

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

GENERAL ORDER 100.42

REVISED MAY 2024

RIDE-ALONGS

1. PURPOSE.

a. The purpose of this General Order (GO) is to establish guidelines regulating the following situations:

(1) When persons other than CHP employees participate in ride-alongs in CHP Class "E" enforcement vehicles or aircraft.

(2) When CHP officers voluntarily, on their own time, participate in ride-alongs with personnel from allied law enforcement agencies.

(3) When nonuniformed employees or CHP affiliates (e.g., Explorers, communications operators, cadets, applicants) participate in ride-alongs in a learning capacity.

b. This GO is not intended to regulate instances when it is necessary for on-duty CHP and allied agency officers to ride together during the course of normal duty, or when off-duty CHP officers ride in a CHP enforcement vehicle or aircraft.

c. This GO does not apply when providing dignitary transportation, or when emergency conditions render the provisions of this GO impractical.

2. GENERAL.

a. A ride-along is defined as an occasion when an individual is allowed to ride as an observing passenger in a CHP Class "E" enforcement vehicle, or aircraft, with a uniformed CHP officer, or when CHP officers voluntarily, on their own time, participate in ride-alongs with personnel from allied law enforcement agencies. Ride-alongs are for observation purposes only, to provide insight into the activities and responsibilities of CHP field operations and allied agencies.

b. A ride-along can be a valuable tool in the recruitment of future members of the Department. All employees are encouraged to actively participate in the recruitment of future members of the Department and utilize a ride-along when appropriate.

c. A ride-along is one method of acquainting CHP employees and affiliates, members of the public, government officials, members of the news media, and peace officers from allied law enforcement agencies with field operations of the Department. Ride-alongs present an opportunity to promote and enhance public trust when individuals have the opportunity to observe and connect with officers. However, many people are not prepared to confront the serious hazards often encountered by the field officer. Therefore, it is in the best interests of the public and the Department that a ride-along not be encouraged for individuals without a specific need to observe departmental field operations.

d. Commands shall inform a ride-along participant that, should they witness any type of incident (e.g., arrest, citation, etc.), they may be subpoenaed to testify in court as a witness.

3. POLICY.

a. All ride-along requests shall be forwarded to and reviewed by the Area commander or their designee.

b. Ride-along requests should be authorized when practical in the following circumstances, but only under the procedures set forth in paragraph 4. of this GO. Requests may come from the following:

(1) Nonuniformed departmental employee.

(2) Persons considering employment with the Department.

(3) Persons currently involved in the cadet selection process.

(4) Cadets with approval of the CHP Academy. (Refer to paragraph 4.e. of this GO.)

c. In addition to the above circumstances, commanders may authorize a ride-along under the following conditions:

(1) Ride-along requests from members of the public shall be forwarded to the Area commander or designee for their consideration. Requests without a specific need to observe departmental field operations shall not be approved.

(2) A ride-along by peace officers from allied law enforcement agencies, judges, district attorneys, elected officials, the news media, and others may be permitted, but only under the procedures set forth in paragraph 4. of this GO.

d. Eligible participants for a ride-along should be 18 years of age or older. The Area commander may allow younger participants who are involved in the Department's Explorer Program, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, Scouts, school research, etc., with signed parental/legal guardian approval on the departmental CHP 428, Release and Waiver of Liability.

e. California Highway Patrol officers participating in a ride-along with an allied agency are subject to the following:

(1) An armed CHP officer shall not participate in a voluntary, off-duty ride-along with an allied law enforcement agency without first receiving the written approval from their respective commander.

(2) Departmental approval is not required in situations where an unarmed CHP officer participates in a ride-along with an allied law enforcement agency while off-duty.

4. PROCEDURES.

a. General.

(1) A ride-along shall not be allowed until approval is obtained from the respective commander or their designee.

(2) Care should be taken to select officers who will ensure the utmost value is received from the ride-along. Based on the operational needs of the command, limitations may be placed on a ride-along in terms of duration, location, allowable response to various types of incidents, etc.

(3) All ride-along participants shall dress conservatively. A ride-along participant in a CHP vehicle is viewed by the public as a representative of the Department. Therefore, the participant's attire, appearance, and personal conduct shall reflect the standards of the Department.

(4) A preliminary record check should be conducted on all prospective ride-along participants using the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS). The preliminary record check is for security purposes and shall not be used in a decision to hire a prospective employee. Preliminary record checks shall not be conducted on current CHP employees. Preliminary record checks containing felony convictions shall result in a denial of participation in a ride-along. Prospective ride-along participants with misdemeanor convictions on their preliminary record checks shall only participate in a ride-along upon approval from the Area commander or designee. Preliminary record checks shall be logged on the Area's CHP 263B, Criminal Offender Record Information Release Log. Policy related to the use of CLETS for preliminary record checks is contained in Highway Patrol Manual (HPM) 40.4, Information Security and Administration Manual, Chapter 6, California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System.

(5) The role of the ride-along participant should be that of an observer only. The participant's involvement in any situation shall be at the direction of the officer and shall be limited to actions essential to officer safety. Ride-along participants should be briefed on the routine tasks and duties of the field officer to prepare the rider for situations that may be encountered. In no event shall non-peace officer ride-along participants be trained in the use of the Lektro-Lok or have access to any firearm.

(6) Officers shall exercise due care when determining the location or position of a ride-along participant during a routine traffic stop or other incident (e.g., seated in the vehicle, standing away from an emergency scene in a safe location). If an officer who is assigned a ride-along participant is directed or required to respond to an extremely hazardous situation, they shall ensure the immediate supervisor is aware that a ride-along participant is present. In extremely hazardous situations, it may be advisable to leave the ride-along participant at a safe location and return for the individual after the incident has been concluded. Ride-along participants shall follow the directions of the officer at all times.

(7) A CHP 428 shall be signed by all non-CHP employee ride-along participants prior to a ride-along. If the participant is under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian shall also sign the form. The time and duration of the ride-along shall be entered on the waiver and shall be witnessed by either the shift supervisor or a flight crew member. Completed waivers shall be maintained at the Area office for a period of one year.

(8) Dispatch should be advised when a ride-along is assigned to accompany an officer who is working a regular beat.

(9) Ride-alongs shall be prohibited from taking photographs or making any type of recordings (e.g., video, audio) during a ride-along. Exceptions may only be made for members of the media and only with the approval of the respective Area commander.

b. Peace Officer Ride-Along.

(1) The provisions contained in paragraph 4.a. also apply to peace officers from allied law enforcement agencies. Peace officers from allied law enforcement agencies shall have approval from their commander prior to a CHP ride-along if they are to be armed. This point shall be clarified before a ride-along is authorized.

(2) Except for those individuals within an agency who wear civilian attire while working, commanders may require armed allied law enforcement officers to wear either uniform or civilian attire as appropriate during their ride-along. If ride-along participants are required to be in uniform attire, they shall be in full uniform and equipped as if they were on duty.

(3) Allied law enforcement officers must be advised that their role as a ride-along participant shall be as an observer only, and that involvement in any situation shall be limited to that action essential to officer safety.

c. CHP Officer Off-Duty Ride-Along.

(1) In accordance with HPM 73.5, Uniform/Grooming and Equipment Standards, the CHP uniform will not be worn during off-duty ride-alongs with allied law enforcement agencies.

d. Aircraft Ride-Along.

(1) In addition to the policy set forth in this GO, all of the guidelines of HPM 100.7, Air Operations Manual, Chapter 2, Operations, shall also be followed (e.g., seating location, safety briefings, passenger disembarkation).

e. CHP Cadet Ride-Along.

(1) To be eligible to participate in a ride-along, CHP cadets shall have prior written approval from the Academy commander.

(2) CHP cadet ride-along participants are subject to the Academy SOP, which will specify the terms and conditions (e.g., location, duration, attire) of the ride-along.

f. Public Safety Dispatcher Ride-Along.

(1) Public Safety Dispatchers (PSD) shall be required to participate in at least one ride-along annually.

(2) All PSD participants are subject to the Area and/or Communications Center SOP, which will specify terms and conditions (e.g., location, duration, attire) of the ride-along.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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