Community Observer Program Instructions

Strict adherence to the following instructions is necessary in order to safeguard observers and to minimize the possibility of interference with normal department activities.

1. Observers must complete an application and waiver of liability form, as well as provide proof of identity at the scheduled ride-along shift.

2. Observers are not employees of the University at Police Department or of the University at Albany, and thus are not entitled to any compensation of benefits from the University, including, but not limited to workers’ compensation, medical insurance, or unemployment compensation.

3. Applicants with criminal convictions or pending charges may not be permitted to participate in a ride-along.

4. Observers must be at least 18 years of age.

5. Priority for ride-along will be given to those interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement or other criminal justice field.

6. Observers may only participate in a maximum of two ride-alongs per year. Each time that an observer participates, he/she must complete an application and waiver of liability form.

7. Observers shall not participate in any police activity unless directed to do so by the officer with whom the observer is riding.

8. Unless emergency situations exist, observers shall not leave the patrol car at the scene of any police activity without first obtaining the permission of the officer with whom the observer is riding. Observers shall also not converse with prisoners, suspects, witnesses, or other parties contacted on police business, unless requested by the officer with whom the observer is riding.

9. Observers shall not interfere with the Officer’s activities at any time. Although observers are encouraged to ask questions regarding procedures and activities, it must be done at an appropriate time.
10. Observers shall dress appropriately. Inappropriate clothing which could be detrimental to the image of the Police Department will not be permitted. This includes, but is not limited to the following: tank or tube tops, shorts, concert shirts, or shirts with crude language or drawings.

11. Observers are not allowed to possess electronic devices (recorder, camera, cell phone) while conducting a ride-along.

12. Observers shall not carry any type of weapon.

13. Observers shall not use tobacco products during a ride-along.

14. Observers shall arrive at the department office ten (10) minutes prior to the designated start time. Due to priority calls for service, the Officer may be delayed in picking you up at the office at your scheduled start time. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

15. If you are unable to keep your appointment, notify the Dispatch center at least twenty-four hours prior to your designated shift. The Dispatch center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 442-3131.

16. All information to which you are privy during your ride-along shall be considered confidential in nature. You may share the general details about an incident with others, but you may not disclose names and locations.

17. We will do our best to accommodate desired shift, date, time, and officer.

A confirmation call or e-mail must be obtained from our office prior to riding. If you have not been contacted within one week of submitting your application, please contact the University Police administrative section at 442-3130 during normal business hours (9:00am to 5:00pm).

I have read and understand the above instructions.

___________________________________________ _____________________
(Signature of observer)     (Date)

Turn this signed form in when you submit your completed application and waiver of liability form.