



# **GREAT BEND FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM RULES**

### **Purpose**

To establish the necessary criteria and procedures for authorizing citizens to ride in Great Bend Fire Department emergency vehicles to observe members of the fire department. Only those persons with written authorization will be allowed to participate in the ride-along program. Priority will be given to students, nurses and physicians enrolled in a school or hospital affiliated program. Exceptions may be granted by the Fire Chief or his designee.

### **Scope**

The Great Bend Fire Department encourages community involvement in the operation of the fire department both during emergency and non-emergency related events. The ride-along program allows students to ride as observers with fire department personnel for legitimate civic or educational reasons. The ride-along program shall be regulated through the Great Bend Fire Department's administration.

### **Guidelines**

#### **1. Eligible Participants**

- All persons wishing to participate in the ride-along program must be pre-approved by the Fire Chief or his designee.
- Participants must be 16 years of age or older.

#### **2. Approval and Assignments**

- All requests for participation in the ride-along program must be referred to the fire department administration office a minimum of 14 days prior to the event.
- All persons desiring to participate in the program must complete the Great Bend Fire Department Ride-Along Application and Liability/Confidentiality Waiver. The forms shall be submitted to the fire department's administrative office.
- Approved participants will be required to receive Great Bend Fire Department training in HIPAA (patient confidentiality), safety and infection control. This may be conducted prior to the ride along with the on-duty Battalion Chief or his designee.
- Participants will be instructed when and where to report. The Battalion Chief shall be notified of the scheduled ride along. The Battalion Chief shall be responsible for the placement of the participant.

- Every effort should be made to avoid delay and the participant should begin the ride-along at the scheduled time.
- The Great Bend Fire Department administration will maintain all records relating to the ride-along program, including the original request and release forms, for five years.
- Ride-along participants shall have their name entered into the daily log as a ride-along. Their name shall also be listed in applicable fire and EMS reports for which they attend.

### 3. Participant Restrictions

- Participants shall be limited to a ride-along maximum of 12 hours or portion thereof in any six-month period. Exceptions to this rule may be made for field internships. Participants who desire to ride-along more than once in six months must make a specific request to the Fire Chief or his designee. These requests will be carefully screened before waiving this limitation.
- Ride-alongs shall only be permissible between the hours of 0700-1900 hours. (Exceptions may be made for those currently participating in a school or hospital affiliated program.)
- Ride-along participants for fire incidents shall be considered an observer only and shall be under the direct supervision of the Officer or his designee during the ride-along. Participants shall be instructed to remain in the fire apparatus at all times except when authorized to leave by the Officer.
- Ride-along participants for emergency medical incidents shall be considered an observer only, regardless of certification, and shall be under the direct supervision of the Office or his designee during the ride-along.
- In accordance with department policy, participants shall wear seat belts.
- The assigned Officer or designee shall take responsible care to prevent the participant from becoming physically involved in or assisting in the following types of incidents:
  - a. Crime scenes
  - b. Violent patients
  - c. Patients with known infectious diseases
  - d. Fire ground operations
  - e. Situations involving or likely to involve the display or use of firearms
  - f. Other activities or situations that are likely to increase the participant's risk of exposure.
- If the Officer or designee receives a potentially hazardous call or realizes that they may become immediately involved in a potentially hazardous situation, the observer should be instructed to remain in the vehicle.
- At no time shall a participant become involved in assisting during an event of physical violence from another person. The participant has the right to use fire department communication devices to contact Fire Dispatch for the purpose of requesting assistance.
- Ride-along participants, who are not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law, may be allowed to carry a concealed handgun, consistent with the Personal and Family Protection Act, during the ride-along and are under the same regulations as City employees.
  - a. Any employee carrying a concealed handgun within a City building pursuant to the provisions of state law must keep the handgun completely concealed, in a proper holster or similar product, with all safety features in place.
  - b. Storage of Concealed/Carry Firearms: It is the sole responsibility of the employee to maintain control of his/her concealed firearm and ammunition by ensuring that such firearm is on his or her person and attended at all times.
  - c. No handgun shall be left unattended or stored in any city facility or building.
  - d. Employees are also permitted, while on City owned property, to store a firearm within their own vehicle provided that such storage is outside of plain view from the

exterior of the vehicle and that the vehicle is locked when the employee is not in the vehicle.

- e. Any employee who stores a concealed firearm in a vehicle owned by the City of Great Bend, Kansas, during the course of employment must store the firearm in a locked case and place the case out of plain view from the exterior of the vehicle. It is the responsibility of said employee to purchase the locked case at his or her personal expense. The City shall not be responsible for the theft, damage or other loss of a firearm and/or locked case left in a City owned vehicle.
- f. Other than certified law enforcement officers, it is outside of the course and scope of employment for any City employee or contractor to brandish, intentionally display, use, discharge, point or threaten any person with the use of a weapon in the workplace or in the exercise of his or her duties.
- g. An employee's failure to maintain a firearm in a concealed manner or locked as described herein could result in discipline, up to and including termination.
- h. In the event a City employee or official discharges a firearm while on duty, the Great Bend Police Department shall investigate the discharge and file a report of the investigation with the department head of the City department employing the employee. Based on such report, the department head will determine whether it constitutes grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination, subject to the procedures outlined in this handbook. The discharge of a firearm while on duty may also result in criminal charges.

Subject to other policies and procedures of the City of Great Bend, Kansas, and Kansas law, law enforcement officers are the only individuals authorized to use deadly force while action for and on behalf of the city of Great Bend, Kansas. Under no circumstances will any other employee use deadly force as a function of their job. Employees who are not authorized to use deadly force do not have the immunities and are not entitled to the same indemnity afforded law enforcement and other employees authorized to carry firearms within the scope of their employment. The City will not provide for, reimburse, or pay attorney fees or other costs in defense of any employee who uses deadly force if the use of deadly force is not a function of said employee's job.

- At no time will a rider be permitted to take pictures, use a video camera or any audio-visual recording device while on the scene of an incident, unless with a department provided camera for department use. Requests for media ride-alongs will be considered separately through the Great Bend Fire Department administrative office.
- At no time will a rider be permitted to use any tobacco products while on the scene of an incident. Any tobacco use while not on an incident will be in a designated area with the permission of the officer or designee in charge.

#### 4. Dress Requirements

Participants shall be appropriately dressed when reporting for the ride-along assignment. The on-duty Officer shall deny participation to any person who is inappropriately dressed or who reports for the ride-along in a condition that would compromise the safety or best interest of the department, the assigned shift, the public or the participant.

- Shoes: Closed toe shoes with a good no-slip shall be worn.
- Pants: Long pants that sit at the waist shall be worn. Undergarments should not be visible when in a normal standing position. No rips or faded pants will be allowed.
- Shirt: Solid colored dress or polo-style shirts shall be worn. Shirts with small designer logos shall be permitted. No t-shirts are allowed.
- Participants from school or hospital programs may wear approved class uniforms.
- Minimal Jewelry. No nose, eyebrow or facial piercings allowed.

- Hair: Long hair shall be pulled back and tied so as not to interfere with activities.
- A traffic vest will be provided and shall be worn at all times outside the apparatus when on emergency calls.

#### 5. Participant Duties

All ride-along participants will be required to perform the following work assignments:

- Assist with carrying equipment to and from incidents.
- Assist with minor cleaning and/or restocking of apparatus after incidents.
- Assist crew members as needed under direction of the Officer.

## Required Application Forms

1. Great Bend Fire Department Ride-Along Application and Liability/Confidentiality Waiver