



# Douglas County Sheriff's Office

## Explorer Post #592

### 2024-2025 Handbook



## Section 1: Introduction

This handbook is an order which contains procedures to be followed by members of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #592. This handbook will be used as a guide in performing various post tasks in administration, personnel, training, equipment, and provide direction on duties and organization of the post.

The primary missions of the post are:

- Create a better understanding between law enforcement and young adults
- Teach young adults various skills of law enforcement officers with the purpose of assisting them in deciding a career path
- Prepare young adults for future career opportunities
- Develop the explorer's character and leadership skills
- Serve our community

## Section 2: Definitions

Chain of Command- A hierarchy of ranks which is designed to provide structure to the post. The Chain of Command for Explorer Post #592 is as follows:

**Post Advisors → Explorer Chief → Explorer Sergeants → Explorers**

Explorer- A young adult participant in Explorer Post #592

Explorer Post #592- An organization composed of young adults with an interest in a law enforcement-related career. The post is administered by the Mid-America Council, but is run day-to-day by the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

Post Advisor- A sworn Douglas County Sheriff's Deputy that is tasked with administering Explorer Post #592. Advisors are responsible for providing safe training, mentorship to explorers, and ensuring explorers follow this handbook.

Post Function- Any explorer post meeting, ride-along, volunteer event, or competition

Senior Explorer- An explorer who has completed at least one full year in the post

Squad- An element of explorers that is led by a sergeant



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### **Section 3: Participation**

Participants in Explorer Post #592 must:

- Be between 14 and 20 years of age
- Have no felony charges or convictions
- Have no more than one minor and explainable misdemeanor charge
- Pay a yearly registration fee
- Maintain a scholastic record of a "C" or its equivalent in all subject areas
  - Consideration is given to low grades in Advanced Placement classes.
  - If an explorer falls below this academic standard, he/she will be placed on academic probation until the standard is met.

### **Section 4: Attendance**

Explorers will be provided with a meeting schedule and will be expected to attend all meetings. Explorers with a legitimate reason to miss a meeting, such as being sick or having a school function, must notify the lead advisor beforehand.

Missing a meeting without notifying the lead advisor will be considered an unexcused absence. Two consecutive unexcused absences will result in consultation with the explorer's parents or guardians, and may result in discipline. Three total unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the post.

If an explorer signs up for a volunteer event and later determines that he/she will not be attending, the explorer must remove himself/herself from the GroupMe sign-up link before the event (see section 8).

### **Section 5: Uniform and Appearance**

Explorer Post #592 will furnish one short-sleeve uniform shirt and one identification card to each explorer. The remainder of the uniform shall be provided by the explorer. Explorers will have the option to purchase a long-sleeve uniform shirt.

The full uniform is:

- Either the short-sleeve or the optional long-sleeve uniform shirt (tucked in)



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- Additional layers may be worn underneath either shirt.
- Sweatshirts and jackets must be taken off during meetings while indoors.
- Khaki uniform trousers with belt loops that are free of stains, rips, or tears
- A plain black leather belt with a silver buckle
- The provided identification card
- Black closed-toe shoes

All members shall be in complete uniform at post functions unless told otherwise. Uniform shirts and ID badges may not be worn outside of post functions.

Jewelry is allowed as long as it is appropriate.

Depending on availability, take home duty belts may be issued to senior explorers. In this case, the belts remain property of the post and may not be worn or displayed outside of meetings.

### **Section 6: Conduct**

Failure to obey this handbook may result in discipline. Discipline may take the form of physical training, suspension from the post, or dismissal from the post.

Explorers shall:

- Obey this handbook and any lawful order from post advisors
- Obey all criminal and traffic laws, whether inside or outside of post functions
  - Any explorer who is arrested, receives a criminal or traffic citation, or is criminally investigated by law enforcement shall report said incident to an advisor no later than the next meeting. Failure to report such incident is grounds for dismissal from the post.
- Treat others with respect at all times
  - Bullying or any type of harassment is grounds for dismissal from the post.
- Be honest at all times
- Report at the specified times and locations
- Refrain from distractions and disruptions during post functions
- Be accountable for their actions
- Use assigned equipment in a safe manner
- Report any injury suffered during a post function, regardless of severity, to an advisor as soon as practical



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Explorers shall NOT:

- Represent himself/herself as a commissioned law enforcement officer
- Use their association with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office to solicit special privileges for themselves or others
- Possess during a post function a firearm, ammunition, knife, pepper spray, Taser, or any other lethal or non-lethal weapon. The only exception is when the object is provided by an advisor for training purposes.

**Section 7: Leadership Positions**

Chief:

- Responsibilities
  - Set an example of high integrity, honor, and dedication to the post
  - Act as the overall young adult leader of the post
  - Attend most or all meetings
  - Assist in maintaining records of attendance
  - Lead roll calls and physical training
  - Appoint acting sergeants when regular sergeants are absent
  - Ensure all explorers follow the post rules
  - Represent the post to the media or the DCSO
  - Act as a liaison between the explorers and the post advisors
- Selection process
  - Interested applicants will have until Friday, September 20th, 2024 to submit their letter of interest to the lead post advisor. The letter must be typed and may be hand-delivered or emailed. The letter should justify the applicant's qualifications, experience in the program if applicable, and motivations for wanting the role of chief.
  - The post advisors will review all applications and select a chief based on the letters of interest, qualifications, and the best interests of the post.
  - A letter of interest for chief will also serve as a letter of interest for sergeant, should the applicant not be appointed as chief.

Sergeant:

- Responsibilities



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- Lead the squad members and set an example of high integrity, honor, and dedication to the post
- Attend most or all meetings
- Assist in maintaining records of attendance
- Take attendance and conduct a uniform inspection of squad members during roll call
- Communicate as necessary with squad members outside of meetings
- Relay any problems or issues to the chief and/or advisors
- Selection Process
  - Interested applicants will have until Friday, September 20th, 2024 to submit their letter of interest to the lead post advisor. The letter must be typed and may be hand-delivered or emailed. The letter should justify the applicant's qualifications, experience in the program if applicable, and motivations for wanting the role of sergeant.
  - The post advisors will review all applications and select sergeants based on the letters of interest, qualifications, and the best interests of the post.

### **Section 8: Communication and Media**

Explorer Post #592 uses the GroupMe smartphone app for group communication and volunteer event sign-up. Cancellations and other important information will be shared via this app. Explorers will have access to post content, and all content posted shall be professional.

Private communication may be sent to advisors at their DCSO email address.

Explorers will be aware that during post functions, photos and videos may be taken by DCSO members. By participating in this program, explorers agree to allow photos and/or videos taken during post functions to be posted on official DCSO websites or social media pages.



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**Section 9: Ride-Alongs**

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office sponsors a ride-along program, which allows members of the public to ride in a cruiser with a patrol deputy. Explorers will be allowed one six hour ride-along. Ride-along request forms will be provided at the beginning of the program, and explorers may submit them to the lead advisor at any time. Explorers must be at least 16 years old at the time of the ride-along.

If the explorer has to cancel or change the date or time of the ride-along, the lead advisor must be notified with as much advance notice as possible. Once you schedule a ride-along, please make every effort to avoid rescheduling.

Explorers will bring their own money for food or drinks. Explorers will remain alert to their activity and refrain from unnecessary cell phone use. Audio or video recording during a ride-along is prohibited without permission from the assigned deputy. Failure to comply with this may result in your cell phone being seized as evidence or subpoenaed at a later time.