

**PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**Volume 1 – Management Procedures**

**CITIZEN OBSERVER PROGRAM**

<b>M.P. 107.02a</b>	<b>Date Revised: 02/23</b> Implemented: 12/19
This policy is for internal use only and does not expand an employee’s legal duty or civil liability in any way. This policy should not be construed as creating duty to act or a higher duty of care, with respect to third party civil claims against employees or the Phoenix Fire Department (PFD). A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by the PFD for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.	
Related Policies: Cadet Riding Procedures (M.P. 105.07a), Fire Station Use and Function (M.P. 107.01)	

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Citizen Observer Program provides interested citizens an insight into fire department activities and functions. It is a vital part of service excellence, employee retention, and department recruitment. Many, if not most, of the department membership got their start by networking through the Citizen Observer Program. The program is open to family members of Fire Department personnel, City officials, members of the press, visiting fire personnel from other cities, qualified Phoenix Fire Cadets, individuals in the process of becoming Phoenix Fire Department firefighters, members of PFD affinity groups, and on a limited basis, the general public. Qualified medical personnel (i.e. base hospital coordinators and physicians) will be scheduled through Emergency Medical Services to ride with ALS companies, all other requests will be scheduled through the appropriate Battalion Chief office.

**BASIC QUALIFICATIONS:**

Due to Operational and Security Requirements Citizen Observers must meet the following baseline criteria:

1. At least 18 years old (OR) a qualified member of the Phoenix Fire Department Cadet Program or Firefighter Development Program with parental/guardian permission (OR) a family member of a current or retired PFD employee.
  - a. Note – Any requested exception should be forwarded to the appropriate District Commander.
2. Have a completed and current background and waiver on file with Fire Investigations Unit.
3. If riding as a member of the General Public, observer must not have participated in a department ride along in any one of the preceding six months prior to the scheduled date.
  - a. Members of the press, visiting police and fire personnel, qualified Phoenix Fire Cadets, individuals in the process of becoming Phoenix Fire Department

firefighters (in testing process, in mentorship with L493 member, etc.), juveniles participating in Firefighter Development Programs, and members of PFD affinity groups may be allowed to ride as observers on multiple occasions.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS: BACKGROUND CHECK AND LIABILITY WAIVER:**

It is critical for the safety of PFD Members and for liability purposes that anyone who is not an employee has completed the background check and liability waiver. Therefore, those wishing to participate in the Citizen Observer Program must first be referred to the background and liability forms available online at the Phoenix Fire Department's website or in hard copy form at the Administrative Building. It is the responsibility of the Citizen Observer, not PFD Members, to complete these forms and this process.

1. Observer completes background form.
2. Fire Investigations administrative staff completes background check and, if approved, logs the individual as an approved Observer. Those approved will be forwarded to the appropriate District Commander for additional approval.
3. Approved Observers by District Commander will be scheduled through the Battalion Chiefs Office. The Battalion Chief will notify the appropriate company as soon as the rider has been scheduled with a minimum one shift notice to the effected crew. The information will be entered on the company activity calendar.
4. Those approved observers with a pre-existing department relationship may request dates and times through the shift Company Officer. In this case, the Company Officer will keep the Battalion Commander informed.
5. Company Officers have the final say on whether an Observer will ride on his/her apparatus during the scheduled shift.

## **OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES**

Citizen Observers are required to:

1. Dress in an appropriate and conservative manner for the current activity. When riding on apparatus, this includes long or short sleeved shirts, long pants, and closed toes shoes. Phoenix Fire Cadets should wear the appropriate uniform.
  - a. Any observer failing to meet the appropriate dress and hygiene requirements, or failing to conduct themselves appropriately, will be asked to leave the station by the Company Officer and be excluded from any future ride along programs.
  - b. If the observer is directed to leave the station the Company Officer will notify Fire Investigations Unit to be noted in the Citizen Observer Program database.
2. Wear Fire Department safety vest when observing City operations.
3. Citizen Observers will be scheduled to ride between 1800 to 2300 hours. Exceptions to these hours will be at the discretion of the appropriate Battalion Chief.
4. Observers must conform to all City policies regarding a smoke and drug free workplace.

5. Approved juveniles are prohibited from overnight stays. Ride-a-long must not go past 10:00pm.

**Citizen Observers are restricted from the following:**

1. Riding in the front or back of a rescue apparatus, utility vehicle, etc.
2. Touch, for any purpose, a PFD patient. For the purposes of this M.P. a 'Citizen Observer' are those not otherwise part of a medical internship/precept program.
3. Wearing a PFD Uniform other than the safety vest and 'Citizen Observer' badge.

The Company Officer will brief the Citizen Observer on the Fire Department's expectations for riding period and assure that the Citizen Observer is aware of all safety requirements (seat belts, vests, etc.). The Company Officer will explain to the Citizen Observer the appropriate action to follow should the entire crew be away from the apparatus during a major incident, or an incident in which the Citizen Observer is prohibited from being in the immediate area (hazardous or potentially hazardous areas).

The Company Officer will update the MCT Roster to reflect a Citizen Observer or Medical Student during their observation period.

Due to the sensitive nature of some EMS calls, the observer may be required to stay with the apparatus. It is the Company Officer's responsibility to ensure that the Citizen Observer has the opportunity to observe the incident where possible but must not allow the Citizen Observer access to a sensitive EMS situation that could embarrass the Citizen Observer, the patient or the patient's family. The Citizen Observer is also prohibited from riding in a Phoenix Fire Department ambulance in the front or with the patient. Additionally, the Citizen Observer is prohibited from any participation other than observation.

Circumstances may arise when base hospital personnel or a family member wish to ride without being cleared and scheduled. The Company Officer may grant approval in these 'two' instances as long as a scheduled rider is not displaced. The Citizen Observer Request form and liability waiver will be completed and forwarded to Fire Investigations to be logged and documented. The Company Officer will notify the Battalion Chief of any unscheduled observers as soon as possible. Scheduled riders shall always have preference over unscheduled riders.

Under no circumstance will fire personnel (or anyone else) ride in an unsafe position on any apparatus to accommodate an Observer.

It is the Company Officer's responsibility to assure that all requirements of this Management Procedure are strictly followed.

Company Officers have the final say on whether a Citizen Observer will ride on his/her apparatus during the scheduled shift.