



## **Douglas County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #592 2025-2026 Handbook**



### **Section 1: Introduction**

This handbook is an order which contains procedures to be followed by all members of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) 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

This handbook is not intended to cover every possible situation that may arise. Situations that fall outside the scope of this handbook will be handled in accordance with DCSO department policy and/or state law. Post advisors have the authority to amend the handbook during the year. Rule changes will be communicated with explorers during a regular meeting and/or on GroupMe.

### **Section 2: Definitions**

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 DCSO.

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.

Explorer- A young adult participant in Explorer Post #592

Chain of Command- A hierarchy of ranks 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**



**Douglas County Sheriff's Office**  
**Explorer Post #592**  
**2025-2026 Handbook**



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

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

Competition- An event in which explorers participate in graded scenarios and physical training, and their scores are compared against explorers from other law enforcement agencies. Participation in competitions is limited to a small percentage of the explorers. Explorers are **not** required to participate in competitions.

### **Section 3: Participation**

Participants in Explorer Post #592 must:

- Be enrolled in high school or have completed high school / GED equivalent
- Be between 14 and 20 years of age
- Pay a yearly registration fee
- Sign the "Hold Harmless" waiver, rules acknowledgement, and background check forms.
- Have and maintain a clean background that entails:
  - Explorers will have no felony charges or any criminal convictions
  - Explorers must not have anything in their background that would prevent a person from obtaining a job as a law enforcement officer
  - Explorers must not have done anything that would bring their morals or loyalty to law enforcement into question
- Maintain a scholastic record of a "C" or its equivalent in all subject areas if in high school
  - Advanced Placement (AP) classes are exempt from this requirement
  - If an explorer falls below this academic standard, he/she will be placed on academic probation until the standard is met.
- Not have been dismissed from Post #592 for rule violation(s) in a previous year

A background check will be conducted on all explorers in September, and then at least once again during the program year. The background check may include, but is not limited to, a criminal history review, a driving record review, and school discipline records.



## **Douglas County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #592 2025-2026 Handbook**



### **Section 4: Attendance**

Explorers will be provided with a meeting schedule and will be expected to attend and participate in all meetings. Explorers with a legitimate reason to miss a meeting, such as having a school function, must notify their squad sergeant and provide a reason for the absence before the beginning of the meeting. If a squad sergeant will miss a meeting, he/she must notify the explorer chief before the beginning of the meeting.

Missing a meeting without notifying the squad sergeant 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**

The post will furnish one short-sleeve uniform shirt 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 at the beginning of the year. Appropriate jewelry is allowed. Jewelry will be worn conservatively so as not to present a danger to the explorer. Stud earrings are acceptable. Wire, hoop, or dangling earrings are prohibited. Facial piercings are prohibited during any physical or tactical functions.

The full uniform is:

- Either the short-sleeve or the optional long-sleeve uniform shirt (tucked in)
  - 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
- Black closed-toe shoes

All members shall be in complete uniform at post functions unless told otherwise. Uniform shirts may not be publicly worn outside of post functions. Violations may result in dismissal from the post.



**Douglas County Sheriff's Office**  
**Explorer Post #592**  
**2025-2026 Handbook**



The uniform shirt is property of the post and shall be surrendered upon request. In the event that a duty belt is issued to an explorer, the belt and associated equipment are property of the post and may not be publicly displayed outside of meetings.

## **Section 6: Conduct**

Failure to obey this handbook may result in discipline. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, 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 talking while an advisor or other guest is speaking
- Refrain from distractions and disruptions during post functions
  - Cell phones will be out of sight during meetings except during breaks.
- 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

Explorers shall NOT:

- Represent themselves as a law enforcement officer or do anything that would cause a reasonable person to believe they are a law enforcement officer
- Use their association with the DCSO to obtain or solicit special privileges for themselves or others



## **Douglas County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #592 2025-2026 Handbook**



- Possess during a post function a firearm, ammunition, knife, pepper spray, Taser, or any other lethal, less-lethal, or training weapon. The only exception is when the object is provided by an advisor for training purposes.
- Capture any audio or video recordings of post functions without having signed and submitted the "Acceptable Use of Media" agreement
  - Failure to comply with the "Acceptable Use of Media" agreement is grounds for dismissal from the post.
- Bring discredit or disgrace to the DCSO

### **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 19th, 2025 to submit their letter of interest. The letter must be typed and may be hand-delivered or emailed to [dcsoexplorers@douglascounty-ne.gov](mailto:dcsoexplorers@douglascounty-ne.gov). 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.



**Douglas County Sheriff's Office  
Explorer Post #592  
2025-2026 Handbook**



Sergeant:

- Responsibilities
  - 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 19th, 2025 to submit their letter of interest. The letter must be typed and may be hand-delivered or emailed to [dcsoexplorers@douglascounty-ne.gov](mailto:dcsoexplorers@douglascounty-ne.gov). 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.

In the event that a chief or sergeant is not fulfilling the requirements listed above, post advisors will attempt to provide guidance to assist the explorer with honoring their commitment. Post advisors have the discretion to remove explorers from their appointed leadership positions should they fail to improve.

## **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. All content posted shall be professional.

Your GroupMe account must reflect your actual first and last name so everyone is aware of the other members and who is posting the content. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to join and participate with the GroupMe communication.



**Douglas County Sheriff's Office**  
**Explorer Post #592**  
**2025-2026 Handbook**



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.

## **Section 9: Ride-Alongs**

The DCSO sponsors a ride-along program, which allows the public to ride in a cruiser with a patrol deputy. Explorers will be allowed one six hour ride-along. Explorers must be at least 16 years old at the time of the ride-along. Explorers must have attended at least six meetings prior to requesting a ride-along (this requirement is waived for returning explorers).

Once you schedule a ride-along, please make every effort to avoid rescheduling.

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. The deputy the explorer rides with has the right to terminate the ride-along prior to the scheduled end time.

Following the ride-along, the explorer will be required to speak in front of the class about their ride-along experience.