

Lower Providence Township Police Department Eagleville, Pennsylvania		
General Order <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special Order <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Order <input type="checkbox"/>	ORDER NUMBER 1001	
Subject Providing Information To The News Media		
Date of Issue February 4, 2020	Effective Date February 4, 2020	Expiration Date Until Amended or Rescinded
Issued by: Michael Jackson, Chief of Police		
Amends	Rescinds	
Standard Number		
Distribution 1. General Order Manuals 2. Records Manual 3. Reading Verification to all Personnel		

I. PURPOSE

Police Departments must have the support and cooperation of the general public for whom they work. Consequently, the public must understand the call, problems, and needs of the Police and must be aware of required Police activities. Public understanding is greatly influenced by information disseminated by all news media; therefore, it is necessary that the Police cooperate as much as possible with all news media personnel.

II. POLICY

It will be the policy of the Lower Providence Township Police Department to make available to all news media information contained in completed Police investigation reports. All members of the Department, however, must be aware that certain information is prohibited by law; for example, contents of statements by defendants, the “posing” of defendants for news media photographs, and that which is inconsistent with good police practice. The purpose of these guidelines is to permit the free flow of information to all news media, while protecting both the cases of the accused and the prosecution from possible prejudicial publicity.

III. REGULATIONS

- A. Release of Information by the Chief of Police:
 - 1. Information pertaining to departmental policy, training, personnel changes, disciplinary actions, Police procedures, programs, or organizational matters will be released ONLY by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

- B. Release of Information by Shift Supervisor or OIC
 - 1. Routine Police actions, traffic accident reports, names, ages, and addresses of persons arrested, charges filed against them, and routine patrol activities may be released by the Shift Supervisor or OIC.
 - a. Desk personnel, with knowledge of the Shift Supervisor or OIC, may also release the above information.
- C. Release of Information by Shift Supervisor, OIC, or Detective Assigned to Specific Investigation
 - 1. Criminal investigation information may be provided to the media by the Shift Supervisor, or OIC of the investigation division, or the Detective assigned who is handling the investigation with the knowledge and approval of his/her supervisor.
- D. Information Which May be Made Available to the News Media in Criminal Matters
 - 1. The name of the person arrested, age, sex, residence, employment, marital status, and any similar biographical information
 - 2. The substance of the charge, complaint, or indictment
 - 3. The identity of the investigating and arresting agency, and the length of the investigation.
 - 4. The circumstances immediately surrounding the arrest, including the time and place of arrest, resistance, pursuit, possession and use of weapons, and a description of items seized at the time of the arrest.
 - 5. The name of any victims; address; age; sex; occupation; next of kin, if pertinent to the crime; and property taken (not to include victims of rape or other sex offense).
 - 6. The type of force used against the victim, and the general extent of injuries to either the victim or assailant.
- E. Information Which Should Not be Released to the News Media in Criminal Matters
 - 1. Opinions related to character, reputation, credibility, or anticipated testimony of an accused person or prospective witness.
 - 2. Admissions, confessions, or the contents of any statement or alibi attributable to an accused person.
 - 3. The performance or result of any tests, or the refusal of the accused to take a test or to participate in a line-up.
 - 4. The possibility of a plea of guilty to the offenses charged or to a lesser offense, or any other possible disposition.
 - 5. Opinions concerning evidence of any argument in the case, whether it is anticipated that the evidence or argument will be used at trial or not.
 - 6. Name, address, and present location of any victim of sex offenses.
 - 7. Name and addresses of witnesses.
 - 8. Name and address of any subject sought for a crime, but not yet formally charged, unless help is wanted from the news media to assist with locating the subject.
 - 9. The contents of any suicide note.
- F. Photographs and Releasing Photographs of Persons
 - 1. Members of the Department will not present the photographs of defendant when they are in public places outside the courtroom. They will neither encourage nor discourage pictures or televising, but must not pose the accused.
 - 2. Department photography of a suspect may be released ONLY if such release does not jeopardize an investigation. Photographs may also be released if a valid law enforcement function is served.
- G. Releasing Names of Persons Killed or Injured
 - 1. Members of the Department will first notify the next of kin, and obtain identification of the deceased victim or seriously injured victim of a criminal act or accident prior to releasing the name and address to the news media. However, if the next of kin is unknown or has not been located after a reasonable length of time, this information may be released.
- H. Access of News Media to Area of Serious Incident or Crime Scene
 - 1. In the event of a major crime, incident or disaster, police lines will be established for crowd control and to preserve evidence. Depending upon the tactical situation or the likelihood of jeopardizing departmental operations relating to investigation and collecting evidence, members of the news media should be permitted access to these areas when properly identified through credentials as members of the news media.

2. While news media representatives may be permitted in the area of the crime scene or serious incident, they do not have the authority to be within the crime scene or area that has been secured to preserve evidence, or at any location where their presence jeopardizes departmental operations.
3. After a crime scene has been processed, only the owner, legal occupant, or their agent may grant permission to news persons to enter private dwellings or the surrounding premises to gather news.
4. Duly authorized representatives of the news media may enter any area restricted to the general public, after producing valid press credentials. The decision to assume the risk of possible danger remains with the individual news person involved, but it is not the responsibility of Department members to provide for the safety of these representative of any news media who voluntarily choose to subject themselves to danger.
5. Whenever possible during a major crime, incident, or disaster, a secure area should be established for news media personnel to receive and disseminate news information.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

It shall be the responsibility of the Chief of Police and Shift Supervisor to insure and maintain compliance with this policy.

V. CANCELLATION

All orders or parts of orders inconsistent with this order are hereby repealed

VI. DISTRIBUTION

All personnel.

Michael Jackson

Michael Jackson
Chief of Police

