



**Las Cruces Police Department  
GENERAL ORDERS  
ADMINISTRATION VOLUME 1  
GO-144 MEDIA RELATIONS (Daily)  
Revised 05/30/2013**

**144 MEDIA RELATIONS**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines and procedures for interacting with members of the media.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Las Cruces Police Department (LCPD) to support the fundamental principles of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution pertaining to the rights of the news media. The department is committed to informing the public of newsworthy events within the public domain in a fair and impartial manner.

**APPLICABILITY**

This General Order applies to all employees. This General Order supersedes all previous versions.

**REFERENCES**

- NMML ADM.23.01
- NMSA 1978, Chapter 14, Article 2, New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act
- General Order 158 Social Media

**144.01 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

A. The Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for releasing information to the public. The PIO does this by:

1. Preparing and issuing media releases, arranging, coordinating and assisting at news conferences.
2. Coordinating with news media outlets for media releases and at incident scenes.
3. Disseminating public safety information and media releases through social media and the department's website.
4. Monitoring news media for impactful information to the department.



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5. Performing all other duties as assigned by the Chief of Police.

B. PIOs are available at all times and an on-call list shall be maintained and distributed by the PIO.

**144.02 MEDIA RELEASES**

A. The PIO shall maintain a current list of local and national media outlets in order to release public safety information as efficiently as possible.

B. Media releases shall be presented to the Chief of Police or his/her designee for approval prior to being released.

C. The Chief may appoint designees to manage internet sites and/or social media pages as described in General Order 158 Social Media.

D. Media releases concerning inter-agency operations shall be approved by the Chief of Police and the designated representative of the other agency.

E. The following information may be released to the public:

1. That an incident has occurred including general information regarding the incident.
2. A general request for assistance to the public in order to obtain additional information.
3. The facts surrounding an arrest, and information contained on the arrest report.
4. A short factual statement concerning an arrested and charged person that includes the person's name, age, residence, and occupation.
5. Information contained in a police report or on a uniformed crash report.
6. The identity of victim(s) unless there is a compelling reason not to.
7. A generalized statement of evidence seized (other than confessions, admissions or statements) unless there is a compelling reason not to.
8. Information obtained from public records of the court having jurisdiction over the case.



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9. A statement describing the merits of a law or pending legislation after getting the approval of the Chief of Police.
- F. The following information should not be disclosed unless there is a compelling reason to do so:
1. Prior criminal record of the suspect or arrested person, or implication of a prior record.
  2. The identity or address of any witness.
  3. Any opinion, stated or implied, as to the guilt or innocence of the arrested person(s).
  4. Statements as to the character or reputation of a suspect or arrested person, victim, or witness.
  5. Any possible connection of a suspect or arrested person with any uncharged/un-cleared crime or crime pattern.
  6. The results of, or refusal to take, any test/examination.
  7. Any photograph of an uncharged suspect.
  8. Any opinion regarding the merits or the case or quality of the evidence gathered.
  9. Information on suspects of crimes.
  10. Criminal supplemental reports, criminal complaints, statements of fact, unless approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
  11. Any statements regarding an arrested person's confession, admission or statement.
  12. Personal opinions on operating procedures, policies, and managerial functions.
  13. Comparing LCPD procedures, policy, and/or managerial functions to other law enforcement agencies.
- G. Once the prosecution of an arrested and charged person(s) has commenced, all inquiries shall be referred to the District Attorney's Office.



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**144.03 MEDIA ACCESS TO CRIME SCENES AND DISASTER SCENES**

- A. Supervisors may permit the department PIO and properly identified media representatives more liberal access than the general public to any disaster or emergency scene unless their presence would constitute a violation of the law or would substantially interfere with the employee's duty to:
1. Protect human life – those injured or other persons, including news media representatives, from explosion, fire, radiation, chemicals, gun fire or other hazards.
  2. Collect and preserve evidence of a crime.
  3. Protect property.
  4. Identify dead or injured persons.
- B. In most instances where significant danger may exist and the officer is not concerned about 2, 3, and 4 above, the properly identified media representatives should be given sufficient detail about the danger to make an informed decision to enter at their own risk. Once the media representative has made an informed decision, access should not be denied. If the supervisor finds it necessary to establish police lines and restrict access to certain areas, the supervisor should explain the circumstances requiring the restricted access and should grant access to the media as soon as practical.
- C. The news media has the right to be present in public areas and cannot be forced out. If an employee encounters any problems with the news media, a supervisor and/or PIO should be notified immediately.

**144.04 RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA**

Employees shall not discuss or disseminate information to the public or media regarding incidents or other official matters. If approached for information regarding an incident or other official matter, employees shall contact their supervisor who can determine if a PIO needs to be notified. Officers and civilian personnel shall not release information to any news media sources or via the internet unless authorized by the Chief of Police or his/her designee (See General Order 158 Social Media.) Members of the media may request reports and other public records through the Records Unit by submitting a Request for Service form or Freedom of Information Request through the City Clerk's Office. PIOs are authorized to release matters of public record maintained by the department to media representatives as authorized by the Chief of Police.