



# CRYSTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Department Policy Manual

TITLE: Citizen Observer Program  
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### PURPOSE

The Citizen Observer Program is a program in which a participant may accompany an officer during a shift, observing most facets of police work. The program is an educational experience for the participant. It includes, but is not limited to, a demonstration by the host officer of various police equipment, the jail facility and various police procedures. It also provides the participant a chance to observe the host officer's interaction with the public and to receive information in any other area of law enforcement in which they have an interest.

### POLICY

#### OFFICER ELIGIBILITY

Only officers who have successfully completed their probationary status as a police officer can be designated as the host officer. Participation is also based on the officer's past performance, positive interaction with the public and interest in the program. All officers are eligible if the participant is an immediate family member of the officer.

Eligibility status can be revoked for officer misconduct.

If an officer elects not to participate in the Citizen Observer Program, that preference will be in force for all potential observers, including friends and family.

#### OBSERVER PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

Those eligible to participate in the program once a year are:

- City employees;
- POST certified police officers from other jurisdictions;
- Residents of the city of Crystal, 16 years of age or older;
- Non-residents 18 years of age or older if:
  - Criminal justice student fulfilling a course-required ride along
  - Criminal justice professional
  - Current applicants with the Crystal Police Department who have passed the first interview
  - Other persons, at the discretion of the Patrol Lieutenant

Those eligible to participate in the program up to three times a year (once every 4 months) are:

- Elected government representatives
- Members of print or electronic media, 18 years of age or older;

- Immediate family members and acquaintances of Crystal police officers. (Immediate family members are defined as spouse, children, siblings, or parents.)

Parties wishing to participate as an observer must submit an application and signed “Release and Indemnity Agreement” to the Chief of Police, Patrol Lieutenant or Sergeant at least 72 hours before the desired date of the ride-along.

Applicants must submit to a check of criminal history, warrants, court orders, and police contacts prior to being approved as an observer. City employees, police explorers, and police reserves are exempt from the criminal history check and application, but must complete the release and indemnity agreement.

The Crystal Police Department reserves the right to refuse applicants for the following:

- Applicant does not complete the application properly
- Applicant’s criminal history, warrant, court order, and/or police contact history is unacceptable
- Applicants do not meet the policy standards to qualify as an observer
- Time of day, calls for service, staffing levels, work load, equipment shortages, or other reasonable factors preclude the presence of an observer.

## RESTRICTIONS

Not all situations encountered by police officers are appropriate to be observed by a program participant. Officers who are hosting a citizen observer, must be sensitive to those situations where the privacy or confidentiality of an individual takes precedence and must restrict the observer’s access to these situations, (i.e. victims of sexual assault, the booking process, juvenile records, etc.).

Citizen Observers are not allowed to enter or accompany the hosting police officer into any private residence to witness a search or an arrest.

Although the citizen observer assumes responsibility for any personal injury as a result of the inherent risks associated with this program, officers hosting an observer should try to reduce the observer’s exposure to the risks and dangers that may result in personal injury.

Host officers reserve the right to extend or curtail the citizen observer time period on reasonable grounds. Participating observers who refuse to follow instruction, conduct themselves in a manner that reflects poorly on the Crystal Police Department, or distract an officer from job duties shall be returned to the station and have their observation period ended.

The Chief of Police or his/her designee reserves the right to temporarily suspend all citizen observer sessions during periods of unrest, low staffing, equipment shortages, elevated risk, natural disaster, or on other reasonable grounds.