



## CLACKAMAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Policy # 33**

**Printed copies are for reference only.  
Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.**

References: [Clackamas County Public & Government Affairs](#)

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS**

#### **General**

1. CCSO Public Information and Community Relations is a function vested in all employees, which focuses on the promotion, communication and cooperation through provision of information designed to forge strong community relationships. The Public Information Unit (PIU) represents the Sheriff in the application of this focus and effective two-way communication between County residents and CCSO activities.

#### **Public Information Officer (PIO)**

2. The PIO provides lead work supervision and direction to the PIU and is responsible to the Sheriff/Undersheriff for the development, coordination and implementation of PIU programs and activities related to media, business and community relations.

#### **CCSO Public Information Unit (PIU)**

3. The PIU will be the focal point to:
- a. inform the public of policies, programs, services, activities, operations and initiatives in a manner that is accurate, complete, objective, timely, relevant, understandable, and open and transparent within the law;
  - b. fully integrate community relations into the decision-making process for policy development, program design, service delivery and police operations;
  - c. coordinate public information planning and program delivery, including internal communications;
  - d. maintain a professional, up-to-date, and informative CCSO website and social media network; and



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- e. develop and implement procedures and standards for audio-visual and multi-media production; internal communications; public information research; publishing; Internet publishing; and public information training and education.

### **News Media Relations**

4. The PIU serves as a central source of information released by the CCSO and responds to requests for information by the news media as follows:
  - a. assisting Media/News personnel in obtaining information about incidents in the jurisdiction of the CCSO, to include:
    - (1) preparing and distributing news releases in a timely manner to all interested media organizations;
    - (2) maintaining a file of all releases distributed;
    - (3) responding to routine requests from the media during normal business hours; and
    - (4) arranging for news conferences and interviews with the Sheriff or other individuals when needed.
  - b. being available to respond as necessary to the scene of major incidents, disasters, or emergencies and coordinate media relations and interviews;
  - c. being available to coordinate the release of information concerning investigations and operations;
  - d. being available to coordinate media response when more than one agency is involved to ensure appropriate and consistent release of information; and
  - e. ensuring media requests regarding any prosecution are referred to the County DA.



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5. Consistent with security and operational requirements, the PIU will coordinate procedures for:

- a. the use of CCSO facilities by the media and public groups; and
- b. tours of CCSO facilities by the media and public groups.

### **CCSO Employee Responsibilities to the Media and Request for Information**

6. **Contacting the PIU.** CCSO employees, via their supervisor, shall contact the PIU if they believe the media should be notified regarding an event in the course of their duties which may be of value or interest to the public.

7. **Scope and Content of the Release of Information.** The scope and content of each release of information must be determined according to the facts of each situation. Releases will generally include a description of the circumstances that are not legally privileged and will not prejudice the rights of suspects, witnesses, victims or interfere with an investigation. The PIO, sergeant or supervisor at the scene will release information only after consultation with the investigating officer or investigative supervisor.

8. **Media Access to Area of a Serious Incident or Crime.** Boundary lines may be established to prevent persons from entering the area of a serious incident or crime scene:

- a. dependent upon the situation and the likelihood of jeopardizing law enforcement operations, members of the news media may be directed to a designated media staging area; and
- b. the media does not have the authority to be within a crime scene or area that has been secured to preserve evidence, crime scene processing or at any location where the media's presence jeopardizes law enforcement operations or public safety.

9. **News Media Not Exempt from Laws.** A newsperson's primary responsibility is to report the news by obtaining information and photographs at newsworthy events. A CCSO employee should not obstruct the newsperson in the performance of their work; however, members of the media are not exempt from municipal ordinances or state and federal statutes.



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10. **Requesting Withholding of Publication.** News media may photograph or report anything they observe when legally present at an emergency scene. Where publication of such coverage would interfere with an official investigation or place a victim, suspect, or others in jeopardy the PIO should advise the news media or their superiors of the possible consequences of publication; however, the CCSO will not interfere with news media's activities as long as that performance remains within the confines of the law.

11. **Release of Name of Juveniles.** Unless required by law ([ORS 419A](#) and [419B](#)) or court order, the CCSO shall not release the names or identification of juveniles. Requests for Juvenile Record Information shall be referred to the Juvenile Court.

12. **Address and Telephone Number of CCSO Employees.** CCSO employees will not divulge the address or telephone number of any other employee of the Sheriff's Office to members of the media. Inquiries into specific cases should be referred to the PIO and not individual employees or investigators.