

CITIZEN OBSERVER INSTRUCTIONS AND RULES

The Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 welcomes you to ride, as an observer, with one of our Deputy Constables. As a professional law enforcement organization, we constantly strive to improve the level of service to our community. To that end, it is necessary to establish and maintain certain rules which govern the conduct and activities of citizens who ride with our Deputy Constables to ensure the integrity of our department is protected. In order for a citizen to ride, as an observer, with the Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7, he/she:

1. Must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.
2. Must complete and submit the Rider Information Form and the Release of Claims Form to the Chief Deputy (or his/her designee), during normal office hours, a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
3. Must be willing to undergo a background check, by the Department, to ensure the rider does not have an unacceptable criminal record and/or outstanding warrants.
 1. Must never have been convicted of a felony or any criminal offense involving moral turpitude.
4. The approved rider must present their own copy of the written request form and a picture I.D. to the on-duty supervisor who accommodates the rider's request for an observation ride.
5. Observers in the Ride-along Program are guests of the Constable's Office and shall conduct themselves in an appropriate, responsible manner. Observers will:
 - a. Not use alcoholic beverages immediately prior to or during the watch that they are to ride;
 - b. Not use profane or abusive language or behave in any manner that would provoke or escalate tension;
 - c. Not enter into any investigation or converse with any citizen, witness, or prisoner concerning a police incident or investigation;
 - d. Not make known to unauthorized persons the identity of persons arrested, detained, confined in jail or suspected of an offense;
 - e. Not operate or use any police equipment or vehicle or any item in police custody or control except in case of an extreme emergency when instructed to do so by a deputy constable;
 - f. Not carry a firearm (unless they are commissioned peace officers with their department badge) or convey the impression or state to anyone that they are police officers;
 - g. Not carry any weapon under any circumstances;
 - h. Remain in the police car during routine traffic stops and disturbance calls of a serious nature, and they shall not enter a house, building, or other property, public or private, from which the public would be excluded because of a police incident or by the owner of the property; and

- i. Obey without question any instructions in the furtherance of the police mission given by a deputy constable.
6. Dress and Grooming Standards:
 1. Observers in the Ride-along Program must dress and groom themselves in an appropriate and business-like manner. The on-duty supervisor or his designee will be the final judge of whether an observer's attire and/or grooming is appropriate for riding in a police car.
 2. The minimum requirements are slacks or dress jeans and a shirt with a collar for males, and slacks or dress jeans and a blouse for females. T-shirts and worn or unsightly blue jeans are not acceptable attire.
 3. Riders will be clean and neat in appearance, hair will be groomed in such a manner that it can be maintained under all but the most adverse conditions, and does not present a ragged, unkempt, bushy, or extreme appearance.
 4. No observer shall wear, on his/her clothing, anything that advertises any product, business, or organization, or any sign, symbol, or word that is inflammatory in nature.
7. Citizen observers will be allowed to ride for a four-hour period, unless circumstances justify otherwise. Additional time must be approved by a supervisor.

On behalf of all the Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 and myself, I hope that you find this as an educational, but enjoyable experience which serves to provide you with a better understanding of the law enforcement profession.

CITIZEN RIDE-ALONG REQUEST

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to ride-along on (date) _____, accompanying **Deputy Constables**(name) _____ for the following reason:

_____.

I have read and signed the release form and I understand the provisions.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time of Day to Contact: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Signature

Parent or Guardian (*if rider is a juvenile*)

From: (Law Enforcement Official)

To: (*Deputy Constables*)

Subject: Authorization

Request is Approved ☐ Denied ☐ (*check one*)

Observer Authorized to Ride (*hours*) _____ On (*date*) _____

With **Deputy Constables** (*name*) _____ In (*area*) _____

**HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE'S
OFFICE OF PRECINCT 7
RIDE-ALONG APPLICATION**

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____ (MI) _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Driver's License: _____ Email: _____

Law Enforcement Affiliation (if any): _____

Reasons for Request: _____

I certify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:

Reviewed by: _____ Rank: _____

Time/Date: _____

Disposition: Approved ☐ Denied ☐ (check one)

Signature: _____

Remarks (Reasons for denial, or **Deputy Constables** and Beat Assignment) _____

Unit Number Assigned: _____ **Deputy Constables** Assigned: _____

Civilian Ride Along
HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE'S
OFFICE OF PRECINCT 7
Emergency Medical Contact and Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Emergency Contact:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Secondary Emergency Contact:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Medical Information

I understand that I do not have to release medical information, but I can volunteer information as a precaution.

Do you have any allergies? If so, list _____

Do you have any medical conditions that we need to be aware of?

If so, list _____

Do you take any medication we need to be aware of?

If so, list _____

Preferred local hospital: _____

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

**HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE'S OFFICE
OF PRECINCT 7 RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

STATE OF TEXAS

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COUNTY OF HARRIS

RELEASE

Known all men by these present that I, _____, of Harris County, Texas in consideration of being allowed to accompany the Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 personnel on official patrols, do by these presents for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, hereby release and agree not to hold liable, Harris County Constable's of Precinct 7, its officers, agents and employees from any and all actions, causes of action, claims, demands, costs or damages arising from or resulting from property damage, personal injuries or death sustained by me or my property while accompanying them even though any such damage, injury to death may result from the negligent or grossly negligent act or omission or any other act or omission of the County or any County employee, official or agent.

I further agree, by these presents, for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, to indemnify, hold harmless, and save from liability Harris County, its agents, officers, and employees from any liability, action, claim, damage, award, or judgment incurred or suffered by the County or individuals as a result of any act or omission by me or caused by me while accompanying any employee, agent, or officer of the County.

In addition, I make the following representations and acknowledgments upon which I intend the Harris County to rely:

1. I understand and agree that while accompanying any officer, agent or employee of the County during his law enforcement rounds, I am to be only ***an unarmed lay observer (unless I am a licensed peace officer in Texas)*** and bystander with no active role whatever and that I will have and am given no duties, rights, powers or authority whatever other than those conferred by law upon any other person in like or similar circumstances as may arise from time to time and will under no circumstances interfere with the officers or offer any advice or counsel to any person being questioned, investigated, taken into custody or arrested by any officer;
2. Neither will I be considered an agent, servant or employee of Harris County and thus, I will not be covered by the county for any workers' compensation, death or disability benefits;
3. I realize that I may and will, at unpredictable times, be placed in both foreseeable and unforeseeable positions of considerable danger that could cause injury, severe injury, permanent disability, death, mental anguish, stress disorder, mental disability, permanent mental disability, and agree that neither Harris County nor any of its officers or employees shall be obligated to take any steps or action to protect my person or provide a means of withdrawal or retreat for me, and I hereby release them of any duty to do so intending hereby to willfully and voluntarily assume all risk inherent in any situation and under any circumstances that may arise incident hereto; and
4. I agree that any information I may gain will be used by me only for my personal educational purposes except where I am summoned as a witness in any administrative or court proceeding.

Witness my hand this the _____ day of _____, 20____.

I hereby certify that there are no misrepresentations, omissions, or falsifications in the foregoing information.

Signature of applicant: _____ Date: _____

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, this the _____ day of _____,
20____, personally appeared before me the said _____
known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged
to me that he freely and voluntarily executed the same for the purpose and consideration therein expressed.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE, this the _____ day of
_____, 20____.

Notary Public in and for
the State of Texas

Printed or Typed Name of Notary

My commission expires:

Civilian Ride Along Agreement
HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE'S
OFFICE OF PRECINCT 7

As a guest of the Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 for the Civilian Ride Along Program, I agree to do the following:

1. I will not use alcoholic beverages immediately prior to or during the ride;
2. I will not use profane or abusive language or behave in any manner that would provoke or escalate tension;
3. I will not enter into any investigation or converse with any citizen, witness, or prisoner concerning a police incident or investigation;
4. I will not make known to unauthorized persons the identity of persons arrested, detained, confined in jail or suspected of an offense;
5. I will not operate or use any police equipment or vehicle or any item in police custody or control except in case of an extreme emergency when instructed to do so by a ***Deputy Constables***;
6. I will **NOT** carry a firearm (unless they are commissioned peace officers and has department badge) or convey the impression or state to anyone that I am a police officer;
7. I will **NOT** carry any weapon such as
 - Knives
 - Tasers
 - Clubs
 - Anything that can cause bodily injury
8. I will remain in the police car during routine traffic stops and disturbance calls of a serious nature and shall not enter a house, building, or other property, public or private, from which the public would be excluded because of a police incident or by the owner of the property; and
9. I will obey without question any instructions in the furtherance of the police mission given by a ***Deputy Constables***.
10. I understand and acknowledge the above statements

Signature: _____

Date: _____

**HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE'S OFFICE
OF PRECINCT 7**

Subject: Evaluation – Ride-Along Program

TO:

(*Civilian Ride Along Coordinator*)

FROM:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NO.: _____ AGE: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

On (*date*) _____ I was given the opportunity to ride-along
with Deputy _____ of the Patrol Division.

The following is my evaluation of the program:

(*Signature*)

Civilian Ride Along
HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE'S
OFFICE OF PRECINCT 7

Deputy Acknowledgment

I, _____, (rank/name), understand that I will have a civilian ride along during my shift on _____, _____, 20____ during the hours of __:____ to __:____

It is my responsibility to do the following:

1. To keep the civilian safe and take necessary precautions to maintain the safety.
2. To ensure the civilian do not have access to any police equipment and information such as criminal histories, MDT, evidence, and other police items.
3. To treat the civilian with respect and comply with Departmental policies respective to demeanor, professionalism, timeliness, and participation.
4. I will ensure that during all calls the civilian will remain in the vehicle.
5. I will not allow the civilian to interact with citizens, prisoners, or others while conducting routine traffic stops, investigations, or other police business.
6. I will not allow the civilian to identify as a *Deputy Constables*.
7. I will engage in safe policing tactics and not respond to calls that would place the civilian in direct unnecessary danger.

Deputy Constable's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE'S OFFICE OF PRECINCT 7

SUBJECT: Deputy's Evaluation of Participant in Ride-Along Program

TO: Administrative Division

FROM: **Deputy Constables** _____

EVALUATION OF: _____

ON (date) _____, I participated in a Ride-Along Program with the above-named person.

My impressions of this person and his/her conduct during the Ride-Along are as follows:

(Deputy)

(Patrol Supervisor)

(Lieutenant)

(Constable)

Forward through Chain of Command to Administrative Lieutenant, Administration Division.

I. POLICY

The observer program allows citizens to voluntarily accompany Deputies and to observe law enforcement activities to better understand the problems of policing. The observer may request to ride in any area at any time or with a particular deputy. If convenient to the department and conditions permit, permission may be granted. Safety of non-police personnel shall be the primary concern.

II. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures for persons, sworn and non-sworn, riding in a Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 vehicle.

III. PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO RIDE

A. Persons authorized to ride *without the Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 Release of Claims*:

1. Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 Deputies who are off-duty;
2. Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 Reserve Deputies ;
3. Any person riding for the furtherance of an official police duty; i.e., prisoners, witnesses, victims, etc.;
4. To courteously serve the public, citizens in need of assistance of a non-official capacity, upon approval of a supervisor, may be transported to a reasonable location *within Harris County*
5. Active duty and reserve duty deputies of other agencies in the performance of official duties; and
6. Non-sworn Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 employees in the performance of official police duties.

B. Persons authorized to ride upon execution of *Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 Release of Claims*

1. Off-duty peace officers from other agencies;
2. News media, upon written approval of the Deputy Chief; and
3. Any other person, upon written approval of the Deputy Chief

IV. GUIDELINES FOR PERSONS RIDING ON A RELEASE OF CLAIMS

A. Request

1. Persons who are eighteen (18) years of age or older and wish to ride in a Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 police unit must complete and submit the Harris County Constable's Office of Precinct 7 Rider Information Form and the Release of Claims Form.
2. The Rider Information Form and the Release of Claims Form shall be submitted to the Administrative Supervisor during normal business hours and must allow a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours advance notice.
3. In the discretion of the Deputy Chief, this requirement may be waived in the case of full-time, part-time, or reserve off-duty peace officers from other agencies.

B. Process Written Request/Release of Claim

1. The written request form, which includes the Release of Claims Form, will be utilized to evaluate the need for the person to ride, and to screen the rider to ensure that the person does not have an unacceptable criminal record and/or outstanding warrants.

(The person requesting to ride must never have been convicted of a felony or any offense involving moral turpitude).
2. The record and warrant check, when completed, will be attached to the written request form.
3. Once the written request form has been approved by the Deputy Chief or his designee, the approved time period by which the citizen may ride will be documented on the form.
4. The approved rider will be notified and given a copy of the written request form and a copy of the citizen observer instructions and rules. The approved rider must present his/her copy of the written request form and a photo I.D. to the on-duty supervisor who accommodates the rider's request for an observation ride.
5. Once the application is submitted, dispatch will email the rider a link to the Criminal Justice Information Services online course. Once the course is completed, they must submit certificate of completion. The rider has 48 hours before their scheduled ride along to complete and produce the course certificate.
6. The written request form and all record/warrant checks will be maintained in the office of the records supervisor in a designated file.

7. Only one rider will be allowed to ride during each shift.
8. Citizen observers will normally be allowed to ride four times per year, unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Chief. (The Deputy Chief's office shall maintain accurate records indicating the number of times each citizen observer rides in each calendar year.)
9. Citizen observers will normally ride for a four (4) hour period, unless circumstances justify otherwise. Additional time may be approved by the supervisor on the shift to which the rider has been assigned.

C. Dress and Grooming Standards

1. Observers in the Ride Along Program must dress and groom themselves in an appropriate and business-like manner. The on-duty supervisor or designee will make final approval of the observer's dress and appearance while riding in a police vehicle.
2. Minimum requirements consist of slacks or dress jeans and a collared shirt for males, slacks or dress jeans and blouse for females. T-shirts, tattered or unsightly blue jeans are not considered to be acceptable attire.
3. Riders will be clean and neat in appearance, hair will be neatly groomed at all times without presenting a ragged, unkempt, bushy or extreme appearance.
4. No observer shall wear on their clothing, anything that advertises any product, business or organization, nor shall they wear any sign, logo, symbol or word(s) that are inflammatory in nature.
5. Off-duty deputies from other law enforcement agencies *may not wear* their agency's uniform when off-duty and riding and must adhere to the specified attire and grooming standards. If a weapon is to be exposed, the off-duty officer's badge shall be displayed in a prominent manner.

D. Citizen Observer Instructions/Rules

Observers in the Ride Along Program are guests of the Police Department and shall conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Observers will:

1. Not use alcoholic beverages immediately prior to or during the watch in which they are authorized to ride;
2. Not use profane or abusive language or behave in any manner that would provoke or escalate tension;
3. Not enter into any investigation or converse with any citizen, witness or prisoner concerning a police incident or investigation;

4. Not make known to unauthorized persons the identity of persons arrested, detained, confined in jail or suspected of an offense;
5. Not operate or use any police equipment or vehicle, or any item in police custody or control except during the case of an extreme emergency when instructed to do so by a *Deputy Constables*;
6. Not carry a firearm (unless they are commissioned peace officers with their department badge) or convey the impression to anyone that they are peace officers;
7. Not carry any weapon
8. Remain in the police vehicle during routine traffic stops and disturbance calls of serious nature. They shall not enter a residence, building or other building, public or private, from which the public would be excluded due to a police incident or by the owner of the property; and
9. Obey without question any instructions in the furtherance of the police missions given by a *Deputy Constables*.

DEPUTY CONSTABLE

- A. It will be the responsibility of the patrol *Deputy Constables* who is assigned a rider to advise dispatch of the citizen observer. Each *Deputy Constables* shall ensure that all precautions are taken for the safety of the rider.
- B. The deputy constable will show themselves “out of service with a special detail: civilian ride along” in CAD. This will help document the start and finish of the ride-along.
- C. For the safety of citizen observers, a *Deputy Constables* may, under certain circumstances, determine that their presence at a scene is not advisable. In such a case, the *Deputy Constables* may leave the citizen observer at a safe location within Harris County. If, for any reason, the observer must be left for an extended duration, another Deputy Constable or employee will be notified, and the rider will be picked up.
- D. Deputy constables will immediately report to their supervisors any interference with their duties or willful non-compliance with instructions, rules, or regulations on the part of observers.
- E. Any supervisor, at their discretion, may cause or permit the termination of an observer's privilege to ride along when the effectiveness of the police mission and/or operations is compromised. The supervisor terminating the privilege shall submit a memorandum to the Chief Deputy citing the reason for termination.

- F. Deputy constables will immediately notify their supervisor if any observer is injured while riding, and they will submit a written report of the incident to the Chief Deputy.
- G. At the conclusion of the ride-along, the *Deputy Constables* will fill out an evaluation form of the rider, and this will be placed in the rider's file.

II. EFFECTIVE DATE

- A. Any previous directive, rule, order or regulation that pertains to this subject matter and its amendments shall remain in full force and effect for any violations which occur prior to the effective date of this Order.
- B. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this Order is, for any reason, held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Order.
- C. The effective date is stated in the header block of this policy.

Policy Implementation Ordered By:

Chief Deputy M. Grant

Executive Chief Deputy

06/01/2025

Effective Date: