



Peoria Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 5.09

Citizen Observer Program



I. POLICY

The Citizen Observer Program is designed to provide concerned Peoria Residents with an insight into police activities and functions by riding with a uniformed patrol officer, during a normal shift, under controlled conditions.

II. PROCEDURE

A. General Guidelines

1. Request to Participate: Any Peoria Resident interested in participating in the Citizen Observer Program must complete a Citizen Observer waiver form and submit it to the Peoria Police Department. This form must be signed and approved at least ten (10) working days prior to their participation in the program. The Citizen Observer Program is available 7 days per week. The Chief of Police, or designee, may authorize non-residents to ride on a case by case basis.
2. Age Restriction: Persons under the age of 18, excluding Explorer Recruits, will not be allowed to participate in the Citizen Observer Program. The Chief of Police, or designee, may authorize the juvenile children of police officers/employees to ride if they are over 16 years of age.
3. The Station Sergeant will oversee the Citizen Observer Program.
4. Waiver Form Routing: Requests to participate in the Citizen Observer Program will be scheduled by the Station Sergeant or their designee.
 - a. Station officers will assist the Station Sergeant by conducting applicable eligibility verifications (i.e., ACIC/NCIS, city bookings, etc.).
 - b. The Station Sergeant will indicate on the form approval or denial of the participant's eligibility. If approved, the Station Sergeant will communicate with the appropriate patrol supervisor for confirmation of the availability of a host officer for the date requested.
 - c. The Station Sergeant will then sign the form and indicate approval or denial of host officer availability, and indicate which sergeant approved the ride-along. The Station Sergeant or designee will then notify the citizen of the status of their request.
 - d. Once the date is confirmed with the citizen, the Station Sergeant will post on the Citizen Observer calendar and forward the form to the patrol supervisor.
 - e. Upon completion of the ride-along, the host officer will sign the form, provide comments (if any), and return to the Station Sergeant, who will file the form and mail out a Citizen Observer Program Critique to the citizen.
5. Qualifications: Persons with extensive police records, unsavory reputations, or unacceptable appearance, health or hygiene will not be permitted to participate in the program. Citizens who are on criminal probation or parole will not be permitted to participate in the program.
6. Limitations: The following limitations and guidelines will apply to the program:
 - a. Certified Arizona law enforcement officers must complete a waiver form, but will be exempt from other limitations of the program. Certified Arizona law enforcement officers may carry their duty/off-duty firearm so long as it is concealed. These are the only Citizen Observer Program participants allowed to carry firearms.

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- b. No more than one person may ride with one officer at any one time.
- c. Family members of employees will be considered as citizens, but will be permitted to participate in the program no more than four (4) times per calendar year.
- d. Off-duty civilian employees shall complete a waiver form in advance of the observation, and be appropriately assigned by the Station Sergeant, but shall be exempt from other requirements.
- e. Citizen Observers, excluding Explorer Recruits, will be allowed to participate in the program no more than two (2) times per calendar year. A citizen shall not participate in the program for more than the ten (10) hours of a complete patrol shift at one time.
- f. Explorers will be authorized to participate in the Citizen Observer Program at the discretion of the Post Commander.
 - (1) Explorers are permitted to participate in the program one (1) time per month, and there must be at least 24 hours between the next authorized ride.
 - (2) Explorers shall not ride with the same officer in a twelve (12) month period. Explorers ages 18 to 20 may ride with an officer at any designated time.
 - (3) Explorers ages 16 and 17 may not ride with an officer past 2300 hours. Explorers ages 14 and 15 may not ride with an officer past 2100 hours.
- g. The Citizen Observer is not to get involved at any time in any police action unless the citizen observer is an Arizona certified peace officer and immediate action is deemed necessary to assist the host officer. Once additional Peoria officers have arrived on scene, the Citizen Observer will assume the role of an observer only.
- h. The host officer will instruct the Observer to return to the police vehicle if a situation arises where the observer will be in danger or their presence would hamper an investigation.
- i. The host officer will immediately report to their supervisor any interference with their duties or willful noncompliance with rules and regulations on the part of the Observer. Any supervisor, at their discretion, may cause or permit the termination of the Observer's tour at any time, at either the request of the officer or the citizen.
- j. The host officer will complete and turn in the waiver form to their Patrol Supervisor, giving their opinion of the citizen's reaction. If negative remarks are made, they will be explained. If the applicant did not appear, it will be so indicated on the form.
- k. Citizen Observers will be permitted to attend shift briefings. If any information is presented "for law enforcement personnel only," the Citizen Observer will be asked to step into the hallway while that information is disseminated. They will then be brought back into the briefing room. Citizen Observers will not be allowed to enter the booking area, holding facility, detention area, or prisoner processing area, unless approval is received prior to entry from a supervisor.
- l. Officers will not participate in pursuits as primary unit, back-up, or support vehicles when their vehicles are occupied by prisoners, suspects, complainants, witnesses, Civilian Observers, or any other person not on-duty as a police officer.
- m. Citizen Observers and family members will not be assigned to ride with an officer who is on probation without the approval of the Watch Commander.
- n. When the host officer is assigned a Citizen Observer, they will be provided with a bright orange "Citizen Observer" vest by an on-duty supervisor. The "Citizen Observer" vest is designed to allow immediate recognition of those citizens in our care. Citizen Observers will be required to wear the "Citizen Observer" vest when they are with the host officer in the following situations:

- (1) Any traffic accident
- (2) Any scene being investigated where there are multiple officers present.
- (3) When the host officer or a supervisor believes it is necessary.

7. Citizen Observers will not be permitted to take photographs of any kind when assigned to participate in the program, unless prior permission has been obtained from the Watch Commander.

8. Citizen Observer Program Critique

a. Citizens participating in the program will be mailed a Citizen Observer Program Critique form, giving them an opportunity to evaluate the quality of service provided by our patrol officers. Additionally, the critique will serve as an evaluation tool and placed in the officer's Individual Performance Report (IPR) file.

b. Patrol supervisors will review critiques with their assigned officers and immediately address any areas of concern.

9. The Chief of Police may grant exceptions to this policy under special conditions.

B. Employee Exemptions:

1. The Citizen Observer Program is an invaluable tool to both the department and our community. It provides a venue for the sharing of information and ideas between Peoria Residents and members of our department.

2. As part of the Peoria Police Department's commitment to the philosophy of Community Oriented Policing, sworn employees are expected to participate in the Citizen Observer Program.

Peoria Police Department
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Original Issue Date: 01/01/03
Last Revision Date: 04/12/07
Next Review Date: 09/30/08
Office of Primary Responsibility: SSD
Editor: P. Panaccione
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