



GENERAL POLICE ORDER CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE



EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 23, 2006	REVISED DATE: MAY 13, 2020	NO. PAGES: 1 of 4	NUMBER: 1.3.01
SUBJECT: MEDIA RELATIONS			
ASSOCIATED MANUAL: RECORD FILE, CCS		RELATED ORDERS: 1.1.23, 1.3.27	
CHIEF OF POLICE: <i>Michael McGrath, Chief</i>			

Revisions in italics

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

POLICY: Cleveland Division of Police personnel shall follow the provisions of this order when attending a meeting or gathering, giving media interviews or otherwise engaging the media. Personnel who make oral or written presentations when presenting themselves as a Division representative must have prior *written* permission of the Chief or the Chief’s designee.

PROCEDURES:

I. Media Relations

- A. Members of the Cleveland Division of Police shall be courteous and professional with media representatives.
- B. 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. Officers 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.
- C. The Chief of Police or the Chief’s designee is the only source for press conferences, news releases, official interpretations of Division policy and internal investigations.
- D. Participation in Formal Media Interviews
 - 1. Members may participate in print, television, radio or other electronic medium interviews (including panel discussions, documentaries, workshops, audience participation programs, etc.), **only** with prior *written*

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approval of the Chief of Police or designee when any of the following apply:

- a. The member is identified as an official representative of the Division; **or**
 - b. The member is identified as a spokesperson of the Division; **or**
 - c. The member will be discussing Division policy; **or**
 - d. The member is appearing in the uniform of the Division.
2. Approval from the Chief of Police may be obtained by submitting a written request through the chain of command to the Chief's office.
3. Members participating in an interview, whether oral, written, or electronic, to express personal viewpoints and/or opinions shall:
- a. Not wear Division of Police uniform clothing or any other apparel with insignia representative of the Division: **and**
 - b. Not participate in the interview on any property assigned to, associated with or reasonably confused as Division property; **and**
 - c. Participate in the interview **ONLY** during off-duty hours; **and**
 - d. 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.

E. Field Release of Public Information

1. At a crime scene, the supervisor in charge may furnish the media with a brief description of the crime and description(s) of the suspect(s). The supervisor shall release this information as promptly as circumstances allow.
2. The supervisor in charge at the scene of a newsworthy event shall furnish the media with a synopsis of the incident.

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3. The supervisor in charge at the scene may contact the Communications Control Section (CCS) to request the Public Information Officer respond to the scene for assistance with the media.

II. Release of Public Information

A. Record Management System (RMS) Reports

Some information included in non-supplemental RMS reports is 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.
 4. Information that would endanger the life or physical safety of law enforcement personnel, a crime victim, a witness or a confidential information source.
 5. Social security numbers.
- 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:
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 is **not releasable**:

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1. Statements that relate to the character or reputation of the arrested and charged person or prospective witness.
 2. Admissions, confessions or the contents of a statement or alibi given by an arrested and charged person (unless the comments were in the original RMS report).
 3. Statements that concern the credibility or anticipated testimony of prospective witnesses.
 4. 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 G.P.O. 7.03.02, Disclosure of Information, when receiving inquiries about computerized, arrest or other sensitive information.*