

	Greenville, SC Police Department GENERAL ORDER		
	Subject Public Information	Number 172A2	Type Administrative
Effective Date March 21, 2017	Amends/ Rescinds 172A1	Pages 1 of 7	Re-evaluation Annual-August
References CALEA 54.1.1; 54.1.2; 54.1.3			Notes Minor change

1.0 POLICY

The Greenville Police Department seeks to establish a cooperative climate in which the news media may obtain information on matters of public interest in a manner which does not hamper the operation of the department. Certain information must be withheld from the news media to protect the constitutional rights of an accused individual, to avoid interfering with an active investigation, or if the information may be otherwise privileged.

Press relations, like public relations, are essential in police work. The members of the news media should be kept informed of occurrences so the public is advised of the accomplishments as well as the problems law enforcement officers face today.

2.0 PROCEDURE

2.1 The Public Information function will be the responsibility of the Administration Division and delegated to the Public Information Officer. The Public Information Officer (PIO) will:

- Assist news personnel in covering routine news stories and at the scenes of incidents.
- Be available for on-call response to the news media.
- Arrange for and assist at news conferences.
- Coordinate and authorize, with the Investigations Commander, the release of information about victims, witnesses and suspects.
- Assist in crisis situation within the agency.
- Coordinate and authorize, with the Investigations Commander, the release of information concerning confidential agency investigations and operations.

2.2 Press Releases:

- 2.2.1 Press releases from the Greenville Police Department will occur on an as needed basis. All prepared press releases will come from the Office of the Chief of Police and will be released by the Public Information Officer. Releases may be prepared and forwarded for review and dissemination by any Division Commander or their designee.
- 2.2.2 The subject of the press release will be announced when the media is advised of the release.
- 2.2.3 Special care will be taken by the Public Information Officer to ensure first release information is equally available to all news media.

2.3 Release of information to the news media:

- 2.3.1 When the Public Information Office is on duty, all media personnel should be directed to contact him/her directly.
- 2.3.2 During night time hours, weekends, and/or holidays, media personnel will contact Communications for information about on-going significant events. The Communications supervisor may release or verify the type and location of the incident. No further information may be released by Communications to prevent a situation where evidence or a crime scene is compromised by on-lookers (Communications SOP G.510).
- 2.3.3 Media personnel needing additional information about an on-going incident should be directed to contact the duty commander. Communications personnel will obtain the contact information and advise the duty commander will contact them when they are able.
- 2.3.4 If media personnel inquire about an already occurred or non-critical incident they should be referred to the public information officer's office number.
- 2.3.5 Any supervisor or duty commander may contact the public information officer anytime they deem necessary.
- 2.3.6 News media personnel at the scene of an incident will be directed to the PIO or ranking supervisor for release of information. A



- supervisor can authorize the investigating officer to release information on cases which the officer has knowledge.
- 2.3.7 Release of information from agency files must be directed to the Public Information Officer. In the absence of the Public Information Officer, a Division or Watch Commander will make these determinations
- 2.3.8 Information concerning on-going criminal investigations will be released by the Public Information Officer or the Investigative Services Commander.
- 2.4 Crime Scene Access:
- 2.4.1 The Public Information Officer will go to the scene of any large scale crime scene, major incident, natural catastrophe, fire, or any event of long duration to facilitate media activities.
- 2.4.2 If access to the crime scene, major incident, natural catastrophe, fire, or incident site is restricted media personnel will be granted access into the outer perimeter. Media personnel must identify themselves with media identification issued by the media agency itself. Access to the inner perimeter will be restricted to necessary investigative personnel as determined by the crime scene commander.
- 2.4.3 The media should be given access as close to the scene as possible to enable them to obtain their needed information as quickly as possible whenever tactically feasible.
- 2.4.4 During a hostage (barricaded suspect) situation, the PIO or Commanding Officer on the scene should arrange to provide a briefing for news media personnel at regular intervals, conducted by either the Public Information Officer or the Commanding Officer.
- 2.4.5 Officers of the Greenville Police Department will not obstruct the legitimate freedom or operation of any media personnel, photographers or television cameramen. No member of the Greenville Police Department will take any action to prevent or interfere with the news media in photographing or televising an event, a suspect, an accused person, or any other person or thing where the media has a lawful right to be present. Cameramen and crews, however, will not be allowed to interfere with police operations of a critical nature. When possible, the officer in charge



of a scene should try to make allowance for the presence of news media or representatives.

- 2.4.6 Officers of the Greenville Police Department will not deliberately pose a suspect or accused in custody to be photographed, televised or interviewed.
- 2.4.7 When a member of the media refuses to cooperate with officers at a crime scene, the Public Information Officer will be informed of the circumstances and the nature of the complaint. The Public Information Officer will then follow up on the complaint with the news agency concerned. Conversely, when a news media representative has a complaint concerning an officer's actions at the crime scene, the Public Information Officer will be informed of the circumstances and will follow up on the complaint with the appropriate Division Commander. A written reply will be furnished to the concerned news agency as soon as all the facts in the matter have been determined.
- 2.5 Major revisions of media policy will be accomplished by involving area news media representatives in the development of the changes. In addition, occasional meetings will be held with news media representatives to discuss any present or future areas of concern between the Greenville Police Department and the news media.
- 2.6 Guidelines for the release of information to the news media
- 2.6.1 Information that may be released:
- 2.6.1.1 The type of event or crime;
- 2.6.1.2 The location, time, injuries sustained or damages incurred;
- 2.6.1.3 Identity of victim, unless:
- Release of identity could endanger victim;
 - Identity of deceased not released until notification of next of kin, and permission of the Coroner's office;
 - Identity of rape victim not released.



- 2.6.1.4 The circumstances immediately surrounding an arrest, the time and place of arrest, resistance, pursuit, possession and use of a weapon, and a general description of items seized at the time of the arrest, providing that such disclosure will not compromise the defendant's rights or the integrity of the investigation;
- 2.6.1.5 Whether or not there are suspects, and descriptions, if available;
- 2.6.1.6 The arrested person's: (Note: Persons must be formally charged before identity can be released)
- Name; (Juveniles below 17 not released, unless charged as an adult)
 - Address;
 - Marital Status;
 - Occupation;
- 2.6.1.7 Number of officers or people involved in an event or investigation and the length of investigation, if this does not compromise an undercover investigation;
- 2.6.1.8 The finding of physical evidence, such as weapons or proceeds of the crime, the issuance and service of a search warrant, and the positive or negative results of the search may be released;
- 2.6.1.9 Where the identity of the suspect has not been established, it may be desirable to publicize descriptions, artist sketches, or other information which could lead to the identification and arrest of the suspect;
- 2.6.1.10 Fugitive cases may require wide publicity. The circumstances and facts in each case will be the controlling factors in any decision;
- 2.6.1.11 If a member of the Greenville Police Department resigns while he is the subject of an Internal Affairs investigation, that fact may be released;



- 2.6.1.12 When recognition is desirable, names of arresting or investigation officer may be incorporated into news releases;
- 2.6.1.13 Name of officer hurt or fatally injured will be withheld until notification of the officer's family has been made.
- 2.6.2 Information that may not be released:
 - 2.6.2.1 Any information which may jeopardize the successful conclusion of an investigation;
 - 2.6.2.2 The identity of any suspect prior to obtaining warrants;
 - 2.6.2.3 The identity of arrested juveniles (below 17 years old, unless charged as an adult);
 - 2.6.2.4 The identity of witnesses or informers;
 - 2.6.2.5 The identity of victims of rape;
 - 2.6.2.6 The identity of suicide, or attempted suicide victims (refer inquiries to coroner's office);
 - 2.6.2.7 The existence of statement, admission or confession by an accused person, or of his failure to do so;
 - 2.6.2.8 No information as to the results of examination or tests, or the refusal by the accused to take them (Exception: refusal to take Datamaster);
 - 2.6.2.9 Non-conviction data (arrest without conviction or arrest without a disposition with one year of arrest);
 - 2.6.2.10 Re-enactment of a crime by suspect, or the fact that suspect may have shown investigators where a weapon, loot or other evidence was located;
 - 2.6.2.11 No personal opinions of any type involving a case;
 - 2.6.2.12 Any references to defendant's character "typical gangster" or "shakedown artist";
 - 2.6.2.13 The construction, content, and mechanism of any explosive or incendiary device;



- 2.6.2.14 Contents of suicide notes- existence may be reported without further comment;
 - 2.6.2.15 Results of Internal Affairs investigations, unless the investigation results in formal charges being filed;
 - 2.6.2.16 Reasons for a member of this department resigning who has resigned for "personal reasons";
 - 2.6.2.17 Amount of money taken in robberies.
- 2.6.3 Any time the media is given information from the police department, the Public Information Officer will be made aware of the release and its contents. This advisory will be made as soon as possible, using the Media Information Release Form, so that the PIO will be ready with all pertinent information for other media representatives.
- 2.6.4 In instances where the police department is working with other city departments, or other law enforcement agencies, release and coordination of the release of information will be determined by the agency or department having jurisdiction over the incident.


Kenneth C. Miller, Chief of Police

3-21-17
Date

