
	Florida State University Police Department	
Media Relations and Public Information		
Revision Effective Date: 09/01/17	General Order 309	Attachments: None
Rescinds/Amends: 28 (6/29/16),14-28	Distribution: Department-Wide	CFA Reference: 1.06 & 1.07
	Pages: 7	

Media Relations and Public Information Policy

POLICY

As a matter of policy, the Florida State University Police Department (FSU PD) strongly believes in establishing and maintaining a cooperative and mutually respectful relationship with the news media and general public. Hence, it is the explicit policy of the FSU PD to effect and follow procedures regarding media relations and public information that strikes an appropriate balance between the public's right to know and the furtherance of the FSU PD's efficient, effective, and lawful operations [CFA 28.01 A.]. The FSU PD further recognizes the special position of the University's Media Relations Office and the necessity to coordinate media relationship matters with that organization.

Procedure

A. Persons Authorized to Release Information [CFA 1.06A]

Under the authority of the Chief of Police, the Public Information Officer shall serve as the primary Media and Public Relations spokesperson for the Department. The Public Information Officer is designated by the Chief of Police to coordinate public relations activities, direct social networking initiatives, and respond to requests for information from the news media and the public. The responsibility may be delegated to the Assistant Public Information Officer, Adjunct Public Information Officer, or other members as directed.

1. Public Information Officer

The Deputy Chief is delegated the authority to serve as the primary Public Information Officer (Media and Public Relations Spokesperson) for the Department. The Public Information Officer shall be responsible for assisting and otherwise releasing information to the various news media and general public.

2. Assistant Public Information

During the absence of the Public Information Officer, or when the heavy burden of other duties prevents the Public Information Officer from serving in the role, the responsibility for dealing with the news media and general public shall be delegated to the Lieutenant for Support Services, who shall further serve as the Assistant Public Information Officer.

3. Adjunct Public Information Officer

Sworn members may be selected to serve as Adjunct Public Information Officers at the discretion of the Chief and/or Deputy Chief. The Adjunct Public Information Officers will serve under the direct authority of the Public Information Officer (Deputy Chief). The position of

Adjunct Public Information Officer is intended to expose selected members to the role of Public Information Officer by providing hands on training/preparation. The Adjunct Public Information Officer may serve in the role as Public Information Officer when delegated by the Chief and/or Deputy Chief.

B. Responsibilities of the Public Information Officer

1. The Public Information Officer or designee shall be responsible for carrying out the following responsibilities and procedures related thereto.
 - a. Assist news personnel in covering routine stories, either within Departmental headquarters or at the scene of crimes or incidents. [CFA 1.06B]
 - b. Being available for on-call responses to the news media. [CFA 1.06C]
 - c. Preparing and distributing agency new releases; including use of social media. [CFA 1.06D]
 - d. Arranging for, and assisting with news conferences. [CFA 1.06E]
 - e. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information about victim, witnesses, and suspects. [CFA 1.06F]
 - f. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information concerning confidential investigations and operations in accordance with state statutes. [CFA 1.06G]
2. Act as liaison between news media representatives and the Department. Appropriate news and news-related activities shall include, but not be limited to [CFA 1.06B]:
 - a. Specific crimes or incidents.
 - b. Statistical information.
 - c. Feature stories on Departmental activities, personnel, or internal changes.
 - d. Areas of general concern to the University and community publics.
 - e. News media inquiries, either in person, by telephone, fax, or e-mail
 - f. Arrange or assist with news conferences. No news conferences shall be arranged without prior approval from the Chief of Police. In addition, the Chief of Police shall be the final authority for determining the frequency of news conferences, press releases and the subject matter thereof. However, in situations where the Chief of Police is either absent or incapacitated, the Public Information Officer shall be delegated this specific authority.
3. Conditions of Performance of Duty for the Public Information Officer, Assistant Public Information Officer or Adjunct Public Information Officer.
 - a. During normal business hours, the Public Information Officer or designee shall be available within the Department headquarters. After normal business hours, the Public Information Officer or designee may be contacted by e-mail or cell phone.
 - b. In appropriate circumstances, depending upon the complexity, confidentiality, or seriousness of the information, the Chief of Police, lead investigator, and/or other knowledgeable personnel shall be present during any interactions with the news media in order to provide additional background information.
 - c. At no time will the Public Information Officer, Assistant Public Information Officer, or any other personnel within the Department—sworn or non-sworn—attempt to handle a media inquiry without a thorough knowledge of the facts and circumstances regarding the particular request for information or query.

- d. The Public Information Officer and Assistant Public Officer or designee shall be appropriately attired and respond to media inquiries in a straightforward and courteous manner.

C. Information Which May Be Released

The following information, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 119, F.S. (Public Records Law), may be released:

1. The date, time, location, and nature of a reported crime.
2. The amount of damage or loss associated with a reported crime.
3. The name, age, sex, photograph, and address of a person arrested if the person is:
 - a. An adult, or
 - b. A child under 18 years of age and has been taken into custody for a violation of the law, which, if committed by an adult would be a felony, or has been found by the court to have committed at least three or more violations, if committed by an adult, would be a misdemeanor.
4. The date, time, and location of an arrest.
5. The specific crime for which a suspect has been arrested.
6. General information pertaining to the organization, management, policies, plans, and programs of the Department that correspond to the items cited above which do not violate the items cited subsequently in Section D.
7. Internal disciplinary or investigative matters if prior approval is granted by the Chief of Police and if such information is not in violation of the confidentiality provisions of on-going Internal Affairs investigations.

D. Information Which May Not Be Released

The following information, in accordance with Chapter 119, F.S., other Florida statutes regarding open, active, and/or ongoing investigations, and the Federal "Buckley" Amendment **may not be released**.

1. Information classified as confidential by law or judicial decision.
 - a. Information revealing the identities of confidential sources.
 - b. Information revealing the identities of undercover personnel of a criminal justice agency.
 - c. Any personal information, i.e., name, address, telephone number, etc. of a victim of sexual battery, child abuse, or person under the age of sixteen who is a victim of a sexual offense (the victim's gender, age, and general location of the incident may be released). [CFA 1.07G]
 - d. Information revealing the identity of a juvenile except when authorized by Florida Statute. [CFA 1.07H]
 - e. Names, addresses and photographs of any individual sought for a crime, but not yet formally charged, unless assistance is required from the news media or public in an effort to locate the subject, or such a release is in the interest of public safety. [CFA 1.07B]
 - f. The address, phone number, and telephone numbers of sworn personnel; the names, phone numbers, and places of work of spouses of sworn personnel; and the names, phone numbers, addresses, and/or schools of children of sworn personnel.
 - g. Information from student records that any FSU students explicitly states, on a form on file with the Registrar's Office, that he or she does not want released in accordance with the provisions of the Federal "Buckley Amendment".

- h. Information revealing the home or employment telephone number, home or employment address, or personal assets of a victim of sexual battery, aggravated child abuse, aggravated stalking, harassment, aggravated battery, or domestic violence. The contents of any suicide note.
 - i. The name of a victim in a death investigation. However, that name may be released when:
 - 1) The victim is positively identified; and
 - 2) The next of kin has been notified.
 - j. Information obtained from other agencies without their concurrence for release. [CFA 1.07I]
2. Information which may be withheld from the Media or Public:
- a. Active criminal intelligence and active criminal investigative information, including but not limited to:
 - 1) Statements related to the prior record, character, or reputation of the accused. [CFA 1.07A]
 - 2) Admissions, confessions, refusal of statements, or the contents of a statement or alibi attributed to a suspect. [CFA 1.07C]
 - 3) The performance or the results of any examinations or tests, or the refusal of the accused to take any examinations or test, or to participate in a line-up. [CFA 1.07D]
 - 4) The identity, credibility or anticipated testimony of a prospective witness. [CFA 1.07E]
 - 5) Opinions of agency members regarding the guilt or innocence of the accused or merits of the case. [CFA 1.07F]
 - 6) Information concerning active criminal investigations should not be released prior to approval of the investigator or supervisor in charge of the investigation.

E. Release of Information (Post Hoc)

After a criminal investigation is satisfactorily closed, and has gone through the judicial process, all information regarding the criminal incident and investigation may be released to the media, with the exception of information protected by state statutes and Federal laws.

F. Release of Information When Public Information Officer or Assistant Public Information Officer Are Not Available

Any and all Departmental personnel—sworn and non-sworn—are prohibited from answering media questions pertaining to a specific crime, incident, or internal investigation. Rather, Departmental personnel are to courteously refer media inquiries to the Public Information Officer and/or Assistant Public Information Officer. The only exception is when prior approval has been given to the officer by the Chief, Public Information Officer and/or Assistant Public Information Officer subsequent to the crime, incident, or internal investigation.

- 1. Departmental personnel should advise media representatives that the Public Information Officer and/or Assistant Public Information Officer shall make contact as soon as possible.
- 2. Departmental personnel should obtain sufficient information from media representatives to expedite contact with the Public Information Officer and/or Assistant Public Information Officer.

G. General Procedures Regarding Media Interactions

1. Press Releases

Neither the Public Information Officer and/or Assistant Public Information, nor any personnel from the Department—sworn or non-sworn—shall prepare and/or distribute any written press releases to media representatives without the approval of the Chief of Police.

All written press releases shall be prepared by the Public Information Officer and/or Assistant Public Information Officer. The Department may request the FSU Department of Media Relations prepare the press release in final form and distribute it to media representatives.

The Public Information Officer, using the authority and discretion specified throughout this general order, may orally release information to media representatives. Subsequent to the release of information to the media, the Public Information Officer, in a timely manner, will inform the FSU Department of Media Relations of the nature of the information released, to whom it was released, and when it was released.

2. Perimeter Lines

Official perimeter lines may be established at the scene of a crime, investigation, or incident to prevent unauthorized personnel from entering the area. Members of the media have no inherent right to enter such areas, but may be granted special access by the Public Information Officer or Assistant Public Information Officer, provided that:

- a. Their physical presence, reporting, and photographing at the scene would not jeopardize any police operations or hinder the proper collection or preservation of evidence.
 - b. The scene is located on public property. Or, if located on private property, the owner and/or agent consent to the presence of media representatives. Absent such consent, media representatives trespass at their own peril without Departmental approval.
 - c. Proper media credentials are presented.
 - d. The crime scene has been secured.
 - e. The preservation and processing of evidence has been completed.
4. Under no circumstances will prisoners be permitted to pose for photographs or participate in media interviews while in the custody of the Department.

H. Access to Media Representatives for Natural Disasters, Fires, and Catastrophic Events

Upon presenting valid media credentials, the Public Information Officer or Assistant Public Information Officer may permit media representatives to enter any area closed because of danger to public health or safety. However, it must be clearly stated to the media representatives that they, themselves, assume the risk of entering such areas.

If, in the opinion of the Public Information Officer or Assistant Public Information Officer, there is danger to human life, limb, or property, and that such danger shall, in all likelihood, escalate, then the media representatives shall be ordered from the scene.

Glossary

Assistant Public Information Officer – Support Services Lieutenant

Active Criminal Investigative Information – shall be considered active as long as it is related to an ongoing investigation which is continuing with a reasonable, good faith anticipation of securing an arrest or prosecution in the foreseeable future (FS 119.011(3)(d)2)

Active Criminal Intelligence Information – shall be considered active as long as it is related to intelligence gathering conducted with a reasonable, good faith belief that it will lead to detection of ongoing or reasonably anticipated criminal activities (FS 119.011(3)(d)1)

Criminal Intelligence Information – means information with respect to an identifiable person or group of persons collected by a criminal justice agency in an effort to anticipate, prevent, or monitor possible criminal activity (FS 119.011(3)(a))

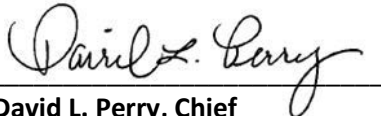
Public Information Officer – Deputy Chief

Public Records – all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance on in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency. (FS 119.011(1))

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Attachments—None

MTC 08/21/17	Filed: General Order 309
Title: Media Relations and Public Information	
Approved:	 David L. Perry, Chief
Date:	08/21/17