PURPOSE
The purpose of this order is to provide procedures for employees contacted by the media.

POLICY
It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department to make timely information available to the news media.

PROCEDURE
A. GUIDELINES FOR THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION
   1. Releasable Information
      a. Adult suspects/arrestees’ name, age, and residence.
      b. The division involved, the investigating section or unit, and the arresting officer(s).
      c. The substance of the crime(s) (e.g., murder, rape, etc.).
      d. The circumstances immediately surrounding an arrest, including the time and place of arrest, resistance, pursuit, and possession and use of weapons.
         NOTE: When an investigations unit (Homicide, SACA, EOD, etc.) is responding, specific information to be released (other than allowed in 1.a., 1.b., & 1.c.) regarding the incident shall be cleared by the supervisor or lead investigator of the investigating unit.
   2. Non-Releasable Information (prejudicial or protected by law)
      a. Observations about the suspects’ character or reputation.
      b. Statements, admissions, confessions, or alibis attributable to the suspect, previous criminal records, or statements indicating the substance or lack of the above.
      c. Juvenile suspects’ or victims’ name or residence.
      d. Information that would identify the victim(s) of any sex crimes per 261, 264, 264.1, 286, 288, 288a, and 289 PC; or child abuse reports per 273a and 273d PC; or domestic violence per 273.5 PC; or bias crimes per 422.6, 422.7, and 422.75 PC.
      e. References to specific investigative procedures such as fingerprinting, polygraph examinations, ballistic tests, or laboratory tests.
      f. Statements concerning evidence in the case, whether or not it is anticipated such evidence will be used at trial.
      g. Statements concerning the identity, credibility, or testimony of a prospective witness(es).
      h. Reference to suspects/arrestees’ refusal to make a statement.
      i. Opinions on the suspects/arrestees’ guilt or innocence.
   3. Suspect/Arrestee Photographs or Interviews
      a. Officers who have suspects in custody shall not move or pose them for media pictures.
      b. Media representatives shall not, however, be prevented from taking unposed photographs or videotape in public places.
      c. Suspects in police custody shall not be interviewed by media representatives.
   4. Cases Being Prosecuted
      a. Once a Preliminary Hearing has begun, employees shall not comment to the media on any case, or any defendant in the case, without approval of the Office of Investigations (OOI) Division Captain or Office Chief, or the Chief of Police (COP).
      b. Media requests shall be referred to the Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office.
B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

1. The Public Information Officer’s (PIO) duties shall include, but are not limited to,
   a. Handling the daily news media inquiries regarding crimes occurring within the city limits, as well as questions relative to ongoing criminal investigations.
   b. Uploading daily activity logs onto the SPD website.
   c. Responding to the scene of a prolonged major incident, disaster, or emergency upon request of an OOI supervisor or a Watch Commander.
   d. Assisting with the coordination and release of information on unit activities and programs upon request.
   e. Ensuring that news is distributed equally and fairly among the media.
   f. Ensuring the timely release and coordination of all news information.
   g. Responding to media requests for information as soon as practical.
   h. Coordinating media requests for employee interviews or interviews with the COP, coordinating media news conferences, and responding to media questions concerning Department policy.
   i. Handling routine requests for statistical data made by representatives of the news media.
   j. Coordinating ride-alongs requested by the media.

2. The PIO, Office of the Chief (OOC) shall maintain an On-Call List for Media Liaison consisting of employees selected by the COP who have been trained to perform the duties of the PIO.

3. The PIO, or an individual on the On-Call List, shall be subject to recall 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week, and subject to call out from OOI supervisors, Incident Commanders, Watch Commanders, or higher authority.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

1. Division Captains shall ensure
   a. That if media contact is made between 0800-1700 hours, Monday-Friday, the call shall be referred to the PIO for follow-up response. During non-business hours, weekends, or holidays, requests for information shall be referred to a Watch Commander or designee.
   b. Press releases drafted by OOI units are sent to the PIO for approval and dissemination.

2. Detectives in charge of a crime scene who desire the on-call PIO to respond to the scene shall make the request to the respective Watch Commander or designee.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

1. Communications Division supervisors and/or their designee(s) shall
   a. Serve as the first point of contact for media inquiries on developing events Monday through Friday from 1600 – 0700 hours and on weekends and holidays.
   b. Ensure information released to the media representatives includes the hundred-block and street name of the location of the event (including the names of commercial businesses, schools, restaurants, etc.).
   c. Refer media representatives to the PIO Office during normal business hours Monday through Friday from 0700 – 1600 hours.
   d. Refer media representatives to the PIO Office for information regarding prior events, daily log activity, or community tips that are not related to a developing event.
   e. Notify the PIO of newsworthy events Monday through Friday from 0700 – 1600 hours, excluding holidays.
      NOTE: For afterhours newsworthy events the Communications Center shall contact the on-duty Watch Commander.

2. Communications Division personnel shall not
   a. Provide beat check information.
   b. Release personal information such as names, ages, or addresses of any involved parties.
E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF FIELD SERVICES

1. Watch Commanders shall
   a. Between 1700-0800, Monday-Friday, and on weekends and holidays, ensure releasable information is furnished to the media in a timely manner.
   b. Ensure media requests for information on current items are answered and receive a response in a timely manner.
   c. Determine if the on-call PIO shall be called to handle any urgent request from the media regarding an ongoing event.

2. If the media request is for routine information, Watch Commanders may advise the requesting reporter(s) that the information is not available at that time. Watch Commanders shall document the request and forward it to the PIO for response during business hours.

F. NEWS MEDIA

1. Employees shall forward a memorandum through their chain of command to the Captain, OOC concerning any unethical or unprofessional conduct by members of the media.

2. Media personnel shall not be allowed free access within a Police Facility. When members of the media are observed in areas other than the Public Information Counter, employees shall ask the individual to leave the unauthorized area.

3. Department personnel shall honor valid media identification.

4. Department personnel shall strive to ensure bona fide members of the media are not hindered in legitimate news gathering efforts when possible.

5. Members of the media are exempt from complying with a peace officer’s authority to close an area during an emergency or disaster. The right of access by the media is described in 409.5(d) PC.

6. When fire lines or a police perimeter have been established, newspapers interfering with or jeopardizing the safety of persons involved in rescue operations may be restrained and charged with interfering, using any applicable law, e.g. 148 PC, 148.2 PC, 2800 CVC. When police have established a crime scene, media personnel may be denied access.

G. PRIVATE CITIZEN PHOTOGRAPHERS

1. Private citizens may legally photograph or videotape police incidents from lawful vantage points but shall not have unrestricted access to areas of those incidents.

2. Private citizens must obey all lawful orders of an officer and with cause may be ordered to relocate.

3. Officers encountering problems with such citizens shall document the incident in a crime report if enforcement action is taken or in an incident report. Supervisors shall ensure a copy is routed via the chain of command to the PIO, OOC.

H. POLICE REPORTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Juvenile reports shall not be released to a third party.

2. Department personnel shall only release photographs of ADULTS to the news media when
   a. It may aid in the investigation.
   b. It may assist in the apprehension of the suspect.
   c. It benefits public safety.
   d. If release of the photographs does not contaminate the investigation (i.e., prior to photo or stand-up lineup).

3. Employees shall not release photographs of JUVENILE suspects/arrestees to the news media unless authorized by the COP.

4. Photographs of juveniles listed as victims of a crime or missing persons may be released to the media only after the “Photo Release for Children Under 18 Years of Age” form has been completed by the authorizing parent or guardian, witnessed by a Departmental employee, and approved by a Section Supervisor, unless extenuating circumstances exist.
I. VICTIM INFORMATION

1. The identity of a decedent shall be released to the media by our Department only after the Coroner’s Office has notified the next of kin or if authorized by the COP.
2. The contents of suicide notes shall not be released, although it may be reported that a note was found.
3. Verification or inquiries concerning injuries to the victim shall be referred to the appropriate hospital, if applicable.

J. CONDUCT OF DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

1. No member of the Department shall pose as a member of the news media without the expressed permission of the COP. This provision shall not be construed as prohibiting members of the Department from attending media conferences or other meetings covered by the news media if no action is taken to identify themselves as members of the news media.
2. When personal opinions are given, officers shall be sure their opinion does not include information designated as non-releasable (Section A.2.). Officers shall adhere to the facts that are releasable (Section A.1.).
3. Frequently, due to public expectations and because of their accessibility, officers are called on to supply information both related and unrelated to the law enforcement function. Officers shall appropriately answer questions asked of them or refer the person to the proper individual or agency for the answers.
   a. When a request is made for information about a police matter, officers shall decide if they possess enough facts, are qualified to respond, and if the person making the request should receive the information.
   b. Officers shall be open in their dealings with the media and unless there is reason to the contrary, supply requested information.
   c. Officers shall be cautious to avoid representing as fact that which is opinion.
4. Information concerning Department policy or administration shall be furnished by the COP or designee.
   a. Employees furnishing information to the media concerning police incidents shall furnish accurate information concerning the case and use the Department’s name, “The Sacramento Police Department,” and identify the investigating and arresting divisions.
   b. Employees shall not use their Department contact with the media as a means of publicity for personal reasons.
   c. All media releases shall be in accordance with the policies expressed in the GOs.
5. The PIO shall be notified when employees are assigned to inform the media of developments in crime prevention or community relations issues. The PIO shall ensure the COP is aware of such information. Regularly scheduled radio shows need not be reported.
6. Personal interviews are regarded as prepared news releases within the meaning of this policy. Usually, a prearranged appointment is made for the interview. The PIO shall be notified of any interview requests and the topic to be discussed prior to the interview being granted. The PIO shall inform the Captain, OOC of the interview.
7. Officers in doubt as to the content of a release shall direct inquiries to the supervisory officer in charge of the investigation.
8. Members of the Department assisting other law enforcement agencies shall refer news inquiries to the outside agency. Officers shall not release information furnished to the Department by other agencies unless the information resulted from our independent investigation.
9. Officers asked for information beyond the range of their knowledge shall acknowledge this and refer inquiries to correct sources.

K. FILMING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES/FACILITIES

1. Department personnel are encouraged to cooperate with commercial production companies filming law enforcement-related activities.
2. Commercial productions intended for viewing by the public in which profit is the main motive shall be scrutinized.

3. The Chief of Police or designee shall review requests to film commercial productions and grant approval as appropriate.

4. Requests by commercial production companies shall be documented in memorandum form directed to the PIO. The memo shall include:
   a. The name of the production company.
   b. The activity or facility to be used in the film.
   c. The intended audience of the final production.
   d. The dates and times the filming will take place.
   e. A statement concerning the amount of disruption or impact the filming will have on Departmental activities.
   f. The name, address, and phone number of a contact person and the person in charge of the production.

5. Companies shall not be given any quotes for the use of our resources nor shall any commitment be made before approval by the OOC.

6. Approved requests shall be routed back to the division submitting the original memo indicating any special conditions that must be observed.

L. PUBLIC RELATION PHOTOGRAPHS
   1. Requests for public relation photographs to be taken at a special public or Department event shall be submitted via e-mail to the Media Services Division for approval.
   2. When approved, the Media Service Specialist shall photograph the event. If the original request comes from the COP, Media Services shall forward the image to the PIO for immediate delivery to the Chief.
   3. Media Services shall email the requestor the finished images or deliver hard copy prints within ten (10) working days after the event or from when the request was made.