



Virginia Beach Department of Emergency Medical Services



OPERATIONS

OBSERVER POLICY

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria for allowing certain members of the general public to observe rescue squad operations, to gain an understanding of rescue squad functions and to encourage system awareness and recruiting.

APPLICABILITY: This policy shall apply to all individuals requesting authorization to ride as an observer on rescue vehicles insured by the City and under the auspices of the Department of Emergency Medical Services.

POLICY STATEMENT: When deemed in the best interest of the department by the EMS Chief or his/her designee, an individual may ride as an observer. The following general rules shall apply:

- A. Observers must be approved in advance by an officer of Rescue Captain rank or higher.
- B. An observer must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older.
- C. A Release of Liability form containing the established rules and responsibilities for observers must be completed by the individual and endorsed by the Rescue Captain or his designee (if applicable) prior to the individual riding. This form, along with a copy of the individual's driver's license, must be forwarded to EMS Headquarters no later than seventy-two (72) hours after the observer has ridden.
- D. All individuals must wear the appropriate department observer ID badge and EMS Department issued safety vest when riding in any VBEMS vehicle and at all times when assigned to a incident. Vests are not required to be worn while at a station waiting for a call or at meals.
- E. Observer must view the VBEMS Observer Duty Expectation video located on the department's website prior to duty.

- F. Observers must wear appropriate attire. This includes dark long pants (no jeans), a plain collared shirt and closed toe shoes. Observers representing other public safety agencies may wear their uniform if approved by the Division Chief of Field Services.
- G. The AIC of the apparatus hosting the observer shall notify the Shift Captain (EMS1) at the start of the shift that an observer is onboard.
- H. The AIC will orient the observer to the rules, regulations and confidentiality of the patient and patient information. An observer may NOT:
- Render any patient care
 - Communicate on the radio
 - Drive an EMS vehicle
 - Assist with lifting or moving a patient
 - Participate in any activities, other than observing
- I. The attendant-in-charge will supervise the observer during the shift.
- J. Should it be deemed necessary for any reason, the attendant-in-charge, any Squad Officer or higher EMS Officer, may remove the observer from the rescue vehicle and terminate the observation period.
- K. Upon completion of the shift, the attendant-in-charge will return the Observer ID badge to the Rescue Captain or his/her designee.

ORDERED:



1/24/2017

EMS Chief

Date