Colorado Springs Police Department

Standard Operating Procedure

DL-1690-02 Significant Event Transparency

Section 1600 – Information & Records

Effective Date: 1/1/2023
Supersedes Date: NA

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to outline the process for releasing information on significant events to community members, department employees, and media organizations.

.02 Cross Reference

GO 504 Body Worn Camera (BWC)
GO 1106 Death or Life-Threatening Injury Incidents
DL-1106-01 Deadly Force Investigations
GO 1690 Public Information & News Media
DL-1690-01 Media Responsibilities for Patrol Operations Bureau

.03 Definitions

Authorized Exception: An exception to the release of a Significant Event Briefing Video within 21 days of the incident. These exceptions include, but are not limited to, statutory requirements, court orders, request of the Office of the District Attorney where the release of information will have a negative impact on criminal prosecution, investigative integrity, and resource availability.

Significant Event: For purposes of this policy, a significant event is a) any officer-involved shooting where Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) personnel fired a weapon in the performance of their duties, not including non-injury unintentional discharges or shootings of animals; b) any use of force event that necessitates the response of the Deadly Force Investigation Team; or c) any other police encounter deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police.

Significant Event Briefing Video: A publicly released video developed by the Professional Standards Division, describing a significant event.

.04 Procedure

The CSPD values transparency with our community members, department employees, and media partners, in a manner that promotes empathy and compassion. Significant events generate a considerable amount of public interest, and the department is committed to providing timely and accurate information regarding these events.

It is the policy of the CSPD to release a Significant Event Briefing Video within 21 days of the event occurring, absent extenuating circumstances that result in an authorized exception.

Significant Event Briefing Video Protocol

Video Protocol

All significant events occurring on or after February 1, 2023 and involving CSPD personnel are subject to these protocols.

Within 21 days of a significant event occurring, CSPD will publicly release a Significant Event Briefing Video. The video will document known releasable facts and circumstances of the event sufficient to provide a transparent overview to the public, department employees, and media outlets. In all circumstances, required statutory notifications will be conducted prior to public release of the video.

A Significant Event Briefing Video will be developed by the Professional Standards Division and may include the following information:

- Narrative summary of the incident
- Identification of the involved employee by name, assignment, and time on the department (photos will not be provided)
- Identification of any involved suspect(s)
- Body Worn Camera (BWC) video
- Audio recordings of 911 calls or police radio traffic
- Still photographs
- Surveillance video or other evidence gathered during the investigation
- Investigative documentation and information
- Law, policy, and administrative explanations related to the investigation

Significant Event Briefing Videos will be published by the Professional Standards Division. Videos will be provided via e-mail to all department personnel at least one hour before its release to the public. Department employees significantly depicted in the release will have the opportunity to view the video prior to distribution to department personnel or the public.

The video will be released to the public via the department's website and social media accounts.

Videos older than 12 months will be purged from the public website at the end of each calendar year.

Authorized Exceptions

CSPD recognizes there will be instances (Authorized Exceptions) in which the release of a video must be delayed beyond 21 days from the event. All Authorized Exceptions to the release of a video within 21 days must be approved by the Chief of Police or their designee.

Redaction of Information

CSPD will redact information presented in the video to the extent necessary to:

- Comply with applicable law or policy
- Protect the identity of juveniles and/or crime victims
- Protect the identity of law enforcement officers, when such protection is required for operational reasons (e.g., undercover officer, etc.)

Efforts will be made to ensure the redactions do not obscure the depiction of what happened during the incident.

Review by Other Investigative Agencies

Prior to the release of a Significant Event Briefing Video, CSPD will ensure the video is provided for review to representatives from the District Attorney's Office, the City Attorney's Office, and the investigating Deadly Force Investigations Team (DFIT) law enforcement agency.

In all instances, the CSPD Chief of Police is the final authority in determining whether information regarding a CSPD incident is released pursuant to this policy.

Significant Events Involving Personnel from Multiple Agencies

If a Significant Event involving personnel from multiple agencies occurs (e.g. – CSPD and EPSO personnel assigned to a task force are involved in a shooting), the Chief of Police or their designee will ensure command staff-level personnel from the other involved agencies are briefed on this protocol and have input in the video production and release.

If personnel from those agencies deem appropriate, a single Significant Event Briefing Video may be produced for all involved agencies.