

## **Red Wing Fire Department Ride-Along Policy**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a ride-along program and the procedures that will govern the program. This program is enacted to allow eligible citizens the opportunity to observe the day-to-day operations of the Fire Department and its employees; to promote understanding of the duties carried out by those employees; and to provide an educational experience for those citizens. This policy will provide a standardized process for determining program eligibility.

### **2. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Red Wing Fire Department to maintain a ride-along program to allow selected citizens to ride along with Department personnel during the performance of some of their official duties. Only those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements and receive written permission from the Fire Chief, or his or her designee, will be allowed to accompany Department personnel on a ride-along.

### **3. WARNING**

Fire Department work and the duties of Department employees may be dangerous. A ride-along may involve hazards to the health of those citizens who desire to participate. There is the possibility that a citizen could be seriously injured or killed during a ride-along. This danger must be weighed against the value of exposure to the types of duties that Department employees perform.

### **4. APPLICATION**

Any individual who wishes to participate in the ride-along program must complete a Fire Department Ride-Along Application, Confidentiality Agreement, and Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability at least ten (10) days prior to the requested date for the ride-along. All documents must be completed in their entirety. Any application that is missing the required information or is not completed in its entirety will be denied.

Complete applications will be forwarded to the Fire Chief, or his or her designee, to determine participant eligibility. Applicants will be notified in writing whether they are eligible and approved to participate, or are ineligible or otherwise not approved to participate. This written notification will provide the reason(s) for the denial of the ride-along request. All documents related to the application shall be maintained by the Department pursuant to the City of Red Wing's record retention schedule, as well as all applicable state laws. All applications received by the Department will become public, pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY

Citizens desiring to participate in the ride-along program must apply for and obtain permission from the Red Wing Fire Department. The Fire Chief, or his or her designee, will consider the reason the applicant wishes to participate, along with the frequency, duration, and hours requested.

In order to participate in the Fire Department Ride-Along Program, the applicant shall meet the following criteria, or fall within an exception outlined below:

- A. Each participant must be at least sixteen (16) year of age or older.
- B. Each participant should be in good health and not have any conditions that may restrict department personnel from performing their official duties. Individuals with severe or communicable illnesses may be denied participation and have their approved ride-along rescheduled to a time when the participant is no longer ill. The Department will, to the extent possible, make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations to any person interested in participation in the ride-along program.
- C. Applicants must read and complete a written application and must acknowledge the risks associated with participation in the ride-along program through the execution of a written Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement.
- D. Applicants must read and complete a written Confidentiality Agreement regarding private data.
- E. Applicants must consent to the City conducting a criminal background check and shall not have been convicted of: a felony; a serious criminal or traffic offense; or been the subject of an order for protection/restraining order granted by a court within the past year, and the Applicant shall not be a defendant in a pending criminal case. The Applicant may be required to pay for the actual costs of the background check.
- F. Each participant shall agree to follow all directions of the Department member to which they are assigned, as well as all rules of the ride-along program and/or the City of Red Wing.
- G. Participation in the ride-along program will only be allowed once a year per civilian, unless there is an exception granted by the Fire Chief, or his or her designee, based on extenuating circumstances.
- H. Each participant is highly encouraged to obtain the following vaccinations prior to the ride-along due to the possible exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials: Tetanus; Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR); and Hepatitis A & B.

**6. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES/EXCEPTIONS**

Programs sponsored by national organizations which provide personal liability and medical insurance coverage for its members may be exempt from the minimum age requirement. The Fire Department may also grant permission for youths involved in Department-sponsored public safety programs or special community events to participate in a ride-along activity on emergency response vehicles or to tour Department facilities.

For any ride-along participants under the age of eighteen (18), the written permission of a parent or legal guardian shall be obtained on the required Application, Confidentiality Agreement, and Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement.

**7. HIPAA COMPLIANCE**

Under the requirements of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”), ride-along participants who come into contact with private, health-related information will be required to agree, in writing, to keep all confidential information learned during their ride-along participation confidential.

**8. PROCEDURE**

- A. Only one participant shall be permitted to ride along in an emergency response vehicle at any time.
- B. Ride-alongs shall only be allowed on Mondays through Fridays, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., except in special circumstances as approved in the sole discretion of the Fire Chief, or his or her designee. The hours, locations, and assignments for which applicants will be allowed to participate are to be determined by the Fire Chief, or his or her designee.
- C. Participants will not be allowed to participate, directly or indirectly, in situations that may jeopardize the safety of the ride-along participant, any Department personnel, or the general public.
- D. A patient or member of the public who is receiving services has the absolute right to refuse to allow participants to observe any procedures performed by Paramedics or other members of the Department. If a patient does not consent to the Participant’s observation, the Participant will not be allowed to witness any procedures and will need to wait in a location as directed by the Department member in charge.
- E. The Department reserves the right to alter or change the procedures and guidelines for the ride-along program at any time.
- F. The Department and/or any Department personnel may terminate the ride-along at any time, for any reason, and transport the ride-along participant back to the Fire Department, or other location of origin. Examples of reasons why an employee may

terminate the ride-along include, but are not limited to, the ride-along participant's conduct, safety, violation of the rules of conduct, or Department response needs. If necessary, Department personnel shall notify their shift supervisor that the ride-along has been terminated. The shift supervisor shall indicate the termination and the reasons for the termination on the application form.

- G. Fire Department employees assigned a ride-along participant should use appropriate caution to ensure that the citizen is not placed in unduly dangerous or hazardous situations. Employees should not engage in dangerous situations, to the extent possible, with ride-along participants.
- H. If the employee receives a potentially hazardous or dangerous call, or realizes that he or she may become immediately involved in a hazardous or dangerous situation, the participant may be dropped off at the Fire Department, or at another safe location. The participant should remain in that location until Department personnel retrieve the participant. If a participant is left in this manner, the employee will contact the Department to request appropriate transportation for the participant.

**9. RIDE-ALONG RULES AND CONDUCT OF PARTICIPANTS**

- A. Department personnel will explain the potential hazards that may be encountered and the necessity for participants to immediately obey all instructions. Participants shall follow the rules of the program as well as any directions of the supervising Department member or the firefighter to which they are assigned.
- B. All ride-along participants are only observers of the Department's operations. No participant shall become involved in any incidents unless specifically instructed to do so by an authorized member of the Department.
- C. Participants shall respect and preserve the confidentiality of all names of persons or information learned through the program, unless otherwise authorized.
- D. Participants shall not operate any vehicle during their ride-along.
- E. Participants shall not use Department equipment except when directly authorized by department staff or in extreme emergencies.
- F. Participants shall be required to wear seatbelts at all times and remain within the Department's vehicle, unless otherwise directed by authorized Department personnel.
- G. Participants are prohibited from possessing or carrying firearms or any other weapons, cameras, recording devices, cell phones, and all other communication devices during the ride-along.

- H. Participants shall not smell of, possess, or consume alcoholic beverages or drugs before or during the ride-along. Participants may not use tobacco while on the ride-along.
- I. Participants shall wear appropriate, business casual dress at all times during the ride-along, including supportive shoes or boots. The Fire Chief, or his or her designee, has the sole authority to determine whether a participant is appropriately dressed. Inappropriate dress may be cause for immediate cancellation of the ride-along. Unless provided by the Department, ride-along participants shall not wear any clothing that implies direct association with the Department.
- J. Participants will be provided Department-issued identification that shall be displayed prominently during the entire ride-along.

**RED WING FIRE DEPARTMENT RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM  
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

As a participant in the Red Wing Fire Department's Ride-Along Program, it is possible that I may come into contact with various types of information, including private or confidential information, to which I would otherwise have no right to access.

I agree that I will not actively solicit or access, through City computers, files, or other means available, any data that I otherwise have no right or need to access or witness.

To the extent that I may have access to private, confidential, nonpublic or protected nonpublic data during the course of my ride-along activities, I agree to comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and all other applicable statutes of the State of Minnesota; the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA") and all other applicable federal laws; and all applicable policies, rules and regulations of the City of Red Wing. I promise to protect the confidentiality of any and all such information that I may learn through my participation in the Ride-Along Program and will act accordingly at all times.

I understand that I may be subject to criminal or civil penalties for noncompliance.

I have read and understand the above information and agree to be bound by its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

If applicant is under the age of eighteen (18), a parent or guardian must co-sign this agreement:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

**RED WING FIRE DEPARTMENT RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM  
WAIVER OF CLAIMS AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY AGREEMENT**

1. I have asked the City of Red Wing and its Fire Department (collectively, “the City”) for permission to be a participant in its Ride-Along Program (the “Program”). My participation is voluntary. I acknowledge that the Program is not an essential service provided by the City. As a participant in the Program, I will ride as a passenger in a City vehicle and will observe the City personnel inside a City vehicle and while at the scene of any incident to which City personnel has responded.
2. I understand that voluntarily participating in the Program may be dangerous because of the multiple hazards encountered by Fire Department personnel. Such hazards include, but are not limited to: accidents involving a City vehicle; injury from bystanders or traffic; negligent or intentional tortuous acts by third persons; exposure to severe weather conditions; exposure to communicable and/or infectious diseases; and various accidents during the routine operations of the City Fire Department. I understand that the City is not a guardian of my safety.
3. I personally assume all risks in connection with participating in the Program. I release the City and its employees, officials, volunteers and agents for any injury or damage sustained by me while participating in the Program, including all risks connected therewith, whether foreseen or unforeseen.
4. In consideration of being allowed to participate in the Program, I waive any and all right to file any action against the City and/or its employees, officials, volunteers and agents for any injury or damage that I might suffer while participating in the Program. This waiver does not waive liability for any injuries or damages that I obtain as a result of willful, wanton, or intentional misconduct by any person acting on behalf of the City.
5. I hereby agree to fully defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City, its employees, officials, volunteers, and agents against any and all claims, demands, damages, costs, or expenses, including reasonable attorney’s fees, for any and all loss, damage, or liability, due to my negligence, misconduct, or violation of the law.
6. I have fully informed myself of the contents of this Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement by reading it before signing it. I have had the opportunity to ask any and all questions regarding this Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement and its effect, as well as the opportunity to consult with private legal counsel. I understand the terms herein are contractual and not a mere recital and that I have signed this document as my own free act and agree to be bound by its terms.
7. It is my express intent that this Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability shall bind the members of my family, if I am alive, and my heirs, assigns and personal representatives if I am deceased.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print)                      Street Address                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature    City, State, Zip

**NOTICE: Program participants under eighteen (18) years of age must have the Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement co-signed by their parent or legal guardian.**

I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of the above individual and hereby consent to his or her participation in the Program. I have read and understand the above Waiver of Claims and Release of Liability Agreement and I agree to be bound by the terms stated therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name                      Parent/Guardian Signature                      Date

**APPLICATION FOR RED WING FIRE DEPARTMENT RIDE-ALONG**

**All application materials must be submitted at least ten (10) days prior to your desired ride-along date. Approval of ride-along participation is subject to background check results and staff availability.**

**NOTICE: As an applicant for the ride-along program, you are being asked to provide information about yourself that will be used in consideration of your application. You are not being required to provide the requested information. However, refusing to provide any of the requested information will lead to a denial of your ride-along application. The purpose of this request for information is to obtain information to permit the City to make basic checks in regard to the applicant’s criminal record and eligibility for the ride-along. Portions of the data requested by this application will be considered public when they are received, pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13. Any data that is classified as private under that Act will be available only to you and to City officials and agencies with a need to know such information in order to process your application. If a ride-along is granted, most information supplied by the applicant will become public.**

I am requesting consideration for a ride-along with the Red Wing Fire Department

Desired date of ride-along: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Last) (First) (M.I.)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Driver’s License Number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency contact: (full name) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you participated in a ride-along program before?  Yes  No

If yes, please list date(s) and sponsoring agency(s):

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Are you affiliated with any police, fire, or other public safety agency(s)?  Yes  No

If yes, please list those affiliations

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What are your reasons for requesting to participate in a ride-along program?

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Sponsoring Officer \_\_\_\_\_ (If applicant does not have a sponsoring officer, supervisory personnel will attempt to locate an appropriate sponsor.)

By signing this application, I acknowledge that I have read this document and agree to be bound by the provisions of the Red Wing Fire Department's Ride-Along Policy if selected for participation in the Ride-Along Program:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature/Signature of Parent or Guardian

If applicant is under the age of eighteen (18), a parent or guardian must co-sign this application:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

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**CHIEF OR DESIGNATED OFFICIAL COMPLETES BELOW**

Request for Ride-Along is  Approved  Denied

If denied, reasons for denial:

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If approved:

Authorized to Ride for \_\_\_\_\_ (hours) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Time Ride-Along will begin \_\_\_\_\_.

Time Ride-Along will end \_\_\_\_\_.

Sponsoring Officer \_\_\_\_\_.

Additional Remarks:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief's Signature      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Officer's Signature      Date

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**SHIFT SUPERVISOR COMPLETES**

**Actual Ride-Along Start Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Actual Ride-Along End Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ride-Along Event Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Remarks (If ride-along terminated early, change in sponsoring officers, etc.):**

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