

Grand Forks Fire Department

Standard Operating Procedures

SOP# 902.03	Section Fire Prevention	Title Student Observer - “Ride-Along” Program
Authored by:		Michael K. Flermoen, Deputy Fire Chief
Reviewed by:		Michael K. Flermoen, Deputy Fire Chief
Authorized by:		Peter D. O’Neill, Fire Chief
Effective date: 8/31/2003	Implementation date: 8/31/2003	Revision date:

I. Purpose

The Student “Ride-Along” Program permits College students pursuing a career in the emergency services, to observe Grand Forks Fire Department operations by riding with Command Officers or Fire Companies.

II. Potential Participants

As mentioned above, the program is open to College students; these students are not required to be going to school in Grand Forks or the Grand Forks area. Ride-alongs are generally not scheduled on any Fire Department utility or support vehicles.

III. Scheduling Process

The Training Officer, through the appropriate Battalion Chief, will schedule Ride-Alongs to ride with fire companies. They should be scheduled at least three shifts ahead of the planned date. The Battalion Chief will notify the appropriate (assigned) company as soon as the Ride-Along has been scheduled. This information will be entered on to the day sheet for that shift and that company. The Training Officer will generally not schedule Ride-Alongs to ride with the Battalion Chiefs.

Normally, Ride-Alongs will be scheduled to ride between 0800 to 2000 hours, Monday through Friday, exclusive of holidays. Exceptions to these hours will be at the discretion of the appropriate Battalion Chief, with an explanation forwarded to the Training Officer.

Ride-Alongs may be scheduled for shorter timeframes than those allowed, but generally not for longer timeframes. All ride-alongs will be advised at the

beginning of their observation period, that emergency activity may delay their return to quarters at the appointed time.

IV. Responsibilities

Company Officers are responsible for insuring that Ride-Alongs are appropriately attired for their assigned activity. Appropriate attire should be addressed in their institutions program handouts and manuals. Anyone failing to meet the appropriate dress requirements, or failing to conduct themselves appropriately will be asked to leave the station by the Company Officer and they will be excluded from any future ride-along programs. The Company Officer will notify the Ride-Along of the no smoking policies of the department, and any and all Ride-Alongs **must** conform to those policies.

If a Company Officer has concerns regarding an observer, those concerns shall be brought to the attention of the Battalion Chief. The Battalion Chief or acting Battalion Chief shall have authority over concerns regarding the Citizen Observer Program.

V. On-site Process

All Ride-Alongs must sign a release form before being permitted to ride. If the Ride-Along is under the age of 18, the release form must also be signed by their parent or guardian and be notarized. For all Ride-Alongs 18 years of age and over, the Company Officer will assist in completing the release form, witness their signature and then sign his/her name on the line indicated. Completed forms will be forwarded to the Training Officer for disposition. The Company Officer will record the name, arrival and departure times of all Ride-Alongs in the daily log. This is very important for many reasons, not the least of which is the need to follow-up with the Ride-Along or his/her institution after the observation period.

Ride-Alongs will then be issued a "Student Ride-Along" ID badge which will be prominently displayed for the duration of the scheduled observation period. The badge will be retrieved by the Company Officer at the completion of the ride-alongs stay. A safety vest will be assigned to the Ride-Along to be worn when required by department procedures.

The Ride-Alongs educational institution will brief the Ride-Along on the Fire Department's expectations for their observation period and assure that they are aware of all safety requirements (seat belts, vests, etc.).

The Company Officer will explain to the Ride-Along the appropriate action to follow should the entire crew be away from the apparatus during a major incident, or an incident in which they are prohibited from being in the immediate area (hazardous or potentially hazardous areas).

Due to the sensitive nature of some EMS calls, the Ride-Along, if not EMS certified, may be required to stay with the apparatus. It is the Company Officer's responsibility to insure that the Ride-Along is a current EMT-B, I, or P; before allowing them to observe or assist on the incident where possible. If the Ride-Along is not certified the Company Officer must not allow them access to a sensitive EMS situation, that could embarrass the patient, the patient's family or the Ride-Along.

VI. Safety and Adherence statements

Under no circumstances will fire personnel (or anyone else) ride in an unsafe position on any apparatus to accommodate a Ride-Along or for any other reason.

It is the Company Officer's responsibility to assure that all requirements of this standard operating procedure are strictly followed.