



HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GENERAL ORDER OPS-13
RIDE ALONG PROGRAM
EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2008

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. PROGRAM APPLICATIONS & CRITERIA
- III. DEPUTY & HCSO RESPONSIBILITIES
- IV. PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS
- V. CANCELLATION

I. POLICY

The Howard County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) has established the Ride Along Program to allow citizens of the community and job applicants the opportunity to observe the HCSO and to gain a better understanding of the role of the Sheriff in the community.

II. PROGRAM APPLICATIONS & CRITERIA

- A. The Court Security Division Commander will coordinate all activities associated with the Ride Along Program. The Program shall only extend to the Court Security Division.
- B. Persons requesting participation in the Ride Along Program will be given:
 - 1. Ride Along Program Application (Appendix A)
 - 2. Waiver Form (Appendix B)
 - 3. A copy of the guidelines for Ride Along Participants (Appendix C)
- C. Persons requesting participation in the program must meet the following criteria:
 - 1. Be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
 - 2. Be free of significant or recent criminal arrest.
 - 3. Be a Howard County resident.
- D. A criminal records check will be completed on the applicant by the Warrant/Fugitive Section. Should an applicant be rejected on the basis of a records check, or for any other reason, the Court Security Division Commander shall clearly document the reason(s) for the rejection. This document will be forwarded to the Sheriff. The Court Security Division Commander will notify the applicant of the rejection.
- E. The Court Security Division Commander may request an interview with the applicant before approving the Ride Along Program application.
- F. If a request is approved, the Court Security Division Commander will:
 - 1. Maintain a central file of all applications and signed waivers for a period of three (3) years.
 - 2. Notify, in writing, the participant and the appropriate shift supervisor who is responsible for the shift on which the participant will be riding along.
- G. There will be only one (1) ride along per vehicle.

- H. Individuals shall not be permitted to habitually or continuously ride. Any one individual may only ride once in a six (6) month period. Exceptions for school projects, etc. may be granted by the Court Security Division Commander.
- I. Any individual riding for a second or subsequent time should not be assigned to accompany the same Deputy.

III. DEPUTY & HCSO RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Deputies involved in the Ride Along Program shall have completed their probationary period with the HCSO.
- B. The Deputy is responsible for the safety of the Ride Along Program participant and shall not intentionally involve the participant in a dangerous situation. The participant will not be taken into the lock-up area except as part of a tour of the HCSO facilities when no detainees are present.
- C. The participant shall not accompany the Deputy into a private residence. The rider may accompany the Deputy into businesses and other public facilities, provided the call does not present a danger to the participant.
- D. In the event the Deputy receives an emergency assignment, he may respond with or without the participant. If the call is inherently dangerous, the Deputy shall have the participant exit the vehicle at a safe location prior to responding to the scene. The participant shall be picked up as soon as possible by either another deputy or the original Deputy when he clears the call.
- E. The Court Security Division Commander shall have the authority to revoke an authorization if the participant's conduct or attire is not in the best interest of the HCSO.
- F. In the event authorization is revoked, the Court Security Division Commander shall document the circumstances and forward the report to the Sheriff.

IV. PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

- A. Ride Along Program participants must follow the guidelines given to them at the time of application.
- B. Participants should report to the Duty Officer at the beginning of the shift, or at a time acceptable to the Deputy.
- C. Participants' attire shall conform with the standards set forth in the Guidelines for Ride Along Participants and should in no way reflect negatively on the HCSO.

V. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces Standard Operating Procedure OPS-16, Ride Along Program, dated February 1, 2005.

Authority:

James F. Fitzgerald
Sheriff



**HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
RIDE ALONG PROGRAM APPLICATION**

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address: _____
(Number) (Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Race: _____ Sex: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

School Attended or Employer: _____

Are you a law enforcement officer for another agency? YES NO

Home Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____

Are you currently under a Doctor's care? YES NO
Are you currently taking any medication? YES NO

Have you completed and do you understand the Waiver form (Return Waiver with completed application)?

YES NO

State your reasons for wanting to ride in a Sheriff's vehicle: _____

I understand that a criminal record check will be completed in compliance with the guidelines of this program. The race, sex, and date of birth information recorded on this form are required to check your criminal record.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date & Time requested to participate: _____

I HAVE READ & UNDERSTAND THE GUIDELINES FOR RIDE ALONG PARTICIPANTS

Participant's Signature: _____



**HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
RIDE ALONG WAIVER FORM**

In consideration of the Howard County Sheriff's Office granting permission to enter in or upon any premises or vehicles which are under its actual or constructive control, I hereby waive all claims to damage or loss to my person or property which may be caused by any act, or failure to act, of the Howard County Sheriff's Office, its deputies, agents, or employees. I assume the risk of all dangerous conditions in, upon, or about the premises or vehicles and waive any and all specific notice of the existence of such conditions.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20__ at _____,
Maryland.

Signature

Signature of Parent or Guardian if
Participant is under 18 yrs of age

Notary Public Signature & Seal

Approval is granted to ride on _____, 20__, on _____ shift.

Approval granted by: _____



HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE GUIDELINES FOR RIDE ALONG PARTICIPANTS

The Howard County Sheriff's Office is please to extend the opportunity to citizens to participate in its Ride Along Program.

In order to facilitate this program, the following guidelines have been established. Please review them carefully prior to your ride along.

- Sheriff's Deputies work one of two shifts: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm or 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm. As a participant, you may request the day and shift when you wish to ride along. You are requested to ride for at least four (4) hours and are invited to ride for the entire tour of duty. Report to the Duty Office at the Operations Division on the date and time you selected. You are responsible for your own transportation to and from the Sheriff's Office.
- The waiver form and attached application must be completed and returned to the Howard County Sheriff's Office at least **fourteen (14) days** prior to the requested ride along date. The application must be filled out in its entirety and the **waiver must be notarized**. It will require fourteen (14) days to process your application.
- As a participant, you must be appropriately attired and in no way reflect negatively on the Howard County Sheriff's Office. The following are examples of clothing that are **NOT** acceptable:
 - T-shirts, halter tops, sweatshirts
 - Dungarees, shorts
 - Tennis shoes, sandals

If you are not appropriately attired, the Operations Division Commander may cancel your permission to ride.

- In order to participate, you must be free of a serious criminal record. The Sheriff's Office will check your criminal record.
- In order to comply with the policies of the Sheriff's Office, you must utilize safety belts while in the HCSO vehicle. Certain emergency calls are considered inherently dangerous and the Deputy may respond to the call after dropping you off at a safe place. Wait for another deputy to pick you up at that location.

- **DO NOT** interfere in any way with the Deputy's handling of a situation. You may be asked questions concerning a specific assignment after it has been completed and you have left the scene. Tape recorders are **NOT** permitted in HCSO vehicles. Cameras may **ONLY** be used at the discretion of the participating Deputy.

We hope that you will enjoy your participation in the Ride Along Program and find the experience educational. You may be requested to complete a short evaluation of the program after you have participated.

Upon approval of your application, you will receive permission either by mail or in person.

KEEP THESE GUIDELINES

James F. Fitzgerald,
Sheriff