



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
KENNETH R. BALL II, CHIEF OF POLICE

NUMBER P-2019-070	EFFECTIVE DATE October 22, 2019	RESCINDS P-10-070 Issued 05-19-10
SUBJECT Civilian Observer Procedure		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief Kenneth R. Ball II

I. POLICY

The Civilian Observer Program is designed to provide insight into the criminal justice system and the opportunity for building an open relationship of integrity and trust through observation and limited practical application. Citizens of the community are permitted to observe the operations of officers provided they have an educational or civic purpose or invitation. Citizens must meet the minimum requirements and adhere to the restrictions placed on this privilege.

II. PROCEDURE

A. REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

1. Civilian observers must be 18 years or older.
2. Having a criminal record may be grounds for disqualification.
3. The taking of photographs and audio/video recordings are not permitted.
4. Unless permission is granted by a shift commander, civilian observers will only be permitted to ride once in any 12 month period.
5. Requests to participate in the Civilian Observer Program should be made through the Patrol Operations Office.
6. Civilian observers are prohibited from using tobacco products while in the police vehicle.
7. Civilian observers are prohibited from carrying weapons or restraint devices unless they are sworn law enforcement officers from an outside agency.
8. Civilian observers will be issued and will wear a visible identification tag identifying them as a civilian observer.

B. PATROL OPERATIONS UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Give the civilian a copy of the form outlining the Civilian Observer Program.

2. Ensure that the participant is at least 18 years of age.
3. Have the civilian complete and sign the Civilian Observer Waiver Form.
4. Conduct a record check on the civilian observer and determine if they meet the requirements.
5. Maintain an alphabetical file of the completed Civilian Observer Waiver Forms. Patrol Operations will check the Civilian Observer Program files to ensure that the applicant has not taken part in the program during the previous 12 months.
6. If the applicant is approved to ride, place the completed waiver form on the clipboard in the Patrol sergeant's office.
7. Inform the participant to arrive in the Patrol sergeant's office fifteen minutes before the shift is to begin.

C. SHIFT COMMANDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Has the final decision to allow an individual to participate in the Civilian Observer Program.
2. List participants on the detail.
3. Return the waiver form to Patrol Operations. Note any comments regarding the observer on the back of the form.
4. A shift commander may allow a citizen to participate in the Civilian Observer Program who has not first applied through the Patrol Operations Office provided that the shift commander does the following:
 - a. Give the applicant a copy of the form outlining the Civilian Observer Program.
 - b. Have the applicant complete the waiver form.
 - c. Ensure that a record check is completed.

D. OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Inform the observer that they shall not leave the police vehicle at the scene of police activity without permission from the accompanying officer. They will also refrain from direct involvement in police functions.
2. Civilian observers are prohibited from entering private residences unless the controller of the property gives permission¹.

3. Should a situation arise wherein the observer becomes a hindrance to the efficient performance of duty, the officer will return the observer to the station and notify his shift commander.

By Order Of,



Kenneth R. Ball II
Chief of Police

Date OCTOBER 22, 2019

¹ Wilson vs. Layne, 526US603 (1999)