

Citizen Ride-Along Program

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Purpose:

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for citizens to experience the functions of the fire department first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, and hours of operation for the Ride-Along Program

Policy:

The Red Bluff Fire Department 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 15 years of age
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against the department
- Denial by any supervisor

Availability:

The Ride-Along program is available **Monday through Friday, 08:00 – 17:00**. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Fire Chief, Shift Captain, and Duty Chief.

Procedure to Request a Ride-Along:

Generally, ride-along **requests will be scheduled with the Shift Captain a minimum of one (1) week prior to the requested date** with approval of the Duty Chief. The participant will complete a ride-along waiver form. Information requested will include a valid ID or California driver's license, address, and telephone number. If the participant is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must be present to complete the waiver form.

Program Requirements:

Once approved, **participants will be allowed to ride no more than one time per month**. An exception would apply to the following: Chaplains and City personnel with approval of the Shift

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Captain and Duty Chief. No more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period.

Suitable Attire:

Any person approved to ride along is required to be suitably dressed in shirt, durable long pants, and boots. Sandals, tank tops, shorts, and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the fire vehicle. The Shift Captain or Duty Chief may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

Ride-Along Criminal History Check:

All ride-along applicants are subject to a criminal history check. The criminal history check may include a local records check and a Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System check through CLETS prior to their approval as a ride-along with fire department personnel. (CLETS Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.D.3)

Firefighter's Responsibility:

The Firefighter shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Firefighters should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, and if feasible, have the participant remain in the vehicle.

Control of Ride-Along:

The assigned employee 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:

- The ride-along will follow the directions of the Firefighter
- The ride-along will not become involved in any patient care, investigation, handling of evidence, or discussions with victims or suspects.
- The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time and the Firefighter may return the observer to their home or to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of the Firefighter's duties.
- Firefighters will not allow any civilian ride-along to be present in any situation that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a patient or any other citizen.

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- Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride-along be permitted to enter a private residence during an incident that poses a safety threat to responding crews or a potential crime scene.
- A civilian ride-along will not handle firefighting tools and/or equipment that could potentially cause harm.
- A civilian ride-along must maintain confidentiality in all areas of medical care or other sensitive information. This would include but not be limited to: posting information and/or photos on Facebook, MySpace, or any other social media, or supplying information to friends and/or family.