



VIA TRANSIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures



Section 613 Ride Along Program

Office with Primary Responsibility:	COP	Effective Date: Prior Revision Date:	March 7, 2018 New
Office(s) with Secondary Responsibilities:		Number of Pages:	3
Forms Referenced in Procedure:	VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver	Related Procedures:	ALL

.01 INTRODUCTION

This procedure establishes guidelines for individuals not currently assigned to the VIA Transit Police Department to obtain authorization to ride as observers with VIA Transit Police Department in police vehicles. This procedure outlines the responsibilities for civilians and officers that are involved in the Ride Along Program.

.02 RIDE ALONG PROGRAM

- A. The Ride Along Program is a program which allows and encourages non-sworn individuals and sworn individuals of other departments to ride as observers with VIA Transit Police Officers to get a better understanding of police work, to create a spirit of involvement in the area of community policing and to use as a recruiting tool.
- B. The Ride Along Program is administered and coordinated by the Chief of Transit Police. Shift supervisors on the shift that the individual has requested to ride will assist with coordinating and implementing the Ride Along Program.
- C. Any non-sworn individual who has received written authorization on VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver, may participate in the Ride Along Program. The following criteria will assist in determining whether to allow an individual to ride and may include:
 1. Sworn police officers from other jurisdictions, military personnel working in law enforcement related areas or individuals who have been referred and /or approved by the Chief of Transit Police.
 2. Professors or students enrolled in a criminal justice program from an institute of higher education, with proof of enrollment in the program;
 3. VIA Transit Police Dispatchers and other VIA Employees may be authorized by the Chief of Transit Police to participate in the Ride Along Program.

.03 AUTHORIZATION PROCESS

- A. Approval for any individual to ride as an observer in a police vehicle must be obtained in advance of each ride by contacting, in person, one of the following:
 1. The Chief of Transit Police or designee;
 2. The Shift Supervisor in charge of the individual's requested shift.
- B. Before authorization is granted for an individual to ride as an observer, the individual must read, agree and pass the requirements set forth in Section .04 of this procedure.
- C. If a civilian agrees to the requirements in Section .04 of this procedure, the civilian will:
 1. Complete VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Release and be issued a copy;
 2. Be instructed on the requirements of the Ride Along Program.



VIA TRANSIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures



Section 613 Ride Along Program

- D. Prior to approving any individual to ride as an observer in a police vehicle, the approving authority shall:
1. Complete a local criminal history and warrant check and approve or deny the ride.
 2. Deliver a copy of VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver and a copy of the individual's driver's license or identification card to the VTPD officer who will be assigned the rider.
 3. Individuals permitted to ride should not be in a physical or mental condition that would hinder the officer from performing their duties or jeopardize the safety of the rider and/or the officer.

.04 REQUIREMENTS FOR RIDE ALONG OBSERVERS

- A. Release of Liability (VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver and Criminal History / Warrant Check)
1. A civilian observer must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older and have a valid driver's license or identification.
 2. Prior to a civilian riding with an officer, the individual must read, understand, and complete VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver.
 3. By completing VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver, the civilian authorizes and consents to a criminal history / warrant check.
- B. Reporting for the Ride Along
1. The individual observer reports to the designated shift supervisor fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the ride.
 2. The civilian observer must present their driver's license or identification to the shift supervisor to verify the information on VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver.
 3. The supervisor introduces the individual observer to the officer with whom they will ride and informs the individual that the officer or the supervisor may terminate the ride at any time.
 5. The civilian observer may terminate the ride at anytime as long as it does not interfere with the officer's immediate responsibilities.
- C. Dress Code
1. The individual observer shall wear comfortable, casual, and conservative clothing (i.e., pants and shirt for men, skirt/pants and blouse for women).
 2. An observer dressed in inappropriate clothing will not be allowed to ride.
- D. Conduct During Ride
1. The observer, for their own safety, will follow the instructions of the officer at all times.
 2. Conversation with the officer is encouraged as long as it does not interfere with the officer's duties.
 3. Firearms or other types of weapons shall not be carried by any civilian observer. This includes observers who have a concealed handgun license.
 4. The observer may carry a flashlight, note pad and other equipment that is approved by the officer.



VIA TRANSIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures



Section 613 Ride Along Program

5. The use of audio and video recording devices (including camera phones) during the duration of the ride along is prohibited, unless prior authorization is received from the Chief of Transit Police.

E. Conclusion of the Ride Along

1. At the conclusion of the ride along the individual observer returns their copy of VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver to the assigned officer.
2. The assigned officer returns VTPD Form 400 Ride Along Program Liability Waiver to a supervisor who files the waiver appropriately.

.05 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Instruct the individual observer on any special requirements prior to the start of the ride along, including:
 1. Actions to take during dangerous or emergency situations;
 2. When he/she may get in or out of the police vehicle on routine calls.
- B. Any incident involving the individual observer is documented in a written report by the officer and is routed through the officer's chain of command to The Chief of Transit Police.