



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures

1.08 Ride Along Program



RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

Effective: December 23, 2025
Scheduled Review: December 23, 2027
Approved: Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. PURPOSE

In order to enhance knowledge and understanding of the fire service in general, this program facilitates opportunities for residents or other interested parties to ride as observers in fire apparatus.

II. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants will have a criminal background check completed prior to participating. The following acts of conduct may disqualify someone from being approved to participate:

- Someone, who is the subject of an active criminal investigation or prosecution, or convicted of a felony, shall not be permitted to participate in the program.
- The fire chief will evaluate an applicant for participation who has a prior arrest history for a misdemeanor.

The fire department retains the right to deny participation to anyone for the reasons specified herein and to disclose only such information as may be required by law.

III. PROCEDURE

Application and program procedures are as follows:

- A. Someone who wishes to participate in the program must read this policy, complete and submit the Ride-Along Request and Waiver of Liability form, along with a copy of the applicant's driver's license. If an applicant is under the age of eighteen (18), a parent/guardian must also sign the waiver. The minimum age to participate in the ride-along program is sixteen (16) years of age.
- B. The safety services administrative manager will run a background check through the Michigan State Police Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT). Upon receipt of the results from the background check, the safety services administrative manager will forward the application to the fire chief for review and approval.
- C. The safety services administrative manager will notify the applicant if they are approved or unapproved to participate in the program. If approved, the safety services administrative manager will schedule a ride-along with the participant. The ride-along will be scheduled on the "AAFD Calendar" in Microsoft Outlook. The assistant chief of operations, fire chief, scheduled shift battalion chief and captain shall be emailed notification of the ride-along. The ride along form is valid for one year from fire chief approval.



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- D. Only one participant will be permitted at a time. A participant may ride-along a maximum of once every six (6) months.
- E. The on-duty battalion chief may terminate a ride-along due to operational circumstances, e.g., civil unrest, storms, disasters.

IV. RIDE-ALONG PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

The participant will cancel or reschedule the ride-along request if they are feeling sick on the scheduled date. If the participant presents any signs or symptoms of illness, the participant will be sent home.

The battalion chief or assigned company officer will make the final decision regarding any questions pertaining to suitability of attire and may rescind permission to ride if the participant's appearance is unacceptable. The participant's appearance must be neat and professional.

- Shoes: Closed toe with a good non-slip sole.
- Pants: Long pants which sit at waist. Undergarments should not be visible when in a normal standing position (no jeans).
- Shirt: Solid color dress or polo-style (no t-shirts).
- Uniform: School uniform and / or scrubs for hospital personnel are permitted.
- Jacket: Dark solid color recommended. Reflective safety vest must be worn in the event of any roadway scene. Provided by AAFD.
- Jewelry: Minimal.
- Hair: Long hair shall be pulled back.
- Tattoos: Explicit/offensive must be covered.
- Ride-along participants shall not dress in a manner that may cause them to be confused with AAFD personnel and shall not wear AAFD apparel.
- Unless being sponsored by their employer and with approval from the fire chief, personnel from other fire departments or other agencies shall not wear their agency uniform.

An identification badge shall be worn at all times to identify the person as a ride-along. The badge shall be turned in to the assigned company officer and returned to the safety services administrative manager at the conclusion of the ride-along.

Ride-along participants

- Are permitted in the day room, kitchen, apparatus bay, and rest rooms only. Offices are off limits unless accompanied by an officer. Dormitories and exercise areas are strictly off limits.
- Should bring a lunch or check with the on-duty shift about purchasing lunch, as it is not provided.
- May leave at any time but shall notify the assigned company officer and the battalion chief prior to leaving.



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- Will follow direction from officers at all times and are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Shall not capture and/or distribute any information, e.g., social media, pictures, audio recordings, without written authorization of the fire chief.
- Are not allowed to carry any weapons during the ride-along, regardless of any weapons permits or licenses they may possess.
- Maintain a safe distance from the emergency scene.
- On a fire scene - will remain with the apparatus unless otherwise instructed.
- On a medical call - will remain at the distance instructed until such time an assessment of the situation is completed.
- May do the following activities:
 - Assist in washing units.
 - Assist in station cleanup within designated areas.
 - Other duties at the discretion of the assigned company officer or battalion chief.
 - Any lifting will be limited to under 20 pounds.

V. DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

Battalion Chief - Provide participant a ride-along badge and reflective vest. The badge shall be worn at all times, and the reflective vest shall be worn during all responses. The ride-along badge shall be collected at the end of the ride-along and returned to the safety services administrative manager. The battalion chief will assign participant to a unit.

Assigned Company Officer - Advise the participant that seatbelts must be used at all times while the vehicle is moving. Monitor the ride-along participant and ensure that the ride-along requirements are adhered to. No confidential information will be discussed in the presence of a ride-along participant. Report any problems or concerns to the battalion chief. The ride-along is not to participate in any emergency operations or to assist with any operations of fire apparatus, e.g., operating pump, patient care, wearing of personal protective clothing, and/or equipment. Ride-Along participants shall not be given a door or any security code for any reason.

Advise the participant of what will be expected at the scene of an emergency, and that they will not be allowed to become directly involved at the emergency scene. Reasonable care will be taken to prevent the participant from becoming physically involved in or assisting in the following types of incidents:

- Crime scenes or situations involving or likely to involve the display or use of firearms
- Violent patients
- Patients with known infectious diseases
- Fire ground operations
- Other activities or situation that are likely to increase the participant's risk exposure



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RIDE-ALONG REQUEST & WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I (print name) _____ do hereby request permission to ride in Ann Arbor Fire Department vehicles with fire department employees who are on duty for the purpose of direct observation of fire department activities.

- I understand that participation could be hazardous and that personal injury or property damage could occur during the course of my participation and I hereby specifically assume any such risks and specifically waive any rights I now have or may hereafter acquire against the City of Ann Arbor or the Ann Arbor Fire Department or the employees of the Ann Arbor Fire Department for any personal injury or property damage that might occur in the course of, or as a result of, my participation in this program.
- I further agree to utilize the seat belts provided in the fire department vehicles.
- I will follow the directions of the company officer as assigned, such as staying in the fire apparatus on the way to or from a designated place during any perceived dangerous or safety compromising situation. I shall maintain confidentiality of any patient information.
- I will not use the radio, unless requested to do so by members of the department to summon help in an emergency, etc. I will not become involved in any fire/EMS action regardless of licenses or level of training.
- Any questions concerning the company officer's actions in the performance of their duty shall be taken up with the battalion chief.
- I shall remain calm and non-disruptive at all times.
- It is possible that the company officer and/or battalion chief may cancel the ride-a-long at any given time as a result of safety or illness concerns.
- I shall have transportation available at all times during the scheduled ride-along, in case it ends earlier than anticipated.
- All ride-alongs will be completed by 5:00 PM.
- I have reviewed and understand the fire department Ride-Along Program - Standard Operating Procedure. I agree to adhere to its provisions.
- I understand that a background check will be conducted via the Michigan State Police Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT).

Please provide an explanation below of why you are interested in conducting a ride along.

Email both pages of the Ride-Along Request & Waiver of Liability form and Driver's License or Student ID to fire@a2gov.org



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RIDE-ALONG REQUEST & WAIVER OF LIABILITY

Name:

Cell Number:

Email:

Address:

Date of Birth:

Gender:

Emergency Contact Name:

Cell Number:

Signature

If under 18 years old parent / guardian approval is required.

Parent / Guardian Name:

Signature:

Fire Chief Approval:

Email both pages of the Ride-Along Request & Waiver of Liability form and Driver's License or Student ID to fire@a2gov.org