	ANDOVER POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER	Number: O2109 Page: 1 of 5 Distribution: All
Title: PUBLIC INFORMATION		Section: Organization
Issued: 02/22/2011	Effective: 03/02/2011	Revised: 03/05/2015
Rescinds: All Previous	Amends:	
CALEA References: 54.1.1, 54.1.2, 46.1.3(f)		
Review: Annual	Authority: Chief Michael A. Keller	

I. Purpose

The agency must have the support of the community to be successful. Establishing and maintaining an effective relationship with the news media is crucial to accomplishing this goal. This General Order establishes guidelines regarding media relations and the release of information to the public through the news media.

II. Policy

It shall be the policy of the department to cooperate with the news media and to maintain an atmosphere of open communication. A positive working relationship with the media is mutually beneficial. To this end, information shall be released to the news media in an impartial, accurate and timely fashion. It shall be the responsibility of each employee to abide by this philosophy of cooperation.

III. Definitions

(This section intentionally left blank)

IV. Regulations

A. No employee shall release any information that would jeopardize an active investigation, prejudice an accused person's right to a fair trial, or violate the law [C].

B. No member of this department shall prohibit the media from news-gathering practices, including photography and interviews [A].

C. No member of this department shall pose any suspect or accused person in custody or make him or her available for media interviews [C].

V. Procedures

A. Responsibilities in Releasing Information

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Chief of Police to release information to the public. The responsibility may be delegated to the following personnel:

1. Supervisors – Supervisors with responsibility for a specific case or incident may be the secondary contact for the news media in the absence of the Chief of Police.

2. Other employees – The Chief of Police or supervisors may direct other employees to respond to media inquiries.

B. Media Inquiries

1. The agency shall respond to all media inquiries in a timely and professional manner.
2. During normal business hours, media inquiries shall be directed to the Chief of Police.
3. Outside of normal business hours, media inquiries shall be directed to the shift supervisor. The shift supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the Chief of Police is informed, through the chain of command, of major incidents and all other events that may generate media interest.

C. Interviews

1. The Chief of Police shall be responsible for assisting the news media by conducting interviews himself or coordinating interviews with other qualified agency personnel.
2. Employees contacted directly by the news media shall notify the Chief of Police, through the chain of command, of any interview requests.
3. All conversations with members of the news media should be considered "on the record" and subject to being quoted.

D. News Releases

1. News releases shall be written and disseminated to the news media and to agency employees on major incidents and events of community interest or concern (54.1.1b).
2. The Chief of Police shall review and approve news releases in advance of dissemination.

E. News Conferences

1. News conferences shall be held only in connection with major events of concern to the community.
2. The Chief of Police, or designee, shall facilitate the news conference (54.1.1c).

F. Access to Crime Scenes and Critical Incidents

Agency personnel shall be courteous to news media representatives at crime and critical incident scenes and ensure media personnel are able to cover the scenes under the following guidelines (54.1.1a):

1. At such scenes, agency personnel shall ensure that the media respect the established perimeter. Members of the media shall receive no more or less access to an incident scene than members of the general public (54.1.3).
2. News media representatives shall not be prevented from access to any area solely because of the possibility of their injury or death. If this is the only consideration, the scene commander shall advise the media representative of the danger and allow the media representative to make the decision to enter on his or her volition.
3. Only the Chief of Police or scene commander shall release information to the news media at crime and critical incident scenes.
4. At critical incident scenes, the Chief of Police or scene commander shall establish a media briefing area as close to the scene as safety and operational requirements allow.
5. At critical incident scenes, members of the agency shall work in close cooperation with the media to ensure that live broadcasts do not disclose any information that could endanger law enforcement personnel or the general public.

G. Public Records

1. The department and its members shall abide by all local, state and federal laws governing the release of public records.
2. If there is question about a record being public, employees should refer to the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA).

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3. All Open Public Records (KORA) requests will be forwarded to the Records/Evidence Custodian, with the exception of motor vehicle accident reports, who will determine appropriateness of the release of the requested information per M1118, "Records-Administration." All Open Record Requests will be submitted in writing, ideally using APD Form 58. Any requests for Open Records that are questionable or any requests for Open Records that are denied will be brought to the attention of the chief of Police.

H. Joint Investigations or Operations Involving Another Agency

1. In a multi-jurisdictional investigation, the lead investigative agency is responsible for providing or coordinating the release of public information (54.1.1f).
2. If the Andover Police Department is the lead agency, the Chief of Police, or designee, shall share information with all involved agencies in advance of public dissemination.

I. Information Release Guidelines

The release of information is subject to restrictions placed by applicable local, state, and federal laws. No member of this agency shall release any information that would hamper the successful conclusion of an investigation or jeopardize the safety of affected persons.

1. Department members can release the following information (54.1.1d):
   a. Basic information about a crime or incident.
   b. Basic information about victims, except as excluded by law.
   c. Description of suspects.
   d. Basic description of weapons and vehicles used.
   e. Basic description of stolen items.
   f. Basic description of injuries and condition of victims.
   g. The name, age, address, and other basic information about arrestees and the charges against them.
   h. Information contained in arrest affidavits and other applicable crime or incident reports.
   i. Booking photographs.
2. Department members shall not release the following (54.1.1e):
   a. Names, addresses and any other information that would identify the victim of a sex offense, child abuse, or any other crime where the privacy of the victim is protected by law.
   b. Names, addresses and basic information about juvenile arrestees, as governed by state law.
   c. Active criminal investigative information, active criminal intelligence information and surveillance techniques.
   d. Names of informants and information provided by them.
   e. Supplemental or investigative reports until such time as the case is closed or the lead investigator deems it permissible.
   f. Grand jury testimony and proceedings.
   g. Active internal affairs investigations.
   h. Names of witnesses.
   i. The identity of critically injured or deceased persons prior to notification of next-of-kin.
   j. Home address, telephone numbers, and familial information of law enforcement personnel.
   k. Names of undercover personnel.
   l. Any other information that could jeopardize the successful conclusion of an investigation and prosecution.
   m. Any other information prohibited by state law from public disclosure.

J. Media Ride-Alongs

1. Media ride-alongs allow members of the media to accompany law enforcement officers as they perform their duties.
2. Members of the media may ride with officers with approval of the Chief of Police and after signing a "Waiver of Liability-Observer Permission" form (APD Form 20).

K. Ethics

1. Employees are to treat members of the media professionally and ethically. It is expected that the media will respond in a like manner and follow ethical guidelines established by their profession. Members of the department who believe they were treated unethically should contact the Chief of Police.

L. Media Credentials

1. The department acknowledges representatives from recognized media organizations who carry and display photographic identification issued by their employer. Anyone else shall be considered a member of the general public.

M. Alternative Methods to Disseminate Information

1. The department will pursue alternative methods of disseminating information directly to the public. These may include the department web site, social media, cable access channel, public appearances by agency members, and other means.

N. Meetings with the Media

1. Reaffirming the department's commitment to positive media relations, the Chief of Police shall meet with representatives of the media as necessary to include them in the development of changes to policy and procedure related to the department's public information function (54.1.2).