



# COSUMNES FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Civilian Ride-Along Program

### *Preparing for Your Civilian Ride-Along*

**PURPOSE:** This is an informational guide to help ensure your participation in the Civilian Ride-Along Program (ride-along) is a meaningful, educational, and safe experience.

Please review the following requirements before reporting to your assigned ride-along location. You must follow the direction of the company officer and other fire personnel you are assigned to during your ride-along.

#### **Confidentiality, Patient and Family Privacy**

- All information that is disclosed during a ride-along is confidential.
- Patient and family privacy is to be maintained at all times.
- It is important to remember most incidents involve patients and issues of a confidential and sensitive nature.
- All of the information observed and heard on an incident must be held in confidence and not shared with others, including your family and friends after your ride-along has concluded.
- You will be allowed inside private residences or situations only when the captain, or designee, has determined it is appropriate.
- During periods when personal or medical information is being obtained (i.e. name, social security number, etc.), you will be directed to remain out of the immediate area.
- The company officer, or designee, will take all reasonable steps necessary to maintain the confidentiality of any of the patient's personal and medical information. Medical reports reviewed, used, or generated by Cosumnes Fire Department staff that identify the patient may not be shared with you, whether inadvertently or intentionally.
- **NO AUDIO, STILL PHOTOS, OR VIDEO RECORDINGS MAY BE MADE ON EMERGENCY INCIDENTS DURING YOUR RIDE-ALONG.**
- The company officer, or designee, will discuss with you the expectations regarding confidentiality, as outlined in the Cosumnes Fire Department Civilian Ride-Along Waiver and Confidentiality Agreement you signed when you submitted your application.
- If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

#### **Incidents**

- Be prepared. You will be accompanying our firefighters on real emergency incidents.
- Each incident will present a different set of situations and circumstances.
- You must be prepared to witness potentially graphic scenes and emotional events.
- You may end your ride-along at any time if the exposure to these events becomes too uncomfortable.
- Please advise the company officer, or designee, if this is an item that you would like to discuss in more detail.

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#### Attire

- Appropriate attire is required at all times. Please consider the predicted weather during your ride-along.
- Recommended Attire:
  - Collared (polo or button-down) shirt without a logo or advertising, slacks, and closed-toe shoes.
  - Ball caps without a logo or advertising may be allowed.
- Unacceptable Attire:
  - Sandals, T-shirts, tank tops, shorts, skirts, dresses and blue jeans are not permitted.
  - Personnel from other fire departments or other agencies shall not wear their agency uniform.
  - Attire that may cause the ride-along participant to be confused with Cosumnes Fire Department personnel, i.e. blue on blue clothing, blue BDU's etc.
- The Battalion Chief or assigned unit officer will make the final decision regarding any questions pertaining to suitability of attire. The on-duty Battalion Chief or Fire Captain may refuse a ride-along to anyone not properly dressed.
- You will be required to wear an identification badge at all times to identify you as a Civilian Ride-Along participant. Turn in the badge to the assigned unit officer at the conclusion of your ride-along.

#### Behavior and Actions

- Appropriate behavior and conduct must be observed at all times.
- Being a part of the crew makes you part of our team. You must conduct yourself as though you represent the Cosumnes Fire Department.
- Improper conduct will result in you being asked to leave. You will be excluded from any further ride-along opportunities in the future.
- The fire station is a public facility and may be visited by individuals from all walks of life.
- The ride-along is observational only. You will not be allowed to become involved in any emergency situations or to assist with any operations of fire apparatus.

#### Personal Belongings

- Please make every attempt to leave your personal belongings at home. The Cosumnes Fire Department is not responsible for any personal belongings that are lost or damaged during the ride-along. You may keep a small bag or backpack in the station and/or fire apparatus during your ride-along.
- If your ride-along is scheduled during lunch, you should bring a lunch for that day or check with the on-duty shift about purchasing lunch, as it will not be provided. Food and drinks are not permitted to be ingested in the emergency apparatus. Meal periods may be affected by business needs and emergency responses.

#### Media Inquiries

- The media may be present on any incident we respond to.
- All media requests and incident information are considered confidential and must be handled by the incident commander.
- Please refrain from commenting to the media. If you are asked anything by the media, politely refer them to the company officer or other Cosumnes Fire Department personnel.

**It is our honor and pleasure to share this experience with you. We expect you to adhere to the items listed above so that your experience will be one that you cherish for a lifetime.**