

Ride-Along Program

328.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the requirements, approval process and hours of operation for the citizen Ride-Along Program.

328.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Napoleon Fire And Rescue to provide opportunities for approved citizens, community leaders and business owners to observe and experience department operations.

328.3 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be reviewed and scheduled by the Fire Operations Captain or the authorized designee.

Requests shall be submitted on the official department release form.

The Fire Operations Captain or the authorized designee will schedule a ride-along date, based on availability, generally at least one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy will be forwarded to the respective Captain as soon as possible for company-level scheduling.

If the ride-along is denied, a representative of the Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along will be allowed in the fire apparatus at a given time.

328.3.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Prior to participating in a ride-along, every participant who may come into contact with private, health-related information will be required to complete Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) orientation and sign a non-disclosure agreement.

Participants must be at least 18 years old. Prior to participating in a ride-along, every person must acknowledge the risks and sign a written waiver of claims and release of liability.

The participant must be in good health and must not be suffering from any illness or injury, including cold, flu or respiratory infection on the day of the ride-along. Photographs, video- and audio-recording during a ride-along observation are strictly prohibited. Observers may not enter the private areas of fire department unescorted or ride-along after 8:00 p.m.

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception may be made for the following: students, chaplains, Reserves, applicants and others with approval of the Fire Operations Captain.

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328.3.2 ELIGIBILITY

The Napoleon Fire And Rescue ride-along program is offered to residents, students and those employed within the City. Every attempt will be made to accommodate interested persons; however, any applicant may be disqualified without cause.

The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant and are not limited to:

- Being under 18 years of age.
- Prior criminal history.
- Pending criminal action.
- Pending lawsuit against the Department.
- Denial by any supervisor.
- Poor health or other condition that cannot be reasonably accommodated.

328.3.3 AVAILABILITY

The ride-along program is available on most days of the week, with certain exceptions. The ride-along times are established by the Fire Operations Captain. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Fire Chief, Fire Marshal or the Fire Operations Captain.

328.3.4 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride along is required to be suitably dressed in a collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, t-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the fire apparatus. Jewelry and tattoos should comply with the Personal Appearance Standards Policy. The Fire Operations Captain or company officer may refuse a ride-along to anyone not properly dressed.

328.4 FIREFIGHTER RIDE-ALONGS

Off-duty members of this department or any other fire service agency will not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty firefighters without the express consent of the Fire Operations Captain or the authorized designee. In the event that such a ride-along is permitted, the off-duty member shall not be considered on-duty and shall not represent him/herself as a firefighter or participate in any fire service activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

328.5 COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Company officers shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Company officers should use discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation and, if feasible, require the participant to remain in the fire apparatus.

328.6 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG

The company officers shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her in the conditions that necessarily limit their participation. These instructions should include:

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- (a) The ride-along will follow the lawful directions of any department member.
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, discussions with victims or handling any fire equipment.
- (c) Either the ride-along or the company officers may terminate the ride at any time. Reasonable effort will be made to return the observer to his/her home or to the fire station if the ride is terminated.
- (d) Company officers will not allow ride-alongs to be present in any residence or situation that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other citizen.
- (e) Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride-along be permitted to enter a private residence with the fire crew without the express consent of the resident or other authorized person.