



CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2023	CHAPTER: 7 - Communications	PAGE: 1 of 4	NUMBER: 7.03.06
SUBJECT: MEDIA RELATIONS			
CHIEF: <i>Dornat A. Drummond, Chief</i>			

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for a working relationship with the media.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police that its members shall follow the provisions of this order when attending a meeting or gathering, giving media interviews, or otherwise engaging the media.

DEFINITIONS:

High Profile Incident – incidents that may cause controversy, unfavorable publicity, and/or create media attention for the City of Cleveland, or the Division of Police.

Public Information Officer (PIO) – the point of contact for media communications within the Division of Police.

Statement – any verbal or written communication made related to active Cleveland Division of Police investigations. The communications include but are not limited to: social media postings, members of the media, non-law enforcement personnel, and community members.

PROCEDURES:

- I. General Guidelines
 - A. Members shall not make written or oral presentations when presenting themselves as a Division representative, without prior written permission of the Chief or the Chief’s designee.
 - B. Members shall be courteous and professional with media representatives.
 - C. At crime scenes and high profile incidents involving the Division, the sector or unit supervisor in charge shall establish a perimeter that authorized personnel may enter. Members shall not allow representatives of the media within this perimeter. Media representatives may perform assigned tasks outside the perimeter when their activities are within the law and do not interfere with law enforcement operations.
 - D. The Chief or the Chief’s designee is the only source for press conferences, news releases, official interpretations of Division policy, and internal investigations.

- II. Formal Media Interviews
 - A. Members may participate in print, television, radio, or other electronic medium interviews (including panel discussions, documentaries, workshops, audience

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participation programs, podcasts, etc.), **only** with prior written approval of the Chief of Police or designee. A formal media interview is considered when any of the following apply:

1. The member is identified as an official representative of the Division.
 2. The member is identified as a spokesperson of the Division.
 3. The member will be discussing Division policy.
 4. The member is appearing in the uniform of the Division.
- B. Approval from the Chief may be obtained by submitting a written request through the chain of command to the Chief's Office.
- C. Any request for interviews from outside organizations (e.g., media, non-profit organizations, etc.) shall be referred to the Office of Public Affairs.

III. Personal Media Interviews

- A. Members participating in an interview, whether oral, written, or electronic, to express personal viewpoints and/or opinions shall:
1. Not wear the Division of Police uniform clothing or any other apparel with insignia representative of the Division.
 2. Not participate in the interview on any property assigned to, associated with or reasonably confused as Division property.
 3. Participate in the interview **ONLY** during off-duty hours.
 4. Make a statement at the beginning of the interview unequivocally expressing that their comments are a personal point of view and **NOT** representative of the Division's position.

IV. Field Release of Public Information

- A. At a crime scene, only the supervisor in charge may furnish the media with a brief description of the incident (e.g., basic incident details, description(s) of the suspect(s), age/gender of victim). This information shall be released as promptly as circumstances allow.
1. **Personal identifiers shall not be released** (i.e., name, DOB, address) for any parties involved.
 2. If a statement to the media is given, a notification shall be made to the respective Commander. The Chief's Office and the PIO shall be notified through the Communications Control Section.

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3. The information that is released to the media shall be sent via email to the PIO.

B. High profile incidents

1. The supervisor in charge at the scene may with the approval of their commander, contact the Communications Control Section (CCS) to request the Public Information Officer (PIO) respond to the scene for assistance with the media.
2. The supervisor in charge at the scene of a newsworthy event may furnish the media with a synopsis of the incident after consulting with the PIO.
3. If the PIO is unavailable, the on scene supervisor may receive approval for a media statement from their respective commander and or watch commander.
4. The information that is released to the media shall be sent via email to the PIO.
5. If the on-scene supervisor is unable to determine if an incident is a high profile incident, they shall consult with their respective commander to make the determination.

V. Release of Public Information

- A. Release of certain information included in incident reports are not subject to public disclosure. Questions about the release of particular information shall be referred to the Custodian of Records in Administrative Operations. Information in these records which must be withheld from public disclosure includes, but is not limited to:
 1. The identity of a confidential information source or witness.
 2. Information provided by a confidential information source or witness that may disclose their identity.
 3. Confidential investigation techniques, procedures, or work product. Information that would endanger the life or physical safety of law enforcement.
 4. Personnel, a crime victim, a witness or a confidential information source.
 5. Personal identifiers (e.g., social security numbers, DOB, address etc.)
 6. Any request for public records shall be referred to the [City of Cleveland Public Records website](#).
- B. In response to a public records request where the Division provides documents of a member's personal service records, Administrative Operations shall send the member a copy of all documents released at the same time the records are provided to the requester.
- C. The Chief's Office may release the following information once a suspect is arrested:

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1. The suspect's name, age, employment, marital status and city of residence.
 2. The substance or text of the offense.
 3. The identity of the investigating and arresting officers and their assignments.
- D. The following information **shall not be released**:
1. Information that violates House Bill 343 "Marsy's Law".
 2. Statements that relate to the character or reputation of the arrested and charged person or prospective witness.
 3. Admissions, confessions or the contents of a statement or alibi given by an arrested and charged person (unless the comments were in the original LERMS report).
 4. Statements that concern the credibility or anticipated testimony of prospective witnesses.
 5. Statements of your opinion concerning evidence or whether or not such evidence will be used at the trial.
- E. When the Division is involved in a high-profile incident, the appropriate supervisor shall notify CCS of the incident's details as soon as possible
- F. Personnel shall refer to General Police Order (GPO) 7.03.02 Disclosure of Information when receiving inquiries about computerized, arrest, or other sensitive information.
- G. Any statements released on social media shall adhere to procedures outlined in GPO 7.03.03 Social Media Policy and Usage.

THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.