

RELEASE OF RECORDS TO THE PUBLIC

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for the release of records to the public.
2. **POLICY:** The Huntsville Police Department will follow applicable Alabama State Law regarding the release of public records.
3. **SCOPE:** This directive is applicable to all personnel.
4. **RESPONSIBILITY:** All sworn and non-sworn personnel are responsible for complying with this directive.
5. **RECORDS DIVISION:** The Records/Identification Section will comply with the following guidelines when releasing reports to the public. Records released to other law enforcement agencies do not require redaction.

A. Alabama Uniform Incident/Offense Reports

1. The front page of the revised Alabama Uniform Incident/Offense Report (ACJIS revised 11-06) is considered public information and may be released to the public without redaction. The back page of the report and supplements are not considered public information and should not be released to the public. The victim's name, witnesses' names, addresses and any other identifying information are protected from disclosure and should be redacted from reports produced to the public.
2. The front page of the prior version of the Alabama Uniform Incident/Offense Report (ACJIS revised 7-04) may contain the victim's name, witnesses' names, home and/or business addresses, and phone numbers which are protected from disclosure and should be redacted. In all cases, social security numbers should be removed from all reports before they are released to the public.
3. Victims and/or their representatives (such as insurance carrier or attorney) may receive the entire report except that the witnesses' and suspect's personal information should be redacted.
4. Individuals listed as suspects should only receive the front page of the report.

B. Alabama Uniform Traffic Crash Reports

1. Alabama Uniform Crash Reports are public records, but the following information should be redacted from reports released to the public:
 - a. Home addresses and telephone numbers;
 - b. Social Security numbers; and
 - c. Driver's License Numbers

2. Alabama Uniform Crash Reports released to individuals listed on said report and/or their representatives, including insurance companies and attorneys, do not require redaction.

C. Arrest Reports

1. The front page of the arrest report is considered a public record, but the following information must be redacted:
 - a. All juvenile information, including name (blocks 5, 17-33, 84-91);
 - b. Arrestee's home address, telephone number, social security number, driver's license number, occupation and business address. (blocks 17, 28-33)
 - c. SID, FBI numbers and fingerprint information must be redacted except to other law enforcement agencies. (Blocks 21, 22, 25-26).
 - d. The back page of the arrest report is not a public record shall not be produced to the public.

D. Rap sheets containing an individual's arrest record are considered a public record and may be released to the public with the following redactions:

1. All juvenile information, including name;
2. Arrestee's Social Security number, FBI #, SBI #, Driver's License number, fingerprint information, home address history and employment history.
3. A copy of his/her rap sheet will be provided to the arrestee with proper identification without redaction.

E. The following types of record requests should be forwarded to the office of the City Attorney along with the responsive records for review:

1. Subpoenas, civil and/or criminal;
2. Requests from attorney's offices;
3. All Media requests;
4. Unusual requests; and
5. Any other requests not addressed herein.

6. **FEES:** According to the Alabama Office of Attorney General, December 28, 2007, No 2008-030, 2007 WL 4638083 (Ala. A.G.), "A custodian of public records may recoup reasonable costs incurred in providing public documents to a citizen including where necessary, costs for retrieving and preparing the records and the actual cost of copying the records".

- A. After meeting the criteria herein, the following charges will incur for copies made.
 - 1. Copies of Incident Reports will be made for a fee of \$10.00 per copy.
 - 2. Copies of Accident Reports will be made for a fee of \$10.00 per copy, or may be purchased on-line for a fee of \$12.50 from the City's contract vendor.
 - 3. Arrest report copies will be made for a fee of \$10.00 per arrest report. Copies of rap sheets will be made for the fee of \$10.00 per person.
 - 4. Non police/government agencies requesting record checks will be charged \$5.00 per name given.

- 7. **GUIDELINES IN DISSEMINATING COPIES OF CASES FOR MEDIA:** Established guidelines set for processing the copies of the Alabama Uniform Incident/Offense Report (case reports).
 - A. Guidelines contained in paragraph 5 shall apply to HPD records released to the media.
 - B. Cases made for "Rape, Sexual Abuse, Child Abuse, etc." will not be made available to the media.
 - C. If an exact block number and/or apartment number of the victim's address appears in the place of occurrence block, it must be deleted. Street names will remain on the report. If place of occurrence is a business, the address in its entirety will remain unless the victim resides at that address.
 - D. Property descriptions will remain on the report with the exception of any identifying numbers such as credit card numbers, driver's license numbers, checking account numbers, social security numbers or any identifying numbers related to the victim.
 - E. Vehicle license numbers and VIN numbers will be deleted from the case report. If block number 57 in the vehicle section contains any specific identifiers that can be associated with the victim, it must also be removed.
 - F. Actual dollar amounts of either cash stolen or property stolen will be removed prior to release. The property descriptions will remain on the report.
 - G. Reporting officer's name will remain on the report.

- 8. **MEDIA NOTIFICATION:** The shift commander will e-mail the shift incident report to the appropriate news groups. The media shift incident report will give a brief synopsis of crimes committed during the shift.
 - A. All shift incident reports e-mailed to the media will be forwarded to the Police Communications Relations Officer. A hard-copy of all reports relayed to the

media including the shift incident report will be forwarded to the Police Communications Relations Officer.

- B. Notifications (e-mails) will be sent to relay information given out to the media to the following individuals.
 - 1. Chief;
 - 2. Deputy Chiefs;
 - 3. Captains;
 - 4. Special Operations Division Lieutenants;
 - 5. Police Communications Relations Officer; and
 - 6. City Attorney's office designee.
- 9. **SUPERVISORY NOTIFICATIONS:** The criteria for supervisory notifications are listed on form 202.5.1F1 "Shift Incident Reporting Classifications" on HPD Forms/Documents at <http://hpdweb/>.