



## **RIDE-ALONG / OBSERVATION POLICY**

### **Purpose**

To establish a standard for the Acadian Ride-Along /Observation Program. This program allows interested persons and student interns to ride as observers with Acadian personnel for legitimate civic or educational reasons. The program is to provide the public and students the opportunity to observe activities of EMS services to gain a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of EMS personnel.

The Ride-Along/ Observance program shall be regulated through Acadian's Compliance Officer.

### **Policy**

It is the responsibility of all Acadian management to ensure all Ride-Along/Observers have complied with Acadian's Ride-Along/ Observance program requirements prior to riding on Acadian units or other vehicles or being given access to response locations. This includes the completion of the Ride-Along/Observer packet.

Ride-Along/Observers are those individuals who (1) are not primarily involved in the treatment of the patient; or (2) are not an Acadian employee or contractor providing quality or review oversight. It is the responsibility of the Operations Manager, or his designee, to approve all requests prior to Ride-Along/Observers riding on Acadian vehicles responding to requests for service. Individuals interested in riding-along on Acadian units or other vehicles who are under the age of 18 shall also obtain a parent or guardian signature on the Ride-Along/Observer packet.

Other than Acadian Explorers, NEMSA students, and students of other recognized EMS Education Programs that have properly contracted with Acadian through a clinical affiliation agreement<sup>1</sup>, Ride-Along/Observers are to act only as observers unless directed by Acadian management.

As a healthcare provider, Acadian is held to a higher standard than the public or the media. Acadian will not allow members of the media to be given access to response locations or to ride-along on any ambulances, sprint trucks or other company directed vehicles without prior approval from the legal department.

### **Procedure**

#### **Eligible Participants**

All persons wishing to participate in the ride-along/ observation program must be pre-approved by the Operations Manager or designee.

Participants must be 16 years of age or older and have no physical limitations of a nature which would jeopardize the safety of the individual or others.

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<sup>1</sup> All clinical affiliation agreements shall be processed through the office of NEMSA's Director, and NEMSA shall be responsible for ensuring compliance of all students participating in any clinical program.



## **Approval and Assignment Process**

All requests for riding on Acadian vehicles responding to a request for service or for access to response locations should be made in writing to the Operations Manager and/or his designee. Any request should be submitted as far in advance as possible, but not less than five business days prior to the requested ride-along/ observance date. In addition, all requests for media or non student/ educational ride alongs/ observance must get the approval of the Compliance Officer as well as the Acadian General Counsel.

Upon approval, the individual will be required to read and sign the Ride-Along/Observer packet and/or any other documents requested by Acadian. In certain circumstances the individual(s) may also be asked to participate in an educational program and enter into a contractual agreement with Acadian regarding their obligations and responsibilities.

The original signed packet and any other required documents shall be maintained on file with the Regional Administrative Assistant. A copy of the forms shall be forwarded to the Compliance Officer. The Operations Supervisor shall be responsible for the placement of the participant and ensure each ride-along/observer receives a safety briefing on general Safety guidelines, Infection Control, patient confidentiality and has an understanding of Rules of Conduct.

The Compliance Officer will maintain all records relating to the ride-along program, to include the original request and copies of information regarding all ride-along/ observation participants, for two years.

## **Participant Restrictions and Responsibilities**

### **Ride-Along Standards**

With the exception of Acadian Explorers<sup>2</sup> and students<sup>3</sup>, Ride-Along/Observer participants shall act as observers, that is, they must not become physically or verbally involved in an incident, unless directed to do so by an Acadian employee.

Ride-Along/Observer(s) shall not attempt to assist Acadian employees with any aspect of routine duties or emergency operations. Ride-Along/Observer(s) shall remain in cab during initial stages of any activity to eliminate impeding operations and safety concerns.

The Operations Supervisor, or designee, shall take reasonable care to prevent the Ride-Along/Observer from becoming physically involved in or assisting in the following types of incidents:

- Crime Scenes

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<sup>2</sup> All Acadian Explorer shifts shall be overseen by the area operations management team and approved preceptors. Students are granted the authority to perform skills to the level of training attained in the Explorer program.

<sup>3</sup> All student ride shifts shall be overseen by NEMSA with assistance from the area operations management team and NEMSA approved preceptors. Students are granted the authority to perform skills to the level of training attained in the EMS education program for which they are enrolled. Additionally, all students riding on Acadian Ambulance Service, Inc. ambulances must be a student of an approved EMS Education Program that executed and has in effect a Clinical Affiliation Agreement between the school and Acadian Ambulance Service, Inc. All students riding with Acadian Ambulance Service, Inc. under a clinical affiliation agreement must ride with a preceptor trained and approved by NEMSA.



- Violent patients
- Patients with known infectious diseases
- Situations involving or likely to involve the display or use of firearms
- Other activities or situations that is likely to increase the participant's risk or exposure.

If the Operations Supervisor, or designee, receives a potentially hazardous call or realizes they may become immediately involved in a potentially hazardous situation, the Ride-Along/Observer should be instructed to remain in the Acadian vehicle or not provided information on the location by any Acadian personnel. It is also acceptable to leave the Ride-Along/Observer at the station.

At the discretion of the preceptor, Acadian Explorers and NEMSA students may practice skills under direct observation and/or supervision<sup>4</sup>. These skills shall correspond with the scope of practice and training guidelines associated with the student's education program.

Ride-Along/Observer under the direction of the Operations Supervisor, or designee, may assist crew members as needed with minor cleaning, re-stocking of supplies and carrying equipment to and from incidents.

Failure to follow the directions of the Operations Supervisor or designee, Rules of Conduct, Acadian policies and procedures will result in removal of the privilege to participate as a Ride-Along/Observer.

### **Dress and Appearance**

Ride-Along/Observer shall be neat and clean in appearance. Their personal hygiene and grooming must be acceptable to the Operations Supervisor and/or Manager. Long hair shall be pulled back and tied so as not to interfere with activities. While participating in the Ride-Along Program, the Rider is, may be perceived as representing Acadian.

Ride-Along/Observer shall wear suitable attire. Dark pants and light plain shirts are recommended (no jeans). No writing or artwork is allowed on clothing, except small brand logos are acceptable.

Ride-Along/Observer must wear flat, closed-toe shoes (steel-toed is strongly recommended). The following clothing items are prohibited: open toe shoes, sandals, high heels, shorts, tank tops, garments with offensive messages, garments that are excessively loose, and/or excessive loose jewelry with the exception of a ring and a watch.

Students engaged in clinical shifts are required to wear uniforms and meet the grooming standards set forth in the clinical affiliation agreement executed between Acadian and their respective education institution.

Ride-alongs from agencies outside of Acadian may wear their agency uniform with prior approval. Student ride-alongs may wear their class uniforms with prior approval.

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<sup>4</sup> Id at Footnote 1 - However, Acadian Preceptors remain responsible for care and treatment of all patients and as such, Acadian Preceptors may prohibit a student from performing any skill, procedure, intervention, or other treatment if the Acadian Preceptor feels it is in the best interest of the patient.



### **Rules of Conduct<sup>5</sup>**

No firearms or other weapons may be brought onto Acadian property or carried during the ride along.

No alcoholic beverages or drugs are to be brought onto Acadian property nor consumed prior to the ride. The smell of alcoholic beverages or marijuana, etc., on the breath will prohibit you from participating. Use of tobacco products is not permitted in any station or vehicle.

Participants shall wear a seat belt as per State Law and Acadian policy. Participants shall carry a valid Driver's license or identification with them during the ride along at all times.

At no time will observers be permitted to take pictures, use a video camera or any other audio-visual recording device while on the scene of an incident. Requests for media ride-alongs will be dealt with separately through the Compliance Officer.

Ride-Along/Observer(s) will treat private health information as strictly confidential. Disclosure of private health information outside of the organizations who are working with the patient is strictly forbidden. No response documents or copies, on which individually identifiable information such as name, address, SSN, etc shall be removed, disclosed or transmitted off site.

Ride-Along Participants will be responsible for bringing his/her own meals or can make arrangements to buy meals.

### **For questions, please contact:**

#### **General Counsel**

Scott Guidry  
(337) 521-3405  
HIPAA@acadian.com

#### **Compliance Officer**

Corey Chapman  
(337) 291-4057  
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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the Rules of Conduct set forth herein, students participating in an approved clinical program must follow all rules, policies, and procedures set forth in the clinical affiliation agreement executed between Acadian and the student's respective education institution.