



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures – 1.08 Ride-Along



RIDE-ALONG

Effective: August 25, 2023
Scheduled Review: August 25, 2026
Approved: Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. PURPOSE

In order to enhance knowledge and understanding of the fire service in general, this program facilitates opportunities for citizens to ride as observers in fire apparatus. Any modifications or exemptions to this program must be pre-approved by an assistant chief or the fire chief.

II. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants will have a criminal background check completed prior to participating. The following acts of conduct may disqualify someone from being approved to participate:

- A. Someone, who is the subject of an active criminal investigation or prosecution, or convicted of a felony, shall not be permitted to participate in the program.
- B. The fire chief will evaluate a someone for participation in the program who has a prior arrest history for a misdemeanor.

The fire department retains the right to deny participation to anyone for the reasons specified herein and to disclose only such information as may be required by law.

III. PROCEDURE

Application and program procedures are as follows:

- A. Someone who wishes to participate in the program must read this policy, complete and submit the Ride-Along Request and Waiver of Liability form, along with a copy of the applicant's driver's license. If an applicant is under the age of 18, a parent/guardian must also sign the waiver. The minimum age to participate in the ride-along program is sixteen (16) years of age.
- B. The office manager will run a background check through the Michigan State Police Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT). Upon receipt of the results from the background check, the office manager will forward the application to an assistant chief or fire chief for review and approval.
- C. Upon assistant chief or fire chief approval, the office manager will notify the applicant if he/she is approved or unapproved to be a participant in the program. If approved, the applicant will schedule a ride-along with the office manager. The ride-along will be scheduled on the "AAFD Calendar" in Microsoft Outlook. The assistant chief(s), fire chief, scheduled shift battalion chief and captain shall be emailed notification of the ride-along. The ride along form is valid for one year from assistant chief or fire chief approval.
- D. Only one participant will be permitted at a time. A participant may ride-along a maximum of once every six (6) months.



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Graduates from the Ann Arbor Citizens Public Safety Academy may ride-along once every four weeks, provided they make arrangements in advance. Ride-alongs will be scheduled only at Station 1 between the hours of 0700 and 1700, Monday - Saturday, excluding holidays. If unable to participate on these days due to work commitment, exceptions will be reviewed. Days, times, and frequencies may be adjusted with prior approval from the fire chief.

- E. The on-duty battalion chief may, at his/her discretion, suspend a scheduled ride-along due to operational circumstances, e.g., civil unrest, storms, disasters.

IV. RIDE-ALONG PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Anyone participating in the ride-along program will adhere to these parameters.

- A. The participant will cancel and / or reschedule the ride-along request if they are feeling sick on the date schedule. If the participant presents any signs or symptoms of illness, the participant will be sent home at the sole discretion of the battalion chief or company officer.
- B. The battalion chief or assigned company officer will make the final decision regarding any questions pertaining to suitability of attire and may rescind permission to ride if the participant's appearance is unacceptable. The participant's appearance must be neat and professional.
 1. Shoes: Closed toe with a good non-slip sole.
 2. Pants: Long pants which sit at waist. Undergarments should not be visible when in a normal standing position (no jeans).
 3. Shirt: Solid color dress or polo-style (no t-shirts).
 4. Uniform: School uniform and scrubs for hospital personnel are permitted.
 5. Jacket: Dark solid color recommended. Reflective safety vest must be worn in the event of any roadway scene. Provided by AAFD.
 6. Jewelry: Minimal.
 7. Hair: Long hair shall be pulled back.
 8. Tattoos: Explicit/offensive must be covered.
 9. Ride-along participants shall not dress in a manner that may cause them to be confused with AAFD personnel and shall not wear AAFD apparel.
 10. Unless being sponsored by their employer and with approval from the fire chief, personnel from other fire departments or other agencies shall not wear their agency uniform.
- C. An identification badge shall be worn at all times to identify the person as a ride-along. The badge shall be turned in to the assigned company officer and returned to the office manager at the conclusion of the ride-along.
- D. Ride-along participants are permitted in the day room, kitchen, apparatus bay, and rest rooms only. Offices are off limits unless accompanied by an officer. Dormitories and workout rooms are strictly off limits.
- E. Ride-along participants scheduled during lunch should bring a lunch in for that day or check with the on-duty shift about purchasing lunch, as it is not provided.



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- F. Ride-Along participants are expected to stay the whole time they are scheduled unless there is an emergency or the participant displays or experiences any signs or symptoms of illness, at which time the assigned company officer and the battalion chief should be notified.
- G. Ride-along personnel will follow direction from officers at all times and are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner.
- H. Ride-along participants shall not capture and/or distribute any information, e.g., social media, pictures, audio recordings, without written authorization of the fire chief.
- I. No participant shall be allowed to carry any weapons during the ride-along, regardless of any weapons permits or licenses they may possess.

V. DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

Battalion Chief

- A. Check driver's license to properly identify participant as the one that is scheduled and provide participant a ride-along badge and reflective vest. The badge shall be worn at all times, and the reflective vest shall be worn during all responses. The ride-along badge shall be collected at the end of the ride-along and returned to the office manager.
- B. Assign participant to a unit and include the ride-along participant's name and officer to whom he/she is assigned on the duty roster.

Assigned Company Officer

- A. Advise the participant that the occupant restraint system (seatbelts) must be used at all times while the vehicle is moving.
- C. Advise the participant of what will be expected at the scene of an emergency, and that they will not be allowed to become directly involved at the emergency scene. Reasonable care will be taken to prevent the participant from becoming physically involved in or assisting in the following types of incidents:
 - i. Crime scenes
 - ii. Violent patients
 - iii. Patients with known infectious diseases
 - iv. Fire ground operations
 - v. Situations involving or likely to involve the display or use of firearms
 - vi. Other activities or situation that are likely to increase the participant's risk exposure
- D. Monitor the ride-along participant and ensure that the ride-along requirements are adhered to.
- E. No confidential information will be discussed in the presence of a ride-along participant.



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- F. Report any problems or concerns to the battalion chief.
- G. The ride-along is not to participate in any emergency operations or to assist with any operations of fire apparatus, e.g., operating pump, patient care; wearing of personal protective clothing, and/or equipment.
- H. Attempts will be made to ensure the safety of the ride-along during emergency operations:
 - i. Maintain a safe distance from the emergency scene such that the ride-along's safety is not compromised.
 - ii. On a fire scene, the participant should remain with the apparatus unless otherwise instructed.
 - iii. On a medical call, the participant should remain at the distance instructed until such time an assessment of the situation is completed and the participant is redirected.
- I. Ride-along participant may do the following activities:
 - i. Assist in washing units.
 - ii. Assist in station cleanup within designated areas.
 - iii. Other duties at the discretion of the assigned company officer or battalion chief.
 - iv. Any lifting will be limited to under 20 pounds.
- J. Ride-Along participants shall not be given a door or any security code for any reason.