

STANISLAUS CONSOLIDATED FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ARTICLE: C-65
SECTION: Operations Division
DATE: June 9, 2010
SUPERSEDES: NEW
TITLE: Observer Ride-A-Long Program

PURPOSE

The Observer Ride-A-Long Program permits interested citizens to observe Stanislaus Consolidated Fire Protection District operations by riding with Command Officers or Engine Companies. The program is open to family members of fire district personnel, City officials, members of the press, visiting fire personnel from other agencies or the general public. The following procedures have been established to promote a safe experience for observers while maintaining daily operations of the district.

SCHEDULING

1. ALL observers must make an appointment and turn in the Release of Liability Form at least one week prior to the desired ride-out date. The Release of Liability will be turned into the Fire Chief and/or Operations Chief for a limited criminal background check and approval. Observers convicted of a Felony will be denied.
2. Permitted Observers shall be at least 16 years of age. Observers under the age of 18 shall have a parent or legal guardian sign the Release of Liability Form.
3. Once background checks have been approved scheduling will be handled by the Shift Battalion Chief's. This will allow for proper station scheduling and prior communication with the station captain before the desired date.
4. Station Captains making request's for individual observers shall have that rider assigned to their shift day unless arrangements have been made with another Shift Captain.
5. Observers of SCFPD shall be limited to one, 8-hour block, every 60 days. Observers shall be scheduled during normal business hours. Observers will be scheduled during normal business hours between 0800 – 1700 hrs. This will allow for appropriate rest periods for assigned fire personnel. Exceptions to this scheduled time shall be the discretion of the appropriate Battalion Chief. During these exceptions the Observer shall depart the fire station no later than 2200 hrs.

6. At no time shall an SCFPD Observer be allowed to stay overnight at the fire station.
7. It is important that each observer be aware that riding at a station is a privilege and should be regarded as such; he/she is there to observe and learn.
8. Observers shall be limited to normal work area. At no time shall riders be allowed within station dormitories & crew sleeping areas unescorted.
9. Scheduled Observers shall not be allowed if it will affect the Station Captain's planned daily duties and assignments.
10. Assigned station captain's shall have the final say on whether a observer will be allowed to ride on the engine company for the day, unless otherwise directed by the on-duty shift battalion chief.

DRESS CODE / ATTIRE

1. Company Officers are responsible for insuring that observers are appropriately attired and have observed good hygiene practices prior to the start of the scheduled time.
2. The following items are considered inappropriate and shall not be worn while observing the SCFPD. Shorts or Cut-Offs, dresses, sandals or open toe flip-flops, shirts with offensive language or designs, tank tops and baseball caps.
3. Any facial piercing except for ear rings shall be removed while observing SCFPD.
4. Any Observer failing to meet the appropriate dress and hygiene requirements, or fail to conduct his/her self in an appropriate manner will be asked to leave the station by the Company Officer immediately and will be excluded from any future observer programs. The on-duty battalion chief shall be notified immediately if this occurs.
5. Appropriate attire shall consist, long pants, shirt with a collar, safety boots (if possible), closed toe shoes if no safety boot are available.
6. Approved SCFPD T-Shirts and apparel shall not be worn by Observers of the SCFPD. This attire signifies "Rank" and employee status within the organization which they do not have ownership.
7. Observers will be issued a "SCFPD Observer" identification badge when reporting to the assigned SCFPD fire station. The I.D. badge shall be prominently displayed for the duration of the assigned riding period. The badge will be retrieved by the Company Officer at the completion of the Observer's stay.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

1. The SCFPD Observer will be issued an assigned safety vest when reporting to the assigned engine company. The safety vest shall be worn to all emergency incidents so the observer is clearly identified separate from emergency response personnel.
2. At no time shall an Observer be placed in harms way or within an IDLH atmosphere.
3. The assigned Company Officer will brief the observer on the Fire District expectations for the riding period and assure that the observer is aware of all safety requirements (vehicle seat belts, vests, etc.). The Company Officer will also explain the appropriate action to follow should the entire crew be away from the apparatus during an emergency situation.
4. At no time will an Observer be allowed to respond out-of-county with assigned fire personnel. If a Strike Team Request does present itself during Observer hours, the Observer shall remain at the station and the On-Duty Battalion Chief shall be notified.
5. Under no circumstances will fire personnel (or anyone else) ride in an unsafe position on any fire apparatus to accommodate an observer or for any other reason.
6. Due to the sensitive nature of EMS and crime scenes, the observer will be required to remain with the apparatus during these types of incidents. At no time shall Observers be allowed to enter these areas or residences during these types of incidents. It shall be the responsibility of the Company Officer to ensure the medical privacy of all patient's and patient's family members. Especially in sensitive situations and times of embarrassment.
7. Company Officers shall advise all Observers of the District Policy of "NO Smoking" within SCFPD Facilities and/or apparatus. Observers must conform to all tobacco use policies.

It is the responsibility of the SCFPD Company Officer to assure that all requirements of this procedure are adhered to during SCFPD Observations. This will ensure a safe experience for the public as well as SCFPD personnel involved.

Written by: B/C Mike Wapnowski

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