

SOUTH PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Policy #:	5.115	Effective Date:	11/1/2023
Title:	Press Releases and PIO Function	# of pages:	3
Category:	Administration	Classification:	Green

1. **PURPOSE:** To identify who is authorized to speak to the press and release information.
2. **POLICY:** Only the Fire Chief or Incident Commander (IC) in charge of a specific emergency shall issue, via the Public Information Officer (PIO) if available, any press release or interview on that particular emergency.

A. Emergency Operations:

Personnel not in command at an incident will not comment to the press or general public about the incident.

Personnel will also refrain from discussing Department general operations, policies & procedures, personnel matters, and other Department business with members of press agencies without authority from the Chief of Department.

The South Portland Fire Department PIO is a member of the Command Staff and may be requested to an incident scene or if unavailable, at the very least, should be consulted prior to finalizing any press releases.

When possible a prepared statement shall be written by the PIO or the IC with a format as follows (see attached template):

1. Nature of the emergency
2. Address of emergency
3. Time of Call
4. Status of emergency on arrival
5. Extent of damage(s) (*No dollar estimates will be provided*)
6. Mutual aid units that assisted
7. Time emergency under control
8. Any investigatory information if released by investigators for public knowledge

The names of owners of property may be released only if they have already been notified of the damage to their property.

Names of injured or deceased civilians or personnel will not be released until family has been notified of injuries, and there it has been determined there are no HIPAA issues. Normally death announcements will be made by a law enforcement agency (SPPD, MSP, MSFMO).

The Portland Regional Communications Center is authorized to release the name & telephone

numbers of the incident commander and/or the PIO to press agencies that have follow-up questions. The Dispatcher should collect contact information and relay it to the incident commander and/or the PIO.

When any information is released to the press, the Fire Chief, if not on scene, will be notified that there was a press release as soon as possible. The Fire Chief will notify the City Manager as needed but if not available, the IC or PIO shall then notify the City Manager.

B. Non Emergencies:

Press Releases or other interactions with the press, that are not related to emergency events, shall require priory notification/approval of the Fire Chief and the City Manager and coordination with the City of South Portland Communications Director.

3. REFERENCES:

- None

By Order Of:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Wilson".

James P. Wilson
Fire Chief



CITY OF
**SOUTH
PORTLAND**

Fire-EMS
Chief Phil Selberg

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Insert Date

MEDIA CONTACTS

Shara Dee, Communications Officer, sdee@southportland.org, (207) 347-4143

Phil Selberg, Fire Chief, South Portland Fire Department, pselberg@southportland.org, (207) 799-3311 Ext 7357

PRESS RELEASE

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