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How do you really understand how things work? Take a walk in their shoes.

The Burleson Police Department hosts a free 10-week Citizens Police Academy each year, June-August, at the Burleson Police Department, 225 W. Renfro St. The 2015 academy starts June 4 at 6:30 p.m. Applications are available online and at the Burleson Police Department. The deadline to apply is May 29.

The academy is every Thursday, 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. The Citizens Police Academy is open to men and women, 18 or older. Citizens must submit an application packet which consists of the application, a waiver form, and consent for criminal history check.

Citizens Police Academy provides a bridge between the officer in the car and the citizens in the field. Citizens who complete the program understand what the police department does as opposed to what is seen on TV. Citizens gain an appreciation of problems and challenges facing law enforcement. These citizens then become the police department's "goodwill ambassadors" in the community.

You'll learn about the department's organization, recruiting process, the Texas Penal Code, criminal investigations, search and seizure, building searches, traffic law enforcement, narcotics investigation, SWAT, patrol procedures, and more. The classes are as "hands on" as possible. Instructors demonstrate techniques used to search a building for an intruder, then participants practice what they've learned. Participants also solve a mock homicide scenario by identifying evidence, using investigative techniques, and interviewing witnesses. Students ride along with an officer or monitor the communications office.

Sgt. Brian O'Heren serves as coordinator for the academy but speakers from throughout the department share their expertise. Occasionally instructors are brought in from outside the department as well.

The packets are available at the Burleson Police Department, 225 W. Renfro St. and online at [www.burlesontx.com/citizenspoliceacademy](http://www.burlesontx.com/citizenspoliceacademy). For more information, call 817-426-9881 or email Sgt. O'Heren @ [boheren@burlesontx.com](mailto:boheren@burlesontx.com).