



Chapter: Records, Freedom of Information, and Transparency
Subject: 14-10 – News Media General Policy
Effective: April 19, 2022
Supersedes: Official Order 20, Sections 20.2.1 and 20.2.2A-B, dated August 5, 2019
Distribution: Department Members

PURPOSE: This Order establishes department policy related to the news media general policy.

14-10-1 DEPARTMENT NEWS MEDIA POLICY

- A. Members are encouraged to proactively offer information to the news media rather than wait for inquiries. They may release information to print, broadcast or online news media, verbally or in written form, on authority of their commanding officer, or in compliance with policy established by their commander.
- B. Worksites shall provide prompt release of newsworthy items unless circumstances make release of information inadvisable. Commanders shall delegate appropriate authority to promptly release information to the news media in their absence.
- C. Worksite commanders shall make reasonable efforts to establish a rapport with local media to promote a highly visible, positive image of the department and to resolve any local problems between the media and the department.
- D. News releases should call attention to newly assigned worksite personnel, special accomplishments, awards, training, major arrests and seizures, extraordinary service offered by members or citizens, local crime trends, suggested crime prevention and traffic safety methods, and other behavior which may be of interest to citizens and enhance public safety.
- E. Copies of written news releases and official statements shall be forwarded to the Public Affairs Section electronically at time of distribution to the news media, unless otherwise specified in procedure manual related to public affairs.
- F. In the event of a Governor's-declared State of Emergency/Disaster or activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), all release of information to the news media pertaining to State Police actions or response shall be coordinated through Public Affairs.
- G. The Operations Section is the after-hours point of contact for media inquiries to Headquarters. After-hours point of contact for media inquiries at the worksites is the nearest post or regional dispatch center.
- H. Members shall work cooperatively with other law enforcement agencies, local prosecutors, the Attorney General's Office, or other state agencies in the issuance of joint news releases on incidents that involve multiple agencies.

- I. Where appropriate, and with the permission of the involved agency, department news releases should include mention of other agencies involved in an incident/event, and/or quotes from a representative of the agency.
- J. Members shall familiarize themselves with the resources available on the Public Affairs Intranet site, which includes news release templates, EX-201, official statement templates, EX-202, media tips and training, information on media law, and event planning materials.

14-10-2 GUIDELINES FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

- A. Refer to procedure manual related to traffic crash investigations for news releases on motor vehicle accident victims.
- B. Information shall be withheld or delayed if:
 - (1) A court order prevents its release.
 - (2) The involved prosecutor or the Attorney General has requested the information be withheld.
 - (3) The information could jeopardize the investigation or prosecution of a case.
 - (4) The information would disclose the identity of confidential informants or adversely affect the privacy or security of other involved persons, including law enforcement officials and their families.
 - (5) A Children's Protective Services (CPS) investigation is underway.
 - a. The Children's Protection Law prohibits the release of information about a CPS investigation. As a result, the existence of a CPS investigation or the nature of the investigation (e.g., sexual abuse) can be neither confirmed nor denied.
 - (6) The department is not the originating/lead agency on an incident or investigation.

DIRECTOR

Annual Review Responsibility: Transparency and Accountability Division

Accreditation Standards: CALEA 54.1.1 A-C, F