



CHAPTER # 20 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS	POLICY # 20.1 PUBLIC INFORMATION FUNCTION
<p><i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i></p>	
Date Implemented: 11/01/2019	Review Date:

POLICY

The Chief of Police is the official representative of the Department in all information releases. The Chief of Police may designate another member to also perform the function of Public Information Officer (PIO).

RELEASING INFORMATION

Authority and responsibility

Individual officers may respond to specific inquiries from the media, within guidelines of this chapter.

Command officers of the Department have the authority as well as the responsibility to respond directly to legitimate news inquiries about his command and its operation.

Command officers will ensure the importance of a sound cooperative policy in his association with news media representatives.

Matters of policy and internal investigations

Questions relating to matters of policy will be directed to the Chief of Police.

At no time will the details of an internal investigation be revealed to the news media until the case has been brought to a logical conclusion. All questions relating to internal investigations will be directed to the Chief of Police.

Police reports

Names and addresses of individuals involved in an incident requiring a police report will not be released without approval of the Chief of Police in the following instances:

- Victims of sex crimes unless homicide is involved
- All witnesses
- Deceased persons before the next of kin is notified

- At no time will information concerning juveniles be released to the media

Police records and photographs

Information inquiries

Routine inquiries from the news media concerning information contained in motor vehicle accident reports, post-arrest reports, and front page of offense reports, will be handled through the Chief of Police.

Investigative files

Inquiries from the news media concerning information contained in either past or pending investigative files, other than basic arrest information contained on post-arrest reports, will be made in writing to the Chief of Police and released only at his discretion.

Mug shots

Mug shots of arrested individuals will be made available to the news media, upon request, within a reasonable time after the arrest has been made.

This directive applies only to the mug shots that are the property of or in the custody of the Department. It is not the responsibility of the Department to make photographs or mug shots available to the news media that are in the custody of another law enforcement or detention agency.

Juvenile investigative files

At no time or in any instance shall the identity of a juvenile be released to the news media or any member thereof.

MEDIA ACCESS

Officers in command of a detail, assigned to the scene of an emergency or any special event, should make a reasonable effort to provide the news media with the appropriate information and a location from which they may take photographs or recordings to the extent that it does not hinder police operation or investigation, and does not endanger the media person.

ONGOING CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

If a major crime is committed or a large-scale investigation is under way that may result in several arrests, officers involved should contact the Chief of Police, give the details of the case to him so that proper coverage can be maintained. This will ensure that information will be released and prevent the release of pre-trial prejudicial information.

The members of the Department will not have the authority or the responsibility to release any information concerning the cause of death or results of post-mortem examinations. All inquiries regarding such examinations will be referred to either the coroner or post-mortem examining pathologist.

In the case where a unit of this Department is assisting the agency of another jurisdiction, that agency will have the authority and responsibility for reporting any information concerning the investigation.

Only the following information concerning the defendant will be made public:

- The defendant's name, age, and residence. Biographical facts should be accurate, and all caution should be taken to prevent the release of pre-trial prejudicial information.
- The text of the charge, KRS, such as complaint, indictment information or, where appropriate, the identity of the complaining party.
- The identity of the investigating and arresting agency.

The release of certain types of information by law enforcement personnel and the publication thereof by the news media may create great danger of prejudice without serving a significant law enforcement or public interest function. Therefore, all concerned should be aware of the dangers of prejudice in making pre-trial public disclosures of the following:

- Opinions about a defendant's character, his guilt, or his innocence.
- Admissions, confessions, or the contents of a statement or any alibi attributable to a defendant.
- Give no information concerning the results of investigative procedures, such as fingerprints, polygraph examinations, ballistic tests, or any type of laboratory tests.
- Do not give any statement about the credibility or anticipated testimony of any prospective witnesses.
- Do not give an opinion concerning the evidence in the case whether it is anticipated that such evidence will be used at trial.