
	<b>MESQUITE POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>
	<b>230.00 PATROL OBSERVATION PROGRAM</b>
	<b>Effective Date: May, 2017</b>
	<b>Approved:</b> _____  <b>Chief of Police</b>

**I. Policy Statement**

To establish procedures to help ensure the safety of observers who wish to observe patrol activity by accompanying an officer on patrol. This practice will be beneficial to both observers and officers who participate in the program. Both parties will gain a better understanding of police/public contacts, and both will be able to provide input toward positive ideas for improving the community. The policy of this department is to allow civilians to ride with on-duty patrol officers as observers. The procedures outlined below will regulate all aspects of when a civilian may ride in a patrol vehicle in an attempt to minimize any disruption to the patrol officer's obligations, and avoid undue risk to the civilian. Any deviation of this policy must be at the direction of the Chief of Police.

**II. Definitions**

- A. City of Mesquite Employee: Any paid employee of the City of Mesquite, Texas.
- B. Family Member: Parents, siblings, adult children, aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws and grandparents of Mesquite Police Department employees.
- C. Federal Law Enforcement Officer: Criminal law enforcement officers of the United States Government, authorized to carry a firearm in the course of their duties during non-emergency conditions.
- D. Governmental Official: Elected members of the Mesquite City Council; the City Management Staff; Judges of Local, State and Federal Courts; elected members of the State and Federal Governments; County, State and Federal District Attorneys and their salaried assistants; Probation and Parole Officers; Prosecutors of the Mesquite Municipal Court; and elected members of the Mesquite Independent School District.
- E. Media Representative: Any media representative including both print and electronic media.
- F. Observation Coordinator: The Lieutenant of the Staff Support Bureau or in his absence, the Training Coordinator.
- G. Patrol Observation Program: A program developed by the Mesquite Police Department for the purpose of exposing citizens to police work in general and allow for greater governmental transparency.
- H. Patrol Observer: A person authorized to ride with a patrol officer for the purpose of observing. The observer is not an active participant in the patrol and they will receive no remuneration for their time.
- I. Peace Officer: As defined in Article 2.12 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and are currently licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.
- J. Spouse: Licensed or common law husband or wife of Mesquite Police Department employees.
- K. Weapon: As described by Chapter 46 of the Texas Penal Code.

**III. Who may engage in patrol observation.**

- A. Any citizen of the City of Mesquite who is 18 years of age or older and otherwise qualifies for the observation program under this directive.
- B. Any person who is employed in the City of Mesquite who is 18 years of age or older and otherwise qualifies for the observation program under this directive.
- C. Members of the Mesquite Police Department Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association.

- D. Employees of the City of Mesquite.
  - E. Government Officials.
  - F. Persons completing a Mesquite Police Department Internship who are 18 years of age or older.
  - G. Active peace officers from other jurisdictions or federal law enforcement officers.
  - H. Police applicants, with the approval of a command level officer in the Staff Support Bureau.
  - I. Members of the Mesquite Police Department Explorer Post who are 16 years of age or older and have completed the required training.
  - J. Media representatives, with the approval of the Mesquite Police Department public information officer.
  - K. Persons enrolled in an institute of higher education who in order to complete a course of study requests observation time to do research. This person must present a letter of introduction from the professor for whom the research is being completed.
  - L. Spouses or relatives of Mesquite police officers are eligible to ride as outlined in these guidelines. Spouses will not be allowed to ride with their officer spouse.
- IV. Duties of the Watch Commander or their designee:
- A. The civilian will sign a waiver prior to participation, and a new waiver will be signed for each observation. The Watch Commander will keep the waivers in a file in the watch commander's office.
  - B. Each patrol observer must sign a CJIS confidentiality agreement each time they observe. The Watch Commander will maintain the agreements in a file in the Watch Commander's office.
  - C. Request a government issued picture identification card from the observer. Make a copy of the identification and place it with the application.
  - D. Run the observer for warrants and criminal history on NCIC.
    - 1. When running criminal histories the purpose code is "C" with a notation of "civilian patrol observer".
  - E. Assign the civilian to an officer who has indicated a willingness to participate in the program.
  - F. If a governmental official or media representative requests a patrol observation the Watch Commander will notify his chain of command and the Public Information Officer of the request.
  - G. Ensure that proper procedures are followed.
- V. Duties of the officer
- A. The assigned officer will control the activities of the rider. Discretion must be used in order to provide safety and protection
  - B. The officer will require the rider to stay in the patrol vehicle if potential risk is anticipated. If deemed appropriate, the officer will drop the rider at a safe location and advise dispatch of that location.
  - C. If the rider does not obey all instructions, the officer will proceed to the Watch Commander's office as soon as possible.
- VI. Procedures- These procedures apply to persons who wish to observe an on-duty patrol officer.
- A. The potential patrol observer will make a request to the Observation Coordinator as to the date and time he/she wishes to engage in a patrol observation. The request should be made no less than 5 business days in advance of the requested date. The Observation Coordinator will contact the Watch Commander and have the request approved. In the absence of the Observation Coordinator, the civilian may direct the request directly to the Watch Commander for approval and future scheduling.
  - B. MCPAAA members will be allowed to observe for 10 hours each quarter. Interns, Explorers and persons conducting research are limited to a schedule approved by the

Observation Coordinator. All other observers will be allowed to observe for 10 hours each calendar year.

- C. Observers must wear conservative clothing, and must be clean and well groomed. Observers must wear a ballistic vest during the observation. A selection of ballistic vests will be kept in the patrol storage room for use by observers. Unacceptable attire includes:

1. Jeans
2. T-shirts
3. Any shirt advertising a product or business
4. Sandals
5. Shorts
6. Attire that has "POLICE" written on it that could cause citizens to believe they are being identified as a police officer
7. Black or camouflage military style clothing

- D. The person requesting the patrol observation may be declined or disqualified from participating for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

1. The person does not possess government issued picture identification.
2. Wearing unacceptable attire.
3. The person has outstanding warrants of any type.
4. The person has a conviction of, is under indictment for, or is currently charged with any offense of a class A misdemeanor or above, or a similar type of conviction from another state or under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.
5. The person has been arrested for a crime involving sexual misconduct or moral turpitude.
6. The person has been arrested for a class B misdemeanor or above in the last 10 years.
7. The person has a history of family violence as the primary aggressor, has been arrested or convicted of family violence.
8. The person is a known associate of a convicted felon or criminal street gang member.
9. The person is a known member of, or associates with, any person or organization, association, or movement which advocates the commission of acts of force or violence to deny others their constitutional rights or which seeks to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means.
10. The person appears to be under the influence of a mind altering drug or gives the appearance of mental illness.
11. The Mesquite Police Department reserves the right to deny any person a patrol observation. If a supervisor denies a person an observation session, they shall submit a memo to the Chief of Police explaining the circumstances that lead to their decision.

## VII. Rules of Conduct for Patrol Observers

- A. The observer should follow instructions/directions as given by the officer. Failure to comply will result in immediate termination of the observation session.
- B. The observer will not:
1. Be allowed to operate police equipment, or handle any evidence or property unless instructed to do so by the officer.
  2. Become involved in discussions with suspects, victims or witnesses or engage in any activity that could hamper an investigation.
  3. Make known to any unauthorized person the identity of persons arrested, detained, confined in jail or suspected of any offense.

4. Be under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, or have the odor of an alcoholic beverage on their breath.
5. Carry any type of weapon as described by Chapter 46 of the Texas Penal Code, or convey the impression, or state to anyone that they are a police officer. Concealed handgun license holders are not exempt from the prohibition against the carrying of a firearm during an observation session.
6. Become engaged in any physical struggle unless instructed to do so by the officer in an emergency situation.

EFFECTIVE: August, 2003; REVISED: March, 2013; REVISED: May, 2017