

JACKSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy: 3-2
Effective: 01-01-09
Revised: 01-08-21

PUBLIC INFORMATION: NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

PURPOSE: To establish procedures for cooperation with the news media.

POLICY: The Jacksonville Police Department will cooperate with the news media in releasing newsworthy items. The Department must, however, preserve the rights of individuals and evidence that might later be used in a court trial as well as protect informants and withhold certain information that could endanger an investigation by premature release.

PROCEDURES:

I. NOTIFICATION

- A. The PIO (Public Information Officer), when properly informed, can be of great assistance to Field Supervisors and the Department as a whole. In order to ensure the PIO is properly kept aware of newsworthy events, the PIO, or the Chief's designee in the absence of the PIO, will be notified of the following:
 1. All homicides;
 2. Armed robberies;
 3. Batteries with serious injuries;
 4. All incidents where Jacksonville officers are shot or killed whether on or off-duty;
 5. All incidents where Jacksonville officers are seriously injured on duty;
 6. Major burglaries where large sums of money or jewels are taken;
 7. Major fires (business, apartment complexes, etc.);
 8. All traffic fatalities occurring within the city limits of Jacksonville;
 9. Natural disasters or explosions;
 10. Hostage situations, barricaded suspects, or sniper incidents;
 11. Riots or civil disturbances; or
 12. Any other incident that may be of interest to the press.
- B. The PIO may be contacted by radio, or telephone, during duty hours. After duty hours, notification may be made by the Communications Center or cell phone.
- C. Division and Shift Commanders shall notify the PIO of any newsworthy events which occur after the PIO's duty hours.
- D. Any employee learning of a newsworthy event will forward the information to his Supervisor as soon as possible. If a Supervisor is not readily available, a patrol Supervisor will be advised of the event.
- E. The supervisor notified will forward the information to the PIO.
- F. Shift Commanders will brief the oncoming Shift Commanders on any newsworthy events which have occurred during the last tour of duty.
- G. The Department will work with the media to ensure that information is provided on a timely and factual basis whenever possible by arranging for, and assisting at, news conferences.

II. RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA

- A. Information about newsworthy occurrences may be released by the following personnel:

1. Public Information Officer (PIO);
 2. Division/Unit Commanders or designated Supervisors (if the item relates to their respective division or unit);
 3. The Chief of Police or his designated representative;
 4. If authorized, employees other than the PIO can release information concerning newsworthy occurrences. The PIO will be briefed on what was released by the employee releasing the information as soon as possible.
- B. Division Commanders, Assistant PIO, and/or the PIO may release any information contained on the court docket to the media upon request.
- C. Release of information regarding statements of policy, standards of conduct, or changes in organization or disciplinary action will be made by the Office of the Chief of Police, or an authorized representative of the Chief of Police.
- D. Records personnel and Support Services Supervisors may release the following information to the media upon request:
1. Accident reports that are available to the general public.
 2. General reports that are available to the general public.
 3. Court docket information.
- E. The PIO or Incident Commander may, upon request, furnish media members any factual information regarding an incident pertaining to:
1. The facts and circumstances of arrest including the time and place of arrest;
 2. Resistance, pursuit, and use of weapons, either by the suspect or the officer;
 3. The accused name, age, residence, and occupation, only after the accused has been charged, arrested or a warrant or probable cause affidavit has been obtained;
 4. The identity of the investigating and arresting officer if it does not compromise the officer or a police operation;
 5. Evidence seized; however, avoid discussions which might hinder the investigation or prejudice the case;
 6. The nature, substance or text of a charge, including a brief description of the offense;
 7. Any persons of interest that the police need the media assistance in locating; and
 8. Victim or witness information, unless the release of such information is likely to pose a threat to the mental health, physical health, or personal safety of the victim or complaining witness, or compromise a future criminal investigation.
- F. Statistical information from Department computer systems may only be released to the media by the Chief of Police, the PIO, or an authorized employee of the Administration Division.
- G. Non-public records will not be made available to the media unless authorized by the Chief of Police or a Division Commander.
- H. Information will not be released pertaining to:
1. The contents of any suspect's statement, admission or confession;
 2. Personal opinions about the suspect or evidence;
 3. Information concerning anticipated testimony or the truthfulness of witnesses;
 4. The results of fingerprinting, polygraph, ballistic or laboratory tests, except official medical examiner's reports on cause of death;
 5. The names of deceased victims until the next of kin have been notified (applies to both citizens and police officers killed or injured);
 6. Names of victims of a sex crime or any information which would lead to their identity;
 7. If the accused is a juvenile charged as a juvenile, their identity will NOT be released to the media;
 8. The names of suspects prior to being arrested, charged, or a warrant or probable cause affidavit has been obtained unless it is decided by Division Supervisors that the police need