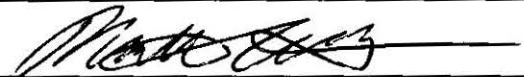


**Erath County Sheriff's Office
Law Enforcement
Policies and Procedures**

Subject: Ride Along Policy	Policy Number: 4.19
Issue Date: 1/4/2019	Revision Date: 01/03/2019
Approval Authority Title and Signature: Matt Coates SHERIFF 	

POLICY:

Civilian passengers are permitted in police vehicles only when specifically authorized for ride-along or when transported under official police business. Civilian observers may occasionally accompany law enforcement officers while on patrol in order to observe and learn about law enforcement procedures and practices. Civilian observers must be authorized by the Sheriff or designee. Employees on probation are not eligible to have civilian riders. Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, assume responsibility, and may be found to have personal liability for their actions.

DEFINITION:

- **Public Information** - Information that may be of interest to the general public regarding policy, procedures or events involving the agency or other newsworthy information that is not legally protected, does not unduly interfere with the mission of the agency, infringe upon the rights of a defendant or compromise the legitimate safety and privacy interests of officers, victims, witnesses or others.

PROCEDURES:

Authorization Process- Ride Along:

Any person or group wishing to participate in this program is referred to the Sheriff or designee for processing a "Ride Along Program Release of Liability Form." This form must be filled out in its entirety and approved by a supervisor every time a person requests to ride prior to the ride. The applicants are notified as to whether or not they are qualified to participate. In most situations, law-abiding citizens wishing to participate and who have completed all necessary requirements are granted that opportunity. Convicted felons or suspects in criminal activity are not allowed to participate. Certified Law Enforcement Officers are exempt from this section.

Civilian Rules- Ride Along:

If the civilian is approved to ride along with a sworn law enforcement officer, they are responsible for following the rules and regulations of the program to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. The civilian rider will:

1. Only ride with officers approved by the supervisor;
2. Not be allowed to exit the police vehicle, at any time, to assist the officer on a call, except in officer down situations;
3. Never carry a firearm or any other weapon while on a ride along; &
4. Stay in sally port or lobby when at the jail.
5. Subject may only ride 3 times a month.
6. Must be approved by the Sheriff, Chief, or Captain.

Officer Rules – Ride Along:

The officer is to:

1. Complete a "Ride Along Program Release of Liability Form" for every rider before every ride and turn in the completed form to their supervisor prior to the ride.
2. Explain the hazards associated with riding in a police vehicle;
3. Explain radio safety equipment including emergency radio procedures;
4. Ensure that the passenger wears a seat belt;
5. Ensure that the passenger exits the vehicle in a relatively safe location prior to participating in high-risk activities such as high-speed pursuit or response to "shots fired" calls; and notify communications of the location the ride along was left so that some arrangements can be made to assist with alternative transportation
6. Explain that the passenger may be required to testify as a witness to criminal activity observed during the ride-along.
7. If the Deputy has less than 1 year experience the rider may only ride until Midnight.

Media Ride Along:

Media representatives must complete a "Ride Along Program Release of Liability Form". The Chief Deputy reviews the document and will approve or disapprove the applicant. If approved, individuals are allowed to ride along with a police officer approved by the shift supervisor.

Representatives of the media are prohibited from:

1. Entering private residences or any other location where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. (Supreme Court case of Wilson v. Layne);
2. Assisting the officer on call except in officer down situations;
3. Carrying a firearm or any other weapon while on the ride along; &
4. Releasing any information, photographs, or videotape to the general public

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unless regarded as *public information*, (as defined in this policy), by the agency.

5. *Showing the faces of juveniles unless they have been involved in a serious felony crime or otherwise authorized by a higher command.*

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