

**GILROY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

Division I: Administration	Article 19: Ride-Along Program
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PURPOSE:

In response to the ever-increasing requests from community members to learn more about Gilroy Fire Department work and the responsibilities involved in the fire protection service, as well as the ever-present need of maintaining and improving relations with the community, a Ride-Along Program has been initiated within the City of Gilroy Fire Department ("Department").

It is hoped that through direct involvement with the Ride-Along Program, the participant ("Rider") will gain an insight into issues encountered in fire service operations. It is further hoped that when the Rider returns to the community, he or she will have a better understanding of Gilroy Fire Department services and service delivery and share with others insights and experiences gained from this direct participation.

The following persons are not considered "Riders" and are not covered under this Policy: (1) Department members; (2) Paid Call Firefighter ("PCF") applicants under evaluation; and (3) persons riding in command vehicles with a chief officer.

POLICY:

The Ride-Along Program is intended for employees of the City of Gilroy seeking an understanding of Fire Department operations, students of fire academies or those in EMT/Paramedic programs, interested members of the Gilroy community and other observers with related purposes.

PROCEDURE:

1. DRESS AND APPEARANCE

- a. Riders shall be neat and clean in appearance. Their personal hygiene and grooming must be acceptable to the shift duty captain and chief. While participating in the Ride-Along Program, the Rider is, in effect, representing the Fire Department.
- b. Riders shall wear suitable attire. Dark pants and light plain shirts are recommended. No writing or artwork is allowed on clothing, except small brand logos are acceptable. Riders must wear flat, closed-toe shoes.

**Bob Jones
OBSERVER
Gilroy Fire Dept.**

Ride-Along Name Badge

- c. Riders shall wear a name badge or observer vest provided by the Department, or other appropriate badge provided by the media, school, or City, etc.
- d. Riders shall wear no jewelry, except a ring and a watch are permitted.

2. RIDE-ALONG HOURS

- a. Riders are generally to be limited to the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless authorized by the Duty Chief for Department-related or educational purposes.

3. INSTRUCTIONS AND RULES

- a. No person shall be permitted to participate in the Ride-Along Program unless he or she first has submitted a signed copy of both of the following Department forms: (1) Request for Ride-Along; and (2) Agreement Assuming Risk of Injury or Damage, Waiver and Release of Claims and Indemnity Agreement. The forms shall have been approved and in the possession of the company officer prior to any participation in the Ride-Along Program. Refusal to complete these forms or false statements of any nature made on these forms will disqualify the applicant from participating in the Ride-Along Program. The completed forms must be submitted by the affected captain to the appropriate Duty Chief at least one week in advance of the date of the requested Ride-Along. The Duty Chief will approve or deny the request and return the forms back to the affected captain.
- b. The rider must be 18 years of age or older.
- c. The Rider may not bring cameras and recording devices unless authorized by the Duty Chief. Any photos taken by a Rider showing emergency activities are the property of the Department until released by the duty chief.
- d. The Rider must not leave the immediate vicinity of the fire vehicle in which they are riding unless the fire captain has given permission to do so.
- e. The Rider must obey the orders and instructions given by the Department personnel to whom he or she is assigned.
- f. When the fire engine is assigned to a dangerous mission, the rider may be dropped off at a safe location. The Rider should remain there until Department or other assigned personnel retrieve the Rider. If a Rider is left in this manner, Department Communications shall be advised and request a Community Service Officer or other appropriate transportation to deliver the Rider to his or her vehicle location.
- g. The Rider will provide his or her own transportation to and from the Fire Department.
- h. Persons with a criminal background may not be allowed to participate in the Ride-Along Program.
- i. Either the Fire Captain or the Rider may terminate the tour at any time.

- j. It shall be understood by the Rider that participation in the Ride-Along Program is a privilege and that the basic premise of the Program is to learn about the functions of the Gilroy Fire Department and Fire and Emergency Medical Service ("EMS") in general.
- k. The Rider agrees not to discuss names or persons involved in Fire/EMS cases or other incidents. Each Rider will be considered a confidant of the Fire Department and it is essential that all matters pertaining to recipients of Fire/EMS or related service by the Gilroy Fire Department and any and all personal information including names, medical history and statements gathered remain confidential in compliance with federal HIPAA regulations.
- l. The Rider must carry a valid California License or Identification.

**GILROY FIRE DEPARTMENT
REQUEST FOR RIDE-ALONG**

Date of Request: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ School _____ Grade: _____

Employer: _____ Occupation: _____

Reason for participating in Ride-Along Program: _____

Person to contact in case of emergency, including address and phone number: _____

PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

1. Have you ever been convicted of theft, assault, battery, sexual offense or any felony? Yes / No
2. If yes, please explain _____

3. Are you presently on parole or probation? Yes / No
4. If yes, please explain _____

**THE ABOVE INFORMATION WILL BE VERIFIED PRIOR TO YOUR PARTICIPATION,
AND KEPT CONFIDENTIAL**

I acknowledge and provide consent to the Gilroy Fire Department to conduct a check through appropriate informational resources to verify the information provided.

I understand that false statements or misrepresentations made by me shall permanently disqualify me from participation in the Ride-Along Program with the Gilroy Fire Department. I agree not to discuss names of persons involved in fire cases and understand that I am considered a confidant of the Gilroy Fire Department. I have read, I understand, and I agree to abide by, the Gilroy Fire Department Ride-Along Program Policy.

Signature: _____

CITY OF GILROY FIRE DEPARTMENT

AGREEMENT ASSUMING RISK OF INJURY OR DAMAGE, WAIVER AND RELEASE OF CLAIMS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, I _____, (being) (not being) over the age of eighteen and not being a member of the Gilroy Fire Department ("Fire Department"), have made a voluntary request to ride in a vehicle assigned to the Fire Department and to accompany a member or members of the Fire Department during the performance of their official duties ("Ride-Along Program"); and

WHEREAS, the Fire Department is willing to allow me to ride in a Fire Department vehicle and to participate in the Ride-Along Program on the terms and conditions stated herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the permission given to me to ride in a Fire Department vehicle and to accompany a member or members of the Fire Department in the performance of their official duties, I do hereby agree as follows:

- 1) I am aware that the work of the Fire Department is inherently dangerous and that I may be subjected to the risk of personal injury or death or property damage by accompanying a member or members of the Fire Department during the performance of their official duties. I freely, voluntarily and with such knowledge assume all risks of personal injury, death and property damage arising from, or in any way connected with, any act or accident by any person including a member or members of the Fire Department while I am participating in the Ride-Along Program. Such act or accident could include, but is not limited to, automobile collision, fire, explosion, gas, electrocution or the escape of radioactive substances, use of weapons, unlawful acts or forcible resistance by suspected law violators, assault, riot, breach of the peace. I agree to release and hold harmless the Fire Department, and the City of Gilroy, its officers, employees, contractors and agents, and any and all of their sureties for all liability for injuries, death and property damage arising from or related to or any way connected with this Agreement or my participation in the Ride-Along Program, including all liability arising from any act, whether or not an act of passive or active negligence, by any person including a member or members of the Fire Department, or arising out of strict liability. I further agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City and City of Gilroy Fire Department from all liability, losses, claims, suits or causes of action arising from any injury, disability, death or property damage to the extent arising or resulting directly or indirectly from any act or omission by me.
- 2) I understand that my participation in the Ride-Along Program is a matter of public record and will not be kept confidential, and that I may be required to testify in a court of law or other proceedings regarding matters occurring during my participation in the Ride-Along Program.
- 3) Unless prior approval in writing by the Fire Chief, cameras, tape recorders, other recording devices are prohibited and that I will not carry or use any such item while participating in the Ride-Along Program.
- 4) I will keep confidential and not disclose the names, addresses or identities of victims, witnesses, or any persons encountered while on the Ride-Along Program except by written permission of the Fire Chief or his or her designee.

I hereby represent that I have carefully read and I understand the contents of this agreement and I agree to the above terms of my own free will.

Date

Signature

Witness

Signature of parent or guardian (if applicant is a minor)