



Effective: 07/19/1999  
Last Revised: 09/15/2019

## CSU FULLERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER NUMBER 1-5

### MEDIA RELATIONS

**SUBJECT:** Media Relations

**PURPOSE:** To establish procedures for the timely release of information to the media and delineate what information may be released.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of this Department to cooperate fully and impartially with authorized news media representatives in their efforts to gather factual, public information pertaining to activities of the Department. This will be done as long as these activities do not unduly interfere with Departmental Administrative, infringe upon individual rights or violate the law. Release of information will comply with Government Code §6254.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

##### **I. Definitions**

- A. Public Information** – Information that may be of interest to the general public regarding policy, procedures or events involving the Department or other news-worthy information that is not legally protected; which does not unduly interfere with the mission of the Department; does not infringe upon the rights of a defendant; or compromise the legitimate safety and privacy interests of officers, victims, witnesses or others.
- B. Authorized News Media Representatives**
  - 1. Those individuals who are directly employed by agencies of the electronic and print media such as radio, television and newspapers. These individuals will be in possession of press credentials issued by a public safety agency or the individual's employing agency.
  - 2. Other authorized media representatives include students who are assigned as reporters for a University newspaper in the CSU system. These reporters will have identification issued by their publisher and will be afforded the same privileges as credentialed press at the scene of newsworthy events.
- C. Public Information Officer** – Serves as a central source of information for release by the Department. The Public Information Officer also responds to requests for information by the news media and the community. This is the

responsibility shared by the Administrative Captain and the University's Strategic Communications Director.

1. The Administrative Captain shall serve as the Department's Public Information Officer and will have the responsibility for the release of information on a regular basis to media representatives about the operations of the Department. The Administrative Captain will:
  - a. Coordinate and authorize the release of information concerning confidential agency investigations and a Administration. [CALEA 54.1.1e]
  - b. Work with the University's Strategic Communications Director in the preparation of news releases. [CALEA 54.1.1b]
  - c. Work with the University's Strategic Communications Director in coordinating and authorizing the release of information about victims, witnesses, and suspects, following the guidelines established in this order. [CALEA 54.1.1d]
  - d. Keep the Chief of Police and the University's Strategic Communications Director informed of any incidents that may attract media attention.
  
2. The University's Strategic Communications Director will serve as the Public Information Director with responsibility for the release of information at major events affecting the University community. The Strategic Communications Director will:
  - a. Have responsibility for preparing and distributing news releases, with assistance from the Administrative Captain. [CALEA 54.1.1b]
  - b. Arrange for and assist at media conferences. [CALEA 54.1.1c]
  - c. Be available for on-call responses to assist the Department in providing information to the news media and assist the news media in covering news stories at the scenes of incidents. [CALEA 54.1.1a]
  - d. Develop procedures for releasing information when other public service agencies are involved in a mutual effort. The agency having primary jurisdiction will be responsible for releasing, or coordinating the release of information. [CALEA 54.1.1f]

## II. Release of Information to the News Media

### A. Media Log

1. A computerized media log is made available to the media upon request and is available on a kiosk in the station lobby. This media log contains:
  - a. A written summary of calls for service having potential media interest.
  - b. All arrests and other items that are assigned a case number.

2. Information contained in the media log is subject to the restrictions as stated in the section of this order entitled, "Information Which May Not Be Released to the Media."

B. Telephone Inquires

1. All telephone inquiries received from the media will be directed to the Administrative Captain.
2. In the absence of the Administrative Captain, any member of the Command Staff (officers with rank of Captain or Lieutenant) or the Chief of Police will answer telephone inquiries.

C. Information Which May be Released to the Media.

1. The description of an occurrence, including a brief summary of the events.
2. The date, general location and time of the occurrence.
3. Injuries sustained and/or damage resulting from an incident.
4. Identification of the victim(s), other than sex crime victims or where reprisal or intimidation may be employed, which may include name, age, occupation and residence.
5. Type and quantity of property taken.
6. Requests for aid in locating evidence, a complainant or suspect.
7. When a suspect, other than a juvenile, has been arrested, it is permissible to release the suspect's full name, age, residence, occupation, marital status and other similar information. The same applies to suspects for whom a warrant of arrest has been issued.
8. Criminal history of a fugitive who may pose a serious threat to the public safety.
9. How an incident was reported, i.e., officer observation, citizen complaint, etc.
10. The time and location of any arrests and the exact charges.
11. Facts and circumstances surrounding the arrest, i.e., resistance, weapons, pursuits, etc.
12. Duration of the investigation.
13. The various dates scheduled for the stages of the judicial process, i.e., arraignments and the amount of bail for the defendant.
14. The name of a deceased when the next-of-kin has been notified.

D. Information Which May Not be Released to the Media

1. Identification of suspects not arrested and for whom no warrant has been issued.
2. The identity of victims and witnesses where release could cause extreme embarrassment.
3. The identity of sex crime victims, only release general descriptions.
4. The exact address of a sex crime offense if it could lead to the victim's identification.

5. The exact identifying information of a weapon or other tangible evidence.
  6. Any information known only to the guilty party and/or critical investigative leads.
  7. The identity of any juvenile who is a suspect or defendant in a case subject to jurisdiction of the juvenile court.
  8. The identity of any critically injured or deceased person prior to notification of the next-of-kin.
  9. The results of any investigative procedure, such as lineups, polygraph examination, fingerprint comparison, ballistics test or other procedures. The fact that these tests have been performed may be revealed without further comment.
  10. Information that if prematurely released may interfere with the investigation or apprehension of the suspect(s), such as the nature of leads, specifics of an "MO" (modus operandi), or details of the crime known only to the perpetrator and police or information that may cause the suspect to flee or more effectively avoid apprehension.
  11. Information that may be of evidentiary value in criminal proceedings.
  12. Specific cause of death, unless officially determined by the medical examiner.
  13. Prior criminal conviction record, character or reputation of a defendant.
  14. Existence or contents of a confession, admission or statement of a defendant or his/her failure or willingness to make a statement.
  15. Identity, statements or expected testimony of any witness or victim.
  16. Any opinion about the guilt or innocence of a defendant or the merits of a case.
- E. Access to Records – Media representatives shall be denied access to the contents of investigative or incident reports and records where releases of the information would.
1. Interfere with law enforcement proceedings, including pending investigations.
  2. Deprive a person of the right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, or give one party to a controversy an undue advantage by exclusive access to such information.
  3. Constitute an unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy rights of another person.
  4. Reveal the identity of an individual who has furnished information to the Department under confidential circumstances.
  5. Disclose investigative techniques and procedures, thereby impairing future effectiveness of the Department; or
  6. Endanger the life or physical safety of any other person.
- F. Cooperation with the Media
1. Authorized media representatives shall have reasonable access to the Strategic Communications Director, the Administrative Captain and the

operations of this Department as governed by this policy. When information must be denied to a media representative, the basis for that denial shall be fully and courteously explained.

2. Public information shall be released to the media as promptly as circumstances will allow, without partiality and in as objective a manner as possible.
3. Public information may be provided to media representatives by telephone if the identity of the representative is known or can be authenticated.
4. Written press statements shall be released only following approval of the Chief of Police and the University's Strategic Communications Director.  
[CALEA 54.1.1b]
5. Dispatchers will notify the shift supervisor as soon as possible upon receipt of information about events or activities that may have media interest.
6. The shift supervisor will notify the Command Staff and the Chief of Police who will notify the Strategic Communications Director of any events that are likely to attract media attention.

#### G. Individuals Authorized to Release Information

1. At the scene of incidents, supervisors at the scene may release factual information to authorized members of the media, with the understanding that no information may be released that may potentially damage investigative efforts. Any information that is released must comply with the restrictions established in this order.
2. An investigator may release information on active or completed cases at the investigator's discretion, following the above guidelines.
3. Any employee who receives an inquiry from a member of the news media will notify the Command Staff and/or the Chief of Police of the nature of the information requested and provided.

#### H. Access of Media at Crime Scenes

1. Media representatives may be allowed closer access of personnel and equipment at crime scenes than available to the general public to the degree that it does not interfere with the police mission or the movement of traffic. The news media shall not be allowed access to any area or scene of an incident or crime where there is a possibility that evidence may be damaged, altered, destroyed or otherwise prejudiced by its existence being published or portrayed.

2. Once evidence has been processed, removed and secured by the Department, the media may be allowed to enter by permission of the commanding officer at the scene. This action should be deferred to the University's Strategic Communications Director when a representative is at the scene.
3. Suspects or accused persons in custody shall not be posed or arrangements made for photographs, telecasts or interviews, nor shall Department personnel pose with suspects or accused persons in custody.
4. When an individual is charged with a criminal offense and is sought by law enforcement authorities, photographs or mug shots may be released to the media to help locate the individual. No other Department photographs of individuals in custody shall otherwise be released to the media unless authorized by the Chief of Police.
5. At the scene of major crimes, the officer in charge shall designate a preliminary press area as early as possible and as close to the scene as safety and operational requirements allow. The officer in charge will coordinate all media interaction with the Police Department. [CALEA 54.1.3]
6. The fact that a suicide or suspected suicide has occurred may be reported to the media together with factual information describing how it happened. The fact that a suicide note exists may be acknowledged, without further comment. The content may not be released except as provided by law.

I. Special Considerations – Non-criminal Matters.

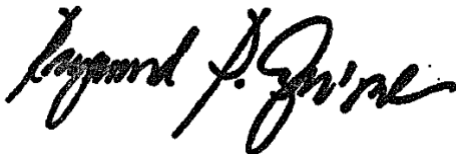
1. At the scene of significant events, man-made or natural disasters or other catastrophic event, the principles of media cooperation shall be maintained to the degree that they do not interfere with the mission of the police, fire, medical and other emergency rescue workers; where the University's Emergency Operations Plan has been initiated, media relations shall become the responsibility of the University's Strategic Communications Director per the Emergency Operations Plan.  
[CALEA 54.1.3]
2. Media access to and movement within fire lines shall be controlled by the fire officer in charge. In consultation with the fire officer in charge, the ranking Police Officer at the scene shall establish an observation point from which the media may observe and photograph the incident.  
[CALEA 54.1.3]
3. All scenes will have a designated inner perimeter and outer perimeter. At the discretion of the officer in charge, a location within the inner

perimeter may be established where the media may observe and photograph the incident. [CALEA 54.1.3]

4. News media representatives may not be prevented from accessing any area solely because of the possibility of their injury or death. If this is the only consideration, the media representative should be advised of the danger and allowed to enter the area on his/her own volition. The University may opt to impose additional requirements, such as requiring a signed, liability waiver.
  5. Sensitive information relating to internal investigations of Police Officers shall not be released without expressed permission from the Chief of Police.
- J. Release of Information During Mutual Efforts – The University Police Department is frequently involved in mutual efforts with other public service agencies, e.g. Fullerton Police Department. [CALEA 54.1.1f]
1. The agency having primary jurisdiction shall be responsible for releasing and coordinating the release of related information.
  2. All public inquires for the release of information pertaining to the Department's involvement in mutual efforts shall be referred to the Chief of Police.
  3. The Strategic Communications Director shall refer media inquires to the primary jurisdiction responsible for the mutual effort.

REVIEWED BY:  
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APPROVED:



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