



SUBJECT

Media Contacts and Interactions

AMENDS

REFERENCE

Missouri Revised Statute 610.100

RESCINDS

Procedural Instruction 06-9

I. INTRODUCTION

To establish guidelines for contact and interaction with the media and the release of information.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Notification and Response

1. Communications Unit - When notified of a major incident, the Communications Unit supervisor will:
 - a. Ascertain, from the ranking officer, a site for assembly of media personnel.
 - b. Notify the Media Unit, Patrol Bureau Commander, and the Duty Officer.
2. Division/Bureau Commander - The Media Unit will be notified by the division/bureau commander or designee of any event/operation within their command that has the potential of attracting media attention.
3. Department Members - Any member contacted by the media for interviews in non-emergency situations should notify their supervisor and the Media Unit, preferably prior to the interview. If circumstances require that the interview be conducted prior to notifying the Media Unit, the department member should make notification as soon as possible following the interview. When Media Unit members are not available for notification, an email will be sent to the Informant, informant@kcpd.org.
4. Inquiries regarding internal investigations of department personnel will be referred to the Media Unit.

B. Media Access To Police Perimeters

1. A designated staging area will be established along the perimeter of the secure crime scene. Access will not be permitted beyond the secured area unless approved by the ranking investigating officer.
2. When a Media Unit member responds to the assembly site of an incident, they will ascertain areas of access for the media from the ranking officer at the scene.

3. Media coverage will be permitted adjacent to any barriers and any other areas accessible to the general public.
4. To the extent possible, without hampering police operations or investigations, the media will be furnished access to information and to safe locations from which to take photographs or recordings.
5. When mobile television, radio transmitting units, or vans arrive at a police perimeter, the news media will be directed to the media assembly point (on foot) to determine the location for their mobile units. Once the personnel assigned to the command post have designated the site, assistance will be provided by department members to advance the mobile units.
6. A Media Unit member may give the news media guided access to scenes, when approved by the ranking officer in charge except in the following instances:
 - (a) When the crime scene is on private property and the owner of the property requests that the news media not be given access.
 - (b) When the presence of the news media might adversely affect the preservation of evidence at the scene or interfere with the investigation.
 - (c) When, in the judgment of the ranking investigative officer/division commander or the Media Unit member, the news media members would be endangered.

C. Media Access To Police Facilities

- *1. Identification of media personnel may be verified by requesting media credentials issued by the media affiliate.
2. The media will be allowed access to all general areas open to the public.
3. The media will be provided guided access by a department member to areas that are not open to the general public.
- *4. Media representatives and other non-department personnel will not be allowed access to evidence lockers, computers, electronic devices, files, file drawers, report baskets, or other non-public department information or sources. It is the escorting member's responsibility to secure such information and sources to ensure that it is not accessible to members of the media.
5. Elements with their own facilities will establish a central location for media personnel to be briefed which can be monitored or secured.

D. Release Of Information To The Media

1. The fire department will make all media releases at the scene of a fire until it is determined to be a crime scene.
- *2. A supervisor will be consulted prior to the release of information not specified in this directive. If a member is uncomfortable addressing the media, the member should refer the media to a supervisor. The supervisor will be responsible for briefing the media in the event personnel from the Media Unit will not be responding. The supervisor/member will forward the details that were released to the Media Unit.
3. Requests for information regarding any investigation, not released at the scene of a crime, will be directed to the Media Unit for follow-up. After hours, if a member receives a request for information about an incident, the member should contact the on-call Media Unit representative to coordinate the release of information.
4. If a suspect has not been apprehended, the member associated with the investigation may release only that information necessary to aid in the apprehension or to advise the public of the potential danger of the fugitive.
5. The Media Unit will provide or decline to provide police reports, personnel files, mug shots, or other records based on Missouri law or current department policy.
6. When requested by news media, members at the scene of an incident or any department member having factual, firsthand knowledge of the situation may verbally provide the following information:
 - a. Type of call received and time dispatched.
 - b. Except in homicide cases known facts and circumstances relating to the commission of a crime which will not hinder or prejudice the investigation.
 - c. General description of any suspect(s).
 - d. Facts and circumstances of arrest, including the time and place of arrest, resistance by the suspect(s), any pursuit, or the use of any weapons, (generic description only, i.e. knife, handgun).
 - e. The race, sex, age, occupation, and family status of the suspect(s).
 - f. A suspect may be identified by name in the following circumstances:

- (1) In cases involving state or federal prosecution, the appropriate investigative element should always be contacted prior to releasing the name of a suspect.
 - (2) In cases involving a violation of a municipal ordinance, the suspect's identity may be released once a summons (UTT or GOS) has been issued. When the arresting officer has submitted a city pick-up to the city prosecutor's office, persons making inquiries will be referred to the Media Unit.
 - (3) In cases when a large public interest exists or when public safety is an issue, the suspect's name may be released with the approval of the investigative sergeant at the scene.
- g. Number, sex, and age of victim(s).
 - h. The identity of any deceased victim(s) will be released only after their relatives have been notified, or upon the approval of a ranking investigative officer.
 - i. The identity of the investigating and/or arresting officers may be released at the discretion of their commander, if such information does not jeopardize or compromise personnel assigned to undercover operations.

7. Information pertaining to the following will not be released:

- a. Detailed descriptions of suspects or evidence, which may jeopardize the successful conclusion of an investigation.
- b. Criminal History Information.
- c. The existence or content of any confession, admission, or statement given by individuals, or the refusal or failure of individuals to make any statement, to perform any examination, or to submit to any test.
- d. Personal opinions about the suspect such as guilt or innocence, mental status, anticipated plea, or value of evidence against the accused.
- e. The identity, testimony, or credibility of prospective witnesses.
- f. The personal identifiers of a victim (address, phone numbers, etc.)
- g. In the case of sex related offenses, the name of the victim.

- h. Nature of injuries, weapons used, or cause of death will not be released in homicide cases, unless approved through the ranking investigating detective.
- i. In the event the victim(s) is transported to a hospital, the hospital's name will not be released.

8. Photographs and Video Recordings

- a. Videotaping, photographing and audio recording will not be allowed during any department approved ride-along without the approval of the Media Unit Commander and the appropriate Division Commander.
- b. Videotaping, photographing and audio recording by the media of any law enforcement activity, which occurs in restricted areas, will be prohibited without prior approval.
- c. Photographs and video recording may be taken in areas where media personnel or the public have been given access. Officers should restrict the media from using flash, strobes, or high intensity lights when the use of such equipment would hinder a police operation, endanger officers or citizens by exposing them to unnecessary risk, or create a hazard (e.g., cause an explosion in a gaseous atmosphere).

Darryl Forté
Chief of Police

Adopted by the Board of Police Commissioners this _____ day of _____, 2012.

Patrick A. McInerney
Board President

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