



**City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Services
Standard Operating Procedure**

Citizen Ride-Along / Observation Program	Presented Date: 09/15/2011 Effective Date: 09/15/2011 Revision Date: 04/16/2015	Page 1 of 7	2.14a
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PURPOSE:

To establish a standard for the City of Manassas Fire Rescue Services for a Citizen Ride-Along/Observation Program. The program is to provide the public the opportunity to observe the activities of Fire and Rescue Services to gain a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities for fire and EMS personnel.

POLICY:

A Citizen Observer is an individual not affiliated with any agency within the City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Services and not one of the following: An EMS Student, a member of the news media acting as such, a staff member or volunteer from a mutual aid jurisdiction actually providing mutual aid in response to a request for it, or a family member riding along with a patient in an emergency. Individuals under the age of 18 years old are ineligible to be Citizen Observers.

It is the responsibility of a chief level officer of a member organization to approve an application prior to Citizen Observers riding on apparatus. It is the responsibility of the Duty Crew Officer in Charge / Attendant in Charge (OIC/AIC) to ensure that Citizen Observers have complied with the Fire and Rescue Services Citizen Ride Along program requirements prior to riding on apparatus. This includes the completion of the waiver of liability and HIPAA participant agreement.

Citizen Observers shall not participate in fire suppression, emergency medical services, or other Fire and Rescue Services duties.

PROCESS

- To be considered for the Citizen Ride-Along program, a person must submit a request to a chief level officer of a member organization on the Citizen Ride-Along application, specifying the station where the observer wishes to ride.
- If the application is approved, the Citizen Observer must read and sign the Ride-Along Program HIPAA Participant Agreement and Waiver of Civil Liability, as well as the Informed Consent, forms for the period the individual will be riding.
- The original signed forms shall be maintained on file at Fire and Rescue Headquarters for a period of three years after the last ride-along by that Citizen Observer. A copy of the forms shall be forwarded to the appropriate Volunteer Chief and Career Lieutenant. The forms are personnel records for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act and related laws.

- Copies of the Ride-Along Application are available at all stations and the Fire and Rescue Department Headquarters Administration.
- No one may be a Citizen Observer if he or she has a conviction or pending indictment that would prohibit him or her from being hired by the City of Manassas under the provisions of City Code § 2-138. Other circumstances that disqualify an applicant include being the subject of a restraining order for a person or address in or near Manassas.

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. Ride-Along Hours and Standards

- a. Citizen Observers are limited to one ride along period every 90 days. A ride-along period is a continuous period of no longer than eight hours, starting no earlier than 0800 and ending no later than 2300. Citizen Observers may not sleep in a station or Fire and Rescue vehicle. The Fire and Rescue Chief may approve or deny any request for participation in this program, or alter such request in the best interest of the department.
- b. Citizen Observers must not become physically or verbally involved in an incident. Under no circumstances will a Citizen Observer be permitted to enter a building that is or has been on fire until such time as the Incident Commander has declared the fire under control, all smoke has been cleared from the building, and the building has been determined to be safe for entry by non-operational personnel. Fire department personnel shall directly supervise such entry.
- c. Failure to follow the directions of the OIC/AIC will result in loss of the privilege to participate as a Citizen Observer.
- d. The on duty Battalion Chief shall determine whether a crew has appropriate qualifications and equipment to take a Citizen Observer on a ride-along.

2. Dress and Appearance

- a. Citizen Observers shall be neat and clean in appearance. Their personal hygiene and grooming must be acceptable to the shift duty officer and chief. While participating in the Ride-Along Program, the Citizen Observer is, in effect, representing Fire and Rescue Services.
- b. Citizen Observers shall wear suitable attire. Dark pants and light plain shirts are recommended (no jeans). No writing or artwork is allowed on clothing, except small brand logos are acceptable. Shorts and tank tops are prohibited. Riders must wear flat, closed-toe shoes (steel-toe shoes are strongly recommended). Citizen Observers from agencies other than the City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Services may wear their agency uniform with prior approval.
- c. Citizen Observers shall wear a name badge or observer vest provided by the Department, or other appropriate badge provided by the media, school, or hospital, etc.
- d. Citizen Observers shall wear no jewelry, except a ring and a watch are permitted.

3. Conduct**a. Health and Safety**

- i. No firearms or other weapons may be brought onto department property or carried during the ride along, unless the Citizen Observer is currently a certified active police officer with a jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- ii. Citizen Observers may not be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs during a ride-along. The OIC/AIC will not allow the Citizen Observer to ride along if there is any reason to suspect that the Citizen Observer is under the influence.
- iii. Citizen Observers shall wear a seat belt as per State Law and City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Services Standard Operating Procedure 2.11 "Seat Belt Usage."
- iv. Citizen Observers shall carry a valid Virginia Driver's license or identification with them during the ride along.
- v. Use of tobacco products is not permitted in any station or vehicle.
- vi. Citizen Observers are responsible for determining whether they are physically and psychologically healthy enough for a ride-along, and whether they are currently impaired due to illness, injury, medication, or the like. In any case of doubt, the Citizen Observer should postpone the ride-along activity to another date.

b. Patient Privacy

- i. At no time will Citizen Observers be permitted to take pictures or use a video camera or any other audio-visual recording device while on the scene of an incident. Requests for media to ride along will be dealt with separately through the Fire and Rescue Chief.
- ii. All Citizen Observers will treat PHI (private health information) as strictly confidential. The disclosure of PHI outside of the organizations who are working with the patient is strictly forbidden.
- iii. Citizen Observers may not take, copy, or transmit response documents with individually identifiable information such as name, address, Social Security Number, photograph, medical history, or other information from which identity can be inferred.

c. Expenses

- i. Citizen Observers will be responsible for bringing their own meals or can make arrangements to buy-in for meals with officer in charge.

City of Manassas Fire and Rescue System Citizen Ride-Along Application

APPLICANT INFORMATION

The completed form must be returned to the Fire and Rescue Department Headquarters. Any false information or omissions on this application may result in disqualification for ride-along privileges. Fire and Rescue Services reserves the right to deny ride-along privileges for any reason, without prior notice.

Full Name _____ Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____

Home Address _____

Home Phone Number _____ Day Time Phone Number _____

Place of Employment or School _____

Employment / School Address _____

Employment / School Phone #: _____

Gender (circle): Male Female Position/Title _____

Dates and shifts when you are requesting to "Ride-Along" _____



City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Services Informed Consent – Ride-Along Program

I understand that there is a possible risk for exposure to potentially life-threatening infectious diseases by direct contact or body fluid exposure, aerosolized airborne means, aerosolized droplet means, or by agents potentially used for bioterrorism or biological warfare when participating in a ride-along program within the fire and rescue work environment.

I have been offered an opportunity to ask questions about the diseases and the risk for exposure, and to have those questions answered.

Should I become exposed to any potentially infectious materials, I will be advised by a representative of the City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Services of that exposure and to seek medical attention. I understand that the City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Services is **NOT** responsible for covering any costs associated with post-exposure medical treatment and/or counseling.

Name (Print legibly): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

SOP APPROVED BY FIRE AND RESCUE COMMITTEE:

Marc T. Aveni
Councilman Marc T. Aveni, Fire and Rescue Committee Chairman

4-16-15
Date