

Ames Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

Book: 2 – Routine Operations
Section: IV – Public Education
Chapter: 1 – **Observer Program**
Date Approved: 05-21-2013 Revision No.: New Approved by: 
Review Date: 2019

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for non-Ames Fire Department personnel to observe the operations of the Ames Fire Department. The Ames Fire Department recognizes that occasionally people express interest in observing the operations of our Fire Department. Some are interested in becoming emergency service workers; some are involved in educational research, while others are simply interested in the activities of the Ames Fire Department.

POLICY:

Interested persons wanting to ride with the Ames Fire Department as an observer fall into one of two categories: Ride Along and Job Shadow.

- A Ride Along must be at least 18 years of age, have a valid photo ID, and meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Currently enrolled in a college level Fire Science Program
 - Active Story County emergency responder
 - Currently on a certified Civil Service list for the Ames Fire Department,
 - Have written approval from the Fire Chief
- A Job Shadow must be at least 14 years of age

All riders must complete and sign an Ames Fire Department *Rider Request Form*, *Rules of Conduct Form*, and a *Waiver and Release of Claims and Indemnity Agreement*.

PROCEDURE:

Dress

Observers are required to dress appropriately, including:

- Dark pants
- Closed toes shoes
- Plain shirt/blouse appropriate for the season, without pictures or words.
Exceptions include any regionally accredited school-approved uniform or outside department-approved uniform.
- A City of Ames “observer” identification

Shift Commander Duties

- The on-duty Shift Commander will determine the station and apparatus placement of the observer, in most cases attempting to limit riders to no more than one rider at any one time on any piece of apparatus.

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- The on-duty Shift Commander has the ability to refuse any observer's privileges based on inappropriate dress (e.g., open-toed shoes, plaid shirt, etc.), time requested (e.g., interference with fire department events, etc.), or offensive body art.
- The Shift Commander or observer may terminate an observer's participation at any time.
- The Shift Commander has the authority to approve extensions of the typical 12-hour time frame for a Ride Along, but it should not involve an overnight stay.
- The Shift Commander has the authority to approve extensions of the typical 3-hour time frame for a Job Shadow, but it should not involve an overnight stay.

Privacy

- The use of personal picture capturing/recording devices require prior authorization from the Fire Chief or his/her designee.
- Any and all personal information regarding fire/EMS cases or other incidents including names, medical history, and statements overheard or ascertained will remain confidential in compliance with federal HIPAA regulations.

On Scene

Observers will not be asked to participate in emergency scene activities, and only exit the Fire Department vehicle in which they are riding with officer permission.

Travel

Observers are responsible for their own transportation to and from the Fire Department.

REFERENCES:

[Ames Fire Department Job Shadow Request Form](#)

[Ames Fire Department Personnel Ride Along Report](#)

[Ames Fire Department Ride Along Request Form](#)

[Ames Fire Department Rules of Conduct Form](#)

[City of Ames Fire Department Waiver and Release of Claims and Indemnity Agreement](#)