



The Aberdeen Police Department Policies & Procedures Manual Chapter Contents



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Chapter 16 Department Public Information
Section 01 Public Information Function
CALEA 11.3.4d, 46.1.3f-g, 54.1.3, 54.1.1, 54.1.2, 54.1.3

GO 24-012, 6/3/2024
Supersedes GO 23-013

A. Policy

1. The Department employees shall maintain a positive working relationship with members of the media so that the community will remain properly informed regarding events that involve this Department.

B. Public Information Officers

1. The Chief of Police shall designate specific officers to represent the Department as Public Information Officers (PIO).
2. The Chief of Police shall designate one officer as the Lead PIO.
3. PIOs shall attend specialized PIO training as soon as training is available.
4. Department personnel shall notify a PIO about all major incidents.

C. Public Information Function

1. Assisting news personnel with covering news stories at the scenes of incidents; (54.1.1a)
2. Preparing and distributing Department media releases; (54.1.1b)
3. Arranging for and assisting at media conferences; (54.1.1c)
4. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information about victims, witnesses, and suspects; (54.1.1d)
5. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information concerning confidential Department investigations and operations; (54.1.1e)
6. Releasing information when other public service agencies are involved in a mutual effort; (54.1.1f) and
7. Maintaining the Department Website and the Department's official social media accounts; (46.1.3g)
8. Providing public information and maintains media relations during critical incidents.

D. Public Information Plan Guidelines for Critical and Other Major Incidents (11.3.4d)

1. These procedures shall serve as guidelines for a Critical Incident Public Information Plan.
2. All information in the field shall be cleared by the Incident Commander (IC) prior to release. (54.1.1d-e-f)
3. The PIO shall gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate accurate, accessible, and timely information on incidents, including:
 - a. Cause, size, and current situation;
 - b. Resources committed; and
 - c. Other information of general interest for internal and external use.



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4. The PIO's duties during a critical or other major incident shall include but will not be limited to:
 - a. Determining from the IC if there are any limits on information release;
 - b. Developing material for use in media briefings;
 - c. Informing the media and conducting media briefings; (54.1.1c)
 - d. Posting information to the public on social media and the Department website; (54.1.1g)
 - e. Media Staging Area
 - 1) Designating and coordinating the location of a media staging area; (46.1.3f)
 - 2) Notifying and communicating to media the guidelines for access to an established media staging area to help ensure their cooperation. (46.1.3g)
 - a) Officers at the scene shall control and prevent media and the public access to any area that would interfere with law enforcement operations. (54.1.3)
 - f. Arranging for tours and other interviews or briefings, as required;
 - g. Evaluating the need for and, as appropriate, establishing and operating a Joint Information System (JIS); (54.1.1f)
 - 1) Implementing the system with personnel to organize, integrate, and coordinating information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and disciplines;
 - h. Establishing a Joint Information Center (JIC), as necessary, to coordinate and disseminate accurate and timely incident-related information; (54.1.1f)
 - 1) Identifying and setting up a physical or internet-based central location for communications across multiple jurisdictions and disciplines.
 - i. Maintaining current information summaries and/or displays on the incident;
 - j. Providing information on the status of the incident to assigned personnel;
 - k. Maintaining an Activity Log;
 - l. Managing media and public inquiries;
 - m. Providing information on a victim reunification area.
 - n. Coordinating emergency public information and warnings;
 - o. Monitoring media reporting for accuracy;
 - p. Ensuring that all required agency forms, reports, and documents are completed prior to demobilization; and
 - q. Having a debriefing session with IC prior to demobilization.

E. Policy Input (54.1.2)

1. PIOs shall encourage members of news media to submit comments and recommendations concerning development of policies and procedures relating to the news media.



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2. PIOs may send media policies to members of the news media and ask for comments and recommendations.

F. Media Releases

1. PIO's shall disseminate media releases to all local news media in a way that ensures that first-release information is equally available.

G. Recordkeeping and Retention

1. Media releases shall be retained by the Lead PIO and may contain the following:
 - a. The media release with any accompanying documents; and
 - b. The name of the PIO who wrote the release.



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Chapter 16 Department Public Information
Section 02 Department Website & Social Media

GO 21-015, 07/14/2021

A. Policy

1. The Aberdeen Police Department has an obligation to inform the public of events that affect the lives of citizens in the community and posts the information directly to platforms that enable citizens and agencies receive timely, reliable, and accurate information.
2. The Aberdeen Police Department maintains its own website and social media accounts.

B. Definitions

1. **Page** - The specific portion of a website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
2. **Social Media**- A category of internet-based resources that integrates user-generated content and user participation. The Department administers and maintains the following accounts:
 - a. Facebook;
 - b. Instagram;
 - c. Twitter; and
 - d. YouTube.
3. **Website** - a group of World Wide Web pages usually containing hyperlinks to each other and made available online by this Department.

C. Administration

1. The Chief of Police or designee has final approval of all Department Social Media and Website content.
2. The Public Information Officers are Administrators of Department Social Media Accounts.
3. The Webmaster maintains the Department website.

D. Guidelines (54.1.1g)

1. All information and materials submitted for approval and subsequently posted on authorized social media sites shall be respectful, professional, and truthful.
2. Acceptable topics include but are not limited to (subject to approval from the Chief of Police):
 - a. Media Releases;
 - b. Notices to the Public;
 - c. Holiday Greetings;
 - d. Traffic Advisories;
 - e. Requests for Identification of Subjects;
 - f. Missing Persons Notices;
 - g. Community Involvement Topics;
 - h. Crime Prevention Topics; and
 - i. Job Announcements.



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GO 21-015, 07/14/2021

E. Procedure

1. Employees shall send their requests to post information and materials on Department social media or the Department website to a PIO or the Webmaster, appropriately.
2. The receiver of the request shall send the request through the Administrative Commander to the Deputy Chief.
3. When the request is approved, the PIO or Webmaster shall post the content appropriately.