
Ride-Along Program

330.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

330.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Steamboat Springs Fire Department to provide an opportunity for citizens to experience fire and EMS service functions when specific criteria are met.

330.3 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Ride-along requests will be reviewed and approved by a department Chief Officer.

Upon approval of a ride-along request the scheduling officer will work with the individual to schedule a date. The ride along will be added to the department calendar and a copy will be forwarded to the respective Captain or supervising officer as soon as possible. If the ride-along is denied, a representative of the Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception may be made for the following: students, chaplains, or individuals seeking employment but only with the approval of a department Chief Officer.

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along will be allowed in the fire apparatus at a given time.

[Ride Along Application](#)

330.3.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Prior to participating in a ride-along, every participant who may come into contact with private health-related information will be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement to keep all confidential information learned during the ride-along confidential. A review of the importance of maintaining confidentiality and professional behavior will be conducted at the beginning of each ride-along by the supervising officer.

Participants must be at least 18 years old, unless participating in a Student Mentorship program, or structured learning program. Prior to participating in a ride-along, every person must acknowledge the risks and sign a written waiver of claims and release of liability. Individuals under the age of 18 must have these documents signed by a legal guardian.

The participant must be in good health and must not be suffering from any illness or injury, including cold, flu or respiratory infection, on the day of the ride-along.

[Ride Along Release Forms](#)

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330.3.2 ELIGIBILITY

Every attempt will be made to accommodate interested persons; however, any applicant may be disqualified without cause.

Factors that may be considered in disqualifying an applicant include but are not limited to:

- Prior criminal history.
- Pending criminal action.
- Pending lawsuit against the Department.
- Denial by any supervisor.
- Poor health or other condition that cannot be reasonably accommodated.

330.3.3 AVAILABILITY

The ride-along program is available on most days of the week, with certain exceptions. Normal ride along times are from 8am-5pm. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by a Department Chief and the supervising officer.

330.3.4 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride-along is required to be suitably dressed in professional attire, a collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, t-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Any department officer may refuse a ride-along to anyone not properly dressed.

330.4 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervising Officers shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Officers should use discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation and, if feasible, require the participant to remain in the fire apparatus.

Supervising officers should review expectations, confidentiality, safety procedures and other relevant information with the ride-along participant prior to the ride-along shift.

330.5 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG

The supervising officer shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her on the conditions that necessarily limit participation. These instructions should include:

- (a) The ride-along will follow the lawful directions of any department member.
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, discussions with victims or handling any fire equipment.
- (c) Either the ride-along participant or the supervising officer may terminate the ride at any time. Reasonable effort will be made to return the observer to his/her home or to the fire station if the ride is terminated.

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- (d) Ride-along participants are not to be present in any residence or situation that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other citizen.

330.6 STUDENT/MENTORSHIP RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

The student/mentorship program allows students under the age of 18, and who are involved in an organized mentorship program or structured learning program related to health or emergency services to ride-along with the Steamboat Springs Fire Department.

Students must present a summary of the program they are participating in and the learning goals to be met during the ride-along experience. The student/mentorship ride-along program will follow all Steamboat Springs Fire Department Ride-Along Policies with the following additional requirements.

- The student and the students legal guardian will sign the departments non-disclosure agreement and waiver of claims and release of liability.
- The student and the students legal guardian will sign the departments student ride-along active participant form.

330.7 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES WITH STUDENTS/MENTORSHIP RIDERS

The officer supervising the ride-along shift shall consider the safety of the student at all times.

Officers should use discretion when encountering all emergency situations and consider the age appropriate exposure of student riders to various emergency situations. Officers should use additional heightened discretion in exposing students riders to situations involving patient care and the officer shall openly communicate with any patient or victim to obtain verbal consent for a student to be present before allowing the student to directly observe patient care and treatment.

The supervising officer should conduct a meeting at the beginning of the student ride-along shift and review expectations, confidentiality, safety procedures and should expressly discuss with the student the need for the student to immediately inform the officer if any situation encountered makes the student uncomfortable in any manner. An additional meeting should be conducted at the end of a student ride-along shift reviewing the days events and any emergency responses giving the student an additional opportunity to discuss any observations or concerns.

At the conclusion of the student ride-along, the supervising officer shall contact the students legal guardian and review the days activities, if the student was exposed to any situations of concern.