

	MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
	Subject PUBLIC OBSERVER PROGRAM	Policy Number EA-12
		Effective Date 08-31-15
Related Information	Supersedes EA-12 (10-06-05)	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines in which members of the public are allowed to accompany a deputy on duty. The Public Observer program is intended to strengthen the relationship between the Office and the community.

- Although this Policy refers to “deputy” throughout, this Policy also applies with equal force to all reserve deputies with car commander status.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Office to provide an observer participating in the Public Observer Program with insight into the daily activities and functions of a Maricopa County Deputy Sheriff (deputy).

DEFINITIONS

Immediate Family: The spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling, child, grandchild, stepchild, or stepparent of either the deputy or the deputy’s spouse.

Waiver of Liability: A document completed by the public observer which releases the Office and its agents from any and all liability for any damages or injury while riding in any motor vehicles, or accompanying a deputy on duty.

PROCEDURES

1. **Public Observer Requirements and Guidelines:** Individuals requesting to participate in the Public Observer Program must meet the following requirements and guidelines:
 - A. The Waiver of Liability shall be completed and signed at least one week in advance of the desired tour of duty and all signatures shall be signed in the presence of a deputy. The observer must not have outstanding warrants.
 1. Persons under 18 years of age must have the Waiver of Liability completed and signed by their parent or guardian, prior to participating in the program.
 2. Persons under 16 years of age may participate, if accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.
 3. Persons under 14 years of age shall not participate in the program.
 - B. Public observers, excluding members of the deputy’s immediate family, when riding with a deputy of the opposite sex, must be accompanied by a second observer of either sex and participate no more

than one shift in any 24-hour period, and no more than two times in any six-month period. Public observers normally participate only once with the same deputy in any calendar year. Exceptions require the approval of the district commander.

- C. Employees may participate one time in any 30-day period, but no more than one time in any six-month period with the same deputy. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis, with prior approval of both employees' division or district commanders.
 - D. Employees assigned by their supervisor to ride with a deputy include, but are not limited to, deputy trainees, communication personnel, and administrative personnel, shall **not** be considered a public observer, therefore requirements and limitations applying to public observers shall not apply.
 - E. All employees participating in a ride along shall maintain a high level of ethical conduct at all times and shall be honest, fair, impartial, and polite when working or identified as employees of the Office, as specified in Policy CP-2, *Code of Conduct*.
 - F. Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board certified-peace officers, currently employed and in good standing with another agency, may ride at the discretion of the assigned deputy and the shift supervisor, and may carry service weapons authorized by their agency. The officer shall not be subject to the restrictions outlined in this Policy, or required to complete the Waiver of Liability.
 - G. All individuals participating in the program are required to wear business casual attire. This attire consists of casual pants, short-sleeve dress shirts, and polo shirts. Clothing such as shorts, tank tops, halter tops, T-shirts with logos, exercise clothing, or shoes that are not business appropriate, such as flip-flops, are **not** acceptable attire.
 - H. Individuals who have extensive police records, unsavory reputations, or an unacceptable appearance, shall **not** be permitted to participate in the program. If the district commander believes that an individual would be a risk to either the deputy or the Office, he may prohibit that person from participating in the program.
2. **Restrictions:** Restrictions may be imposed on the public observer by the district commander, shift supervisor, or deputy.
- A. No more than two public observers may ride with one deputy, at any one time.
 - B. No more than two patrol vehicles on a squad shall have public observers during the shift.
 - C. Public observers shall **not** be permitted to participate if the odor of an intoxicating beverage is present on their breath, or taking any medication that would adversely affect their conduct, or impair their judgment.
 - D. Public observers shall **not** operate any Office vehicle or handle any Office equipment. Non-certified personnel are **not authorized** and should not be permitted to operate or view information from Arizona Criminal Justice Information System (ACJIS) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).
 - E. Participants shall wear seat belts.
 - F. Public observers are prohibited from carrying or handling a firearm while participating in the program.

3. **Deputy Responsibilities:**

- A. Duties of the deputy witnessing the completion of the Waiver of Liability include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Signing his name and serial number on the Waiver of Liability, indicating that he witnessed the person's signature, and if applicable, the signature of the parent or guardian.
 - 2. Completing a warrants check before the person participates in the observer program to ensure the security of Office facilities. The results of the check shall be recorded on the Waiver of Liability.
 - 3. Filing the completed Waiver of Liability in an alphabetical file at the division. The Waiver of Liability shall be retained for a period of two years from the date of the ride. This file shall show the frequency of an individual's participation, and the deputies the individual rode with.

- B. Responsibilities of the deputy who is accompanied by a public observer include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Explaining his job, as fully as possible; fostering a greater understanding of the law enforcement profession.
 - 2. Taking the public observer on normal patrol activity, including booking when appropriate, but avoiding a guided tour.
 - 3. Instructing the public observer to return to the vehicle if a situation were to arise that might endanger the observer, or hamper an investigation.
 - 4. Notifying the supervisor when a public observer intentionally disregards rules, regulations, or directions given to him by the deputy. A supervisor may terminate the ride at any time, at the request of either the deputy or the public observer.
 - 5. Prohibiting public observers from taking photographs or recording conversations.

4. **Scheduling:** Public observers shall be scheduled to participate on Monday through Thursday. Shift supervisors may schedule a public observer to ride along on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. However, priority for these days shall be given to reserve deputies and posse members. Each district commander shall monitor the Public Observer Program in his district.

5. **Office Explorers:** Office Explorers may participate when deemed appropriate by the district's Explorer Program Coordinator, with prior approval of the shift supervisor.

- A. An individual Explorer must be accompanied by another Explorer, when riding with a deputy of the opposite sex.
- B. Explorers shall adhere to uniform and dress code regulations, specified by the Enforcement Support Division, including specific instructions that apply to the Explorer Program.