

The Woodlands Fire Department Operational Guidelines

A-03 Ride-Along Program

1.0 TERMINOLOGY

- 1.1 Ride-Along Program: A program to allow an individual who is not employed by The Woodlands Fire Department to ride on department apparatus at times in which that apparatus responds to emergency and non-emergency calls.
- 1.2 Participant: Name given in this document to the individual riding along.
- 1.3 Sponsor: An Employee of The Woodlands Fire Department to whom a Participant will be assigned.

2.0 POLICY

Individuals will be allowed to participate in the Ride-Along Program if the following conditions are met:

- 2.1 Individuals who request or those who are invited to ride-along, will complete a Ride-Along Release form, and will not be allowed to ride on apparatus until the form is signed by a Chief Officer (or acting Chief Officer). The individual will be a minimum of fifteen years of age. The Participant will be assigned to a Sponsor during his/her ride-along period.
- 2.2 A ride-along period will be limited to an eight (8) hour period, or until 2200 hours. Special permission for longer periods may be granted by a Deputy Chief or above.
- 2.3 A Participant will wear a white collared shirt, dark colored pants (shorts/long, same as sponsor), and dark colored shoes. At no time during the Participant's ride-along period will he/she be allowed to wear any garment that would indicate that he/she is employed by The Woodlands Fire Department. If the Participant is representing another emergency service agency, he/she may wear the uniform of the agency that they are representing.
- 2.4 A Participant will not at any time be allowed to enter a hazard zone of any emergency scene. Sponsors of ride-along Participants will also give consideration as to the nature of emergency incidents that the Participant may be subjected to.

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- 2.5 It will be the responsibility of the Sponsor to inform the Participant about HIPAA Laws and The Woodlands Fire Department policies regarding releasing information that they may have obtained during their ride-along period.