be purged 12-31-**25**).
6. The Chief, **Patrol** Services Bureau, will ensure compliance with the procedures outlined in this directive.
7. The Supreme Court's decision in *Wilson v. Layne* (1999), states: "it is a violation of the Fourth Amendment for police to bring members of the media or other third person into a home during the execution of a warrant when the presence of the third parties in the home was not in aid of the execution of the warrant." If officers feel the media or a third party would be necessary in the execution of a search warrant, they will first obtain permission from the Chief of Police or designee.

V. **RIDE-ALONG TIME PERIODS**

A. Hours

Ride-along operations will take place on any day of the week between 0600-1200 and **1400-2000** hours. Changes to these **ride-along operation** hours may be **no more than six hours** made at the district/unit commander's/**director's** discretion.

B. Scheduling Authority

District/unit commanders will have scheduling authority regarding ride-along participants within their units. Additionally, the district/unit commander may alter the hours of the ride-along or determine that during periods of personnel shortages, the Ride-Along Program may be temporarily suspended.