
COMMUNICATING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Policy #1101-R02 (11/06/2012)

Applies to all staff.

1. Staff Shall Treat Members of the News Media with Courtesy and Respect.

Staff shall prepare a memorandum to the Sheriff concerning perceived unethical or unprofessional conduct by members of the media. A copy of the memorandum shall be given to the Public Information Officer (PIO).

2. Authorized News Media Representatives Shall Have Reasonable Access to the General Reception Areas Within the Sheriff's Office Without an Escort.

Areas restricted from public access or accessed only by Sheriff's Office staff require authorized news media representatives to have an escort.

3. Media Personnel Shall Have Access to the 24-Hour Arrest and Release Log and to Press Releases.

- The 24-Hour Arrest and Release Log is available at all times to the public, including the media, via the Sheriff's Office website. The log includes the name, descriptive information, charges, date of arrest, arresting agency and additional information on each person who is booked into the Washington County Jail during the preceding 24-hour period. Similar information is also provided for each person released from custody for the same time period, along with a notation of the reason for release.
- The PIO will ensure that media releases are distributed electronically to members of the media and that they are maintained on the Sheriff's Office web site.

4. Media Personnel May Have Reasonable Access to a Crime Scene as Determined by the Public Information Officer or Incident Commander.

- The incident commander shall determine the crime scene perimeter and may deny media personnel access inside that perimeter when access would interfere with enforcement or public safety functions.
- Media personnel are subject to any restrictions of the owner or person in charge when a crime scene is on private property.
- Media personnel shall not be prevented access to any area solely because of the possibility of their injury or death. If this is the only consideration, the person(s) shall be advised of the danger and be allowed to make the decision as to whether to enter the area.

5. The News Media May Photograph or Report Anything They Observe When Legally Present at an Emergency Scene.

- The incident commander or the public information officer will instruct the media when the dissemination of information (in image, print or voice format) may interfere with an official investigation or compromise public safety. However, the Sheriff's Office recognizes that a decision not to disseminate information is ultimately dependent upon a cooperative media and not upon censorship by the Sheriff's Office.
- Deputies may not interfere with media activities at a scene within the confines of the law. In a public place, the media must be granted access equal to that of the general public, i.e., a scene cannot be open to the general public, but closed to the media.

Supersedes: 1101-R01 (02/02/04)

Position responsible for updates: Public Information Officer

CALEA: 54.1.3

- Individuals may request no publicity. In that case, the deputy should explain that Sheriff's Office cases are matters of public concern and subject to media review. The media makes the final decision on whether they will disseminate photographs or footage of an event.

Media Release Retention: OAR 166-150-0135 (20)