


POLICY 106.5	OBSERVER RIDING PROCEDURES	
	REVISED: 1/93, 10/07, 06/11, 12/13	RELATED POLICIES:
	CFA STANDARDS:	REVIEWED: 04/00, 10/07, 06/11, 12/13

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to create guidelines for the control and administration of civilian requests to ride as observers with members of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department.

B. POLICY

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department recognizes the educational benefit in allowing civilians to ride as observers with non-probationary officers and detectives. Civilians will be allowed to ride as observers and will be required to adhere to the guidelines and criteria established in this policy.

C. PROCEDURE

1. Age: Civilian observers must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Civilians currently enrolled in an accredited program of study directly associated with or aligned with a criminal justice career, are exempt but must be at least sixteen years (16) of age. Documentation of enrollment in such a program must accompany the request. Any other requests by under age individuals must be approved by a lieutenant.
2. Authorization: Permission MUST be obtained at least two (2) days in advance from the shift lieutenant of the district or the captain of the unit in which the observer wishes to ride. A completed "Request For Permission To Ride As An Observer" form must be submitted at that time.
3. Background Check: All observers will be required to submit to a NCIC/FCIC and Criminal History (part 1 and 2) review prior to riding as an observer. Any pending/unresolved felony charges or felony conviction will disqualify the observer. Observers will not be allowed entry into the Communications Center prior to or during a background check. Sergeants or higher authority will complete this background check.
4. Limits
 - a. Observers are limited to one ride in any six month period. Exceptions may be granted by a lieutenant or higher authority for reasonable cause. Examples include, but are not limited to prospective employees, homeowner association members, student interns, educational projects or surveys.
 - b. A computer file will be established and maintained by the patrol secretary to track all observers. This file will contain the names of observers and the

assigned officers/detectives as well as the date of the ride. A copy of all completed observer forms will be forwarded to the patrol secretary's office to accomplish this task.

- c. Members of Department employee's family are prohibited from riding as an observer with that employee, but may be assigned to ride with other officers/detectives.
5. **Assignment of Observers:** Observers will be assigned to non-probationary officers/detectives on a volunteer basis, when possible. During the two (2) day advance notice, every effort will be made to assign the observer to a shift/area which both satisfies the need/objective of the observation and assists in locating a volunteer officer. If volunteers are not located, observers will be assigned by supervisors. Officer's assigned observers will advise Communications that an observer will be riding with the officer for the shift or portion of the shift.
6. **Identification:** All observers will be required to display an ID card on their outer clothing at all times while riding as an observer. This ID card will identify the civilian as an observer to other police officers and the public. The ID cards will be maintained in Property Control and signed out by the officer/detective assigned to the observer. The officer/detective will be responsible for the return of the ID card to Property Control.
7. **Dress Code:** All observers will be required to be attired in appropriate dress. Collared shirt and slacks are suggested. Tee shirts, shorts, leggings and other inappropriate clothing are prohibited. Permission to ride as an observer may be withdrawn by a supervisor if the observer is dressed inappropriately.
8. **Activity:** All observers will remain under the direct supervision of the assigned officer/detective. Observers will remain in the vehicle unless authorized by the officer/detective to exit the vehicle. As permitted under F.S.S. 901.18, police officers making lawful arrests may command the aid of persons he deems necessary to make the arrest. However, observers will not take active roles in the apprehension of suspects unless circumstances dictate that the offender will be able to successfully resist the arrest without such aid. Observers are prohibited from taking an active role in in-progress calls or the searching of suspects. Observers are prohibited from entering crime scenes without the consent of a supervisor. Observers will not handle evidence or establish any dialog with suspects, witnesses, arrestees or victims. Any violation by the observer can result in the immediate termination of the authorization to ride as an observer. Termination of authorization can be initiated by any supervisor.

D. EXCEPTIONS

Any deviation from the established criteria and procedures of this policy must be with the authorization of a captain or higher authority.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO RIDE AS OBSERVER AND HOLD-HARMLESS / INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

The undersigned, being over the age of eighteen, does hereby request the Fort Lauderdale Police Department for permission to ride, as an observer only, in an authorized Fort Lauderdale Police Department motor vehicle. This observation is for the purpose of educational benefit. If permission is granted, I hereby agree to obey at all times all instructions, orders, and commands given me by the officer or officers in command of any vehicle in which I may be riding. I fully realize and appreciate the basic nature of law enforcement work and the possibility that situations will arise which might result in my being exposed to the danger of physical or emotional harm or injury, including, but not limited to, motor vehicle accidents. I knowingly and voluntarily accept these risks. I understand that my observation may be terminated at any time without notice by the Fort Lauderdale Police Department.

WHEREFORE, in consideration of the educational benefit to the below named person and the granting of the above request, the undersigned hereby agree to hold the City of Fort Lauderdale, its Commission, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department and its Chief, employees, agents and servants harmless from any and all liability for personal or emotional injury or property damage, whether proximate or remote, sustained during the period of time said person may be in the capacity of an observer, as aforesaid. Furthermore, the undersigned agree to indemnify the City of Fort Lauderdale, its Commission, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department and its Chief, employees, agents and servants from any and all damage, actions, suits, claims or demands of whatsoever kind, made by or on behalf of any person or entity, as a result of the City of Fort Lauderdale granting the below named person the status as Observer, including but not limited to reasonable attorney fees and costs.

Print Name	DOB	Race/Sex	Drivers License #, State
Address	City	State,	Zip Code
Local address (if different than above)	Local daytime phone #	Local evening phone #	
Social Security #	Day requested	Date requested	District 1 2 3 Shift 1 2 3 Early Late (circle shift and early or late)

Reason For Riding As Observer _____

Signature: Observer _____ Unit Requesting (name of person or unit initiating) _____

NCIC/FCIC, CRIMINAL HISTORY Yes _____ No _____ Done by _____
CCN

Approved: Lieutenant _____ CCN# _____ Date: _____

Not Approved: Lieutenant _____ CCN# _____ Reason: _____

Observation Time: _____
(Day) (Date) Shift #

Unit Assigned: _____

Distribution: ORIGINAL-Police Secretary COPY-Observer