

PROCEDURE MANUAL

14-01



MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

News Releases and Official Statements

Purpose: This manual establishes policy and procedures for release of information to the print and broadcast news media, as well as the release of department-related photographs and videos to outside entities.

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Definitions:

None

Section 1: News Releases and Official Statements

1.1 Assistance from or Notification to the Communications and Outreach Division

- a. Worksite commanders shall notify the Communications and Outreach Division when a media inquiry or publicity concerning a worksite activity or incident is of more than local interest. If appropriate, assistance may be requested from the Communications and Outreach Division. After normal business hours and on weekends, this notification and/or request for assistance can be made directly to the district Public Information Officer (PIO) or through the Operations Section.
 - i. Examples of incidents that require notification of the Communications and Outreach Division include member-involved shootings; member deaths or serious injuries; high-profile incidents; inquiries concerning department budget, trooper strength, or personnel actions; sensitive FOIA requests; or the department's position on public policy issues.
 - ii. Upon notification, the Communications and Outreach Division shall discuss appropriate action with those persons involved in the activity, assist in dissemination of information to the news media, or coordinate a statement or response from the Director.
 - iii. When appropriate, an enlisted PIO from the Communications and Outreach Division shall respond to the scene of an incident to assist with the release of information to the news media.
- b. The Communications and Outreach Division shall maintain a list of telephone numbers and email addresses for all print and broadcast media in Michigan that is updated on an annual basis. This list is available on the [Communications and Outreach Division Intranet site](#).
- c. Division/district commanders may contact the Communications and Outreach Division to request media-relations training or counsel specific to the division/district.

- d. The Communications and Outreach Division is responsible for generating promotional/transfer and retirement news releases for members at the rank of captain and above.

1.2 News Releases

- a. Worksite commanders shall look for newsworthy opportunities and consult with the Communications and Outreach Division regarding promotion of their worksites.
- b. Efforts shall be made to present material in news releases in such a way that the media will consider it newsworthy.
 - i. Worksites may contact the Communications and Outreach Division for guidance on how to prepare news releases to maximize media coverage.
 - ii. Worksites are responsible for disseminating their news releases via email to their local media. News releases shall be reviewed by the Communications and Outreach Division prior to dissemination.
- c. All news releases shall be created on the department's [News Release](#) header, unless the worksite has established their own header approved by the Communications and Outreach Division.
- d. All news releases shall use Arial 10 as the font size/style, with the exception of the headline, which may be larger.
- e. All news releases shall include a headline, release date, originating city, and media contact.
- f. In most instances, member names shall not be used in news releases relating to incidents occurring during the normal course of duty. Members, with their permission, may be identified in news releases regarding promotion, retirement, specialized training, or awards.
- g. All news releases of statewide impact and those pertaining to grant announcements shall be reviewed by the Communications and Outreach Division prior to dissemination.
 - i. This review process recognizes the following three types of major news releases:
 - 1. Type #1: Those with two or more weeks of turnaround time available.
 - a) Type #1 news releases shall be forwarded to the Communications and Outreach Division via email at least two weeks in advance.
 - 2. Type #2: Those with only two to five days of turnaround time available.
 - a) Type #2 news releases shall be forwarded via email to the Communications and Outreach Division as soon as a draft is available.
 - 3. Type #3: Those that require same-day turnaround.
 - a) Type #3 news releases shall be forwarded via email to the Communications and Outreach Division as soon as a draft is available.
 - b) Unless an extenuating circumstance exists, the Communications and Outreach Division shall give Type #3 news releases priority to ensure they are reviewed and approved as quickly as possible.

- ii. The Communications and Outreach Division will acknowledge receipt of all news releases and will provide an expected timeline for review.
- h. Approval of Outside Entities
 - i. Should the Governor's Office or another state department need to review the news release prior to its dissemination, the Communications and Outreach Division will be responsible for obtaining their approval.
 - ii. Should an outside agency, such as another law enforcement agency or a prosecutor's office, need to review the release, the submitting worksite will be responsible for getting their approval.
- i. Changes made by the Communications and Outreach Division are to be considered final, unless the change inadvertently alters the accuracy of the news release.

1.3 Official Statements

All Official Statements require approval from the Communications and Outreach Division and shall be disseminated on the department's [Official Statement template](#).

- a. Official Statements shall take the form of either:
 - i. An official statement by a worksite commander in response to a local incident, event, or occurrence, or;
 - ii. The Director's position on a matter of state-level interest, a sensitive or controversial issue, or to provide a position on, or a response to, an event or occurrence of statewide or national interest. Statements of this nature shall be handled by the Communications and Outreach Division.
- b. Official Statements may be prepared for dissemination as follows:
 - i. "No dissemination," to serve only as talking points if contacted by the news media.
 - ii. "Local dissemination," as determined by the worksite commander or upon request by media.
 - iii. "Statewide dissemination," as determined by the Director or the Communications and Outreach Division.

1.4 Commercial Television Productions

- a. The affected bureau commander or designee must approve all requests for department participation in "Hollywood" or commercial television productions. To facilitate this process, members shall forward all telephone calls and written requests to the Communications and Outreach Division for initial screening.
- b. The Communications and Outreach Division shall obtain a request in writing from the production company before forwarding the request to the appropriate bureau for approval.
- c. Agency participation shall be limited to those circumstances where department involvement will:
 - i. Assist in solving a crime or apprehending a fugitive;

- ii. Result in significant public information and education benefits; or
 - iii. Result in some other public safety benefits that outweigh the costs to the agency.
- d. When approving requests, the bureau commander may take into consideration the following:
 - i. The significance of the case.
 - ii. The number of times the case has been featured already.
 - iii. The approval of the prosecutor on the case.
 - iv. The wishes of the affected family members.
 - v. Any other factors deemed appropriate.
- e. Once a case receives approval, the production company and bureau commander or designee shall sign a Contractual Services Agreement, UD-066, outlining the production company's expectations regarding required materials, personnel, and department expenses. The UD-066 may be amended to fit the unique circumstances of each production. Amendments to UD-066 must be reviewed by the Director's Office.
- f. If a production company requests case reports and documents related to an approved case, a FOIA request shall be submitted to the Records Resource Section by the production company.
- g. Actual items of evidence shall not be used. The production company is responsible for developing facsimiles for use in the production.
- h. If the production company requests an interview with a retired member or other person not in the department, it is the responsibility of the production company to locate the person and arrange the interview.
- i. Every attempt shall be made to complete filming and interviews without incurring overtime, where applicable.
- j. Members shall not stage crime scenes or provide theatrical recreations for production companies. Explanation of processes used in the case and walk-through and/or narration of the crime scene is permitted.
- k. Members shall not participate in a commercial television production regarding a departmental case without bureau approval, even on off-duty time.
- l. The department recognizes there is a difference between commercial television productions and crime solving shows, such as America's Most Wanted. Sections 1.4 (a-j) of this Procedure Manual do not apply to crime solving shows. Participation in a national crime solving show requires bureau approval, and the Communications and Outreach Division shall be notified.

1.5 Official Photograph of the Director

- a. An official photograph of the Director shall be made available to the news media for use in stories, feature articles, reports, bulletins, programs where the Director is featured as guest speaker, or in similar situations deemed appropriate.
- b. The photograph may also be displayed in the lobby of districts, posts, and other department worksites.

- c. The Communications and Outreach Division is responsible for distribution of the Director's official photo and shall respond to legitimate requests.

Review Responsibility: Communications and Outreach Division
Accreditation Standards: N/A