



# *New London Police Department General Order*

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| Release of information to News Media | G.O. 8.6                       |
| Effective Date: 07/11/2011           | Classification: Not Classified |
| POSTC: 1.2.26, 2.2.18                | CALEA:                         |

## **Policy**

It is the policy of the New London Police Department to maintain a positive relationship, through good communications with the news media and the public. This general order addresses important principles in Police-Media Relations:

1. The public's right to know about police operations;
2. Law enforcement's need to properly conduct investigations;
3. The right to a fair and impartial trial of the criminal suspect.

Further, this general order articulates the duties and responsibilities of member of the department in regard to Police-Media relations and the public release of information.

## **Procedure**

1. Only the Chief of Police or his/her designee may speak with the media regarding any personnel or disciplinary procedures. <sup>1</sup>
2. No employee from the New London Police Department may give an on-air interview without first obtaining authorization from the Chief of Police or his/her designee if such interview pertains to the content, conduct or circumstances surrounding an ongoing criminal or internal investigation.
3. Following the occurrence of major incidents, per instruction of the Chief of Police, details regarding a major crime or incident may only be provided by a PIO, on-scene supervisor or higher authority. <sup>3</sup>
  - a. In cases where an on-scene PIO is designated, he or she shall prepare a news release in cooperation with other investigators and provide the news release to the front desk before departure.
4. The Deputy Chief of Police will serve as the department's Public Information Officer (PIO).<sup>2</sup> As such the Deputy Chief of Police will assume all responsibilities inherent in the department's routine liaison with the news media including:
  - a. After eliminating information that cannot be released from police logs, routinely preparing a copy of the police log for news media representatives per their request;
  - b. Assisting news personnel in covering routine news stories, and at the scene of incidents;

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<sup>1</sup> POSTC 1.2.26

<sup>2</sup> POSTC 1.2.26

- c. Being available for on-call responses to the news media;
  - d. Preparing and distributing agency news releases;
  - e. Arranging for and assisting at news conferences;
  - f. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information about victims, witnesses and suspects from agency files;
  - g. Assisting in crisis situations within the agency;
  - h. Developing procedures for releasing information when other service agencies are involved in a mutual effort; and
  - i. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information concerning on-going confidential agency investigations and operations.
5. In the absence of the PIO, all supervisors may be responsible for media relations involving minor incidents.<sup>3</sup>
  6. Routine press releases designed to provide routine information such as traffic enforcement efforts, new police programs, crime prevention etc. will be submitted and approved by the PIO prior to release.
  7. In cases where multiple jurisdictions are involved, the agency having primary jurisdiction may be responsible for coordinating the release of information.
  8. The news media may be precluded from its presence at any crime scenes, major fires, natural disasters, or other catastrophic events<sup>3</sup> where it presents a danger to them or otherwise interferes with a police search, securing of evidence, or otherwise making a scene safe. Otherwise media personnel who can provide positive identification and media credentials are, by law, allowed to have reasonable access to any incident, provided it does not contaminate a crime scene or interfere with the collection and preservation of evidence,<sup>4</sup> in order to:
    - a. Photograph,
    - b. Videotape,
    - c. Interview persons, and/or
    - d. Gather and record information.
  9. Information that may be released:<sup>5</sup> The following information may be released to the media:
    - a. General information concerning the nature and extent of an incident;
    - b. Hazards to the public, if any;
    - c. Casualty reports, once identification of the deceased and notification of next of kin is done;
    - d. Name(s), address(es), and age(s) of adult(s) arrested;
    - e. Time and place of arrest;
    - f. Charge(s) against the arrested person(s);
    - g. Date, location, and type(s) of offense(s);
    - h. General description of the incident, value of item(s) taken or damaged; and

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<sup>3</sup> POSTC 2.2.18

<sup>4</sup> CGS 7-313b and 7-313e.

<sup>5</sup> POSTC 1.2.26

- a. Identity(ies) of police personnel involved in the case.
- i. The identity of victim(s) injured or killed may only be released after family members or other next-of-kin have been notified.

10. Information that must be released:<sup>6</sup> The following information will be released to the media:

- a. Name(s), address(es) and age(s) of adults arrested;
- b. Charge(s) against the arrested person(s);
- c. Date and location of arrest;
- d. Bond information; and
- e. Either a press release or a general description of the incident.

11. Information that must not be released: <sup>6</sup>

- a. Continuing investigations;
- b. Apprehension of suspects;
- c. Prosecution of the accused;
- d. Sealed arrest or search warrants;
- e. Victim/Witness statements;
- f. Information that may jeopardize continuing investigations, apprehension of suspects, and or prosecution of the accused;
- g. Information pertaining to any juvenile or youthful offender suspect(s), victims or witness(es);
- h. Any information or details pertaining to a sexual assault victim(s) <sup>6</sup>;
- i. Any information that may reasonably lead to the identification of informants; and
- j. Home addresses of Public Safety, Judicial or other personnel whose residential location is protected by statute.

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<sup>6</sup> Sec. 54-86e. Confidentiality of identifying information pertaining to victim of sexual assault.