



City of Racine Police Department

Policy and Procedure

Number: 213

Subject: Department Media Relations		
Date Issued: 4-13-84	Effective Date: 07-25-12	Revision Number: 5

POLICY:

All members and employees of the Department shall cooperate fully with the media in their efforts to gather factual, public information pertaining to activities of the Department as long as the release of such information is not in conflict with existing federal, state or local laws, and does not impede, hamper or obstruct any police operations, and will not infringe upon any individual's right to privacy.

The Department will provide timely information to the media concerning proposed changes affecting the delivery of police services or the implementation of new police/community programs.

The Department's Public Information Officer serves as a central source of information for release by the Department and responds to requests for information by the media and the community.

PROCEDURE:

- 1. NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS (MONDAY – FRIDAY, 8 AM – 4 PM)**
 - a. Direct all press inquiries not related to current events (the current shift or the shift immediately preceding it) to the Public Information Officer.
 - b. If the primary Public Information Officer is unavailable the following are designated as alternate Public Information Officer's:
 - 1) Lieutenant of Planning and Special Events
 - 2) Lieutenant of Training
 - c. Any information released by an alternate Public Information Officer shall be provided to the primary Public Information Officer at the earliest convenience.
- 2. AFTER BUSINESS HOURS (MONDAY – FRIDAY, 4 PM – 8 AM, WEEKENDS, HOLIDAYS)**
 - a. Refer all press inquiries to the On-Duty Shift Commander.
 - b. The On-Duty Shift Commander shall respond to inquiries on current events (the current shift or the shift immediately preceding it) only.
 - c. Any inquiries on matters outside of current events shall be referred to the Public Information Officer during business hours.
 - d. The On-Duty Shift Commander shall call the Public Information Officer (per call-in list) on any of the following incidents:
 - 1) Fatalities (traffic or criminal)
 - 2) Crisis Negotiations/SWAT operations (except when SWAT is assisting the Special Investigations Unit on search warrants)
 - 3) Officer involved use-of-force incident resulting in serious injury or death.
 - 4) Any other incident where number of press inquiries hamper the On-Duty Shift Commander in performing regular duties.
 - e. Shift Commanders may make an "audio tape" for news media inquiries, but the Public Information Officer or his designee should do "on-camera" interviews on behalf of the Department.
- 3. GENERAL GUIDELINES**
 - a. Supervisors shall refer any "field" press inquiries to the On-Duty Shift Commander.
 - 1) An on scene supervisor may release information to the news media if necessary prior to the arrival of the Public Information Officer.
 - 2) Any information released by the on scene supervisor shall be documented and discussed with the primary Public Information Officer at the earliest convenience.

- b. Any Investigations Division Supervisor shall refer news media inquiries to the Public Information Officer during normal business hours.
- c. Do not release police reports involving child abuse, incest or sexual assaults. (This provision does not prohibit information being verbally transmitted to the media, provided the name of all such victims are not given nor information which would lead to the discovery of their identity by the public)
- d. Do not release any information that would hamper, obstruct, or impede an on-going investigation.
- e. When commenting, respond factually and do not "characterize" the victim, witness, or suspect.
- f. Refer inquiries involving prosecution to the appropriate office (City Attorney or District Attorney).
- g. Do not offer an opinion, especially about the nature of a crime or evidence relating to an offense.
- h. Do not comment on the probable guilt or innocence of any person.
- i. Do not release informant information or information derived from an informant.
- j. Do not comment on internal investigations.
- k. Do not dramatize or use any inflammatory language.

**RECORDS
PERSONNEL:**

Place one copy of all accident reports in the baskets located in Records labeled "Public Information Officer" and "Press Box".

**P.I.O OR
SUPERVISOR
DESIGNATED
TO RELEASE
REPORTS:**

To release accident or incident reports to the media;

1. Obtain accident reports from the basket labeled "Press Box."
2. Retrieve approved Phoenix entered incident reports for the previous 24 hours.
3. Review all reports prior to release and ensure;
 - a. The reports released will not impede, hamper or obstruct any police investigations.
 - b. The reports released do not infringe upon any individuals legal right to privacy.
 - c. The reports released are not in conflict with existing federal, state or local laws governing said release.
4. Print a copy of the Phoenix generated list of adults arrested for the previous day.
5. Arrange for a location where members of the news media may inspect police reports and the arrest log of which they have a legal right to review.
6. Shred the reports when the media review is complete.

NOTE:

Communications personnel shall not comment to the news media on any police operations and shall refer all such inquiries to the On-Duty Shift Commander.

**RELATED
PROCEDURES:**

[212 - Reporting of Major, Unusual, or Noteworthy Occurrences](#)
[312 - Duties and Responsibilities - Sergeant of Police - Public Information Officer](#)
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