



ERIE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Written Directives

Number: **210.004**

Title: News Media and Release of Information		Pages: 6
Effective Date: 01/25/06	Review Date: 02/15/16	Amended Date: 01/06/19

POLICY:

The Erie Police Department is committed to cooperating with and informing the community and news media of events within the public domain which are handled by or involve the Erie Police Department. It is the Department's intent to provide information as timely, accurately and completely as possible.

DEFINITIONS:

CRIME SCENE: An area secured by the police in order to preserve and process evidence.

COMMAND OFFICER: Officers with the rank of Commander or higher.

SUPERVISOR: Officers with the rank of Sergeant, or the highest ranking officer designated as the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) in absence of a Sergeant.

PROCEDURES:

I. MEDIA RELEASES

The Public Information Officer, or PIO, for the Erie Police Department will typically be a Commander or Deputy Chief. The PIO will:

1. Assist news personnel in covering routine news stories;
2. Authorize supervisors or other personnel to release information to the media on the scene or from the station;
3. Prepare and distribute agency news releases;
4. Coordinate and authorize the release of information regarding:
 - a. Victims;
 - b. Witnesses;
 - c. Suspects; and/or
 - d. Confidential departmental investigations and operations.

5. Arrange for, assist or conduct news conferences as approved by the Chief of Police; and
6. Assist news media in coverage of crisis situations within the department.

II. EMPLOYEE AUTHORIZATION

CACP STANDARD 210.3

- A. Every effort should be made to provide basic information to the news media as soon as possible. If information cannot be provided when requested by the media, the media should be advised of a reasonable time and place when the information will be made available.
- B. All department members will be respectful and courteous to members of the media.
- C. Routine information to be provided includes:
 1. The daily media activity log (from Records Management System (RMS));
 2. General location of the offense;
 3. Type of incident;
 4. Time and date occurred/reported;
 5. Number of people involved, their gender and age if known;
 6. Number of individuals arrested, if any, with name, address, age and gender of adults. Only the age and gender of juveniles arrested will be provided; and
 7. Estimated value of property loss and description of loss, if any, on property damage cases only.
- D. The following information will not be furnished to the news media by anyone other than the Chief of Police or his/her designee:
 1. Information about the accused with regard to:
 - a. Character;
 - b. Reputation; or
 - c. Mug shots of the accused. However, mug shots may be released if the photo release will not damage the investigation.
 2. Information about any prospective witness such as their:

- a. Identity;
 - b. Testimony; or
 - c. Credibility.
3. Victim's information regarding the name, address or other identifying information.
- a. Dealing with offenses prohibited by law or embarrassing to the victim (i.e. sexual assaults); or
 - b. When requested by the victim not to release the information.
 - c. Victim information may become public once a suspect has been formally charged with an offense.
4. The existence of the following will not be furnished, confirmed or denied:
- a. A confession, admission of guilt or statement made by the accused;
 - b. The failure or refusal of the accused to make a statement;
 - c. The refusal by the accused to submit to any examinations or tests or the results of any examinations or tests;
 - d. Identifying juveniles, unless authorized by state statute to release;
 - e. Information from other law enforcement agencies without their authorization to release the information; or
 - f. Any information not releasable under state statutes.
5. Officers will not express any opinion as to the
- a. Guilt or innocence of the accused;
 - b. The merits of the case; or
 - c. The general overall quantity or quality of evidence gathered. (This does not prohibit the release of information on the quantity or quality of specific items of evidence such as drugs, money or firearms.)
- E. When a representative of the media is denied access to a scene or information about a case, a courteous explanation as to the reason for denial will be provided.

- F. At the scene of an incident or from the police station, additional information may be provided by:
 - 1. Any Command Officer present; or
 - 2. Any officer in charge of the investigation if authorized by a Command Officer.

- G. Media releases relating to major cases, incidents involving death or serious bodily injury or actively being investigated, shall be in writing with copies to:
 - 1. Chief of Police;
 - 2. Deputy Chief and Commander;
 - 3. The Town's Public Information Officer; and
 - 4. The case file.

- H. Written media releases relating to major incidents shall be released only following approval of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
 - 1. The media release should be brief and contain only factual information.
 - 2. It should be written in the third person and no police terminology should be used. The time should be expressed in civilian (12-hour) terms rather than military (24-hour) terms.

III. INFORMATION CONCERNING AN ONGOING CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION MAY BE RELEASED BY:

- A. Chief of Police;
- B. Deputy Chief; or
- C. Detective Sergeant.

IV. NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE ACCESS

- A. Access through police lines or barricades to major fires, natural disasters, or catastrophic events will be only with the permission of the on-scene supervisor in charge.

- B. News media representatives may be allowed access to the perimeter of crime scenes but not within the crime scene.
- C. The incident commander or PIO will be responsible for ensuring media personnel are permitted access to an area sufficiently close to the scene, but where the integrity of the scene or the tactical operations of the department will not be disturbed.
- D. Access into crime scenes may be allowed:
 - 1. After all evidence has been processed and collected; however,
 - 2. The police have no standing to invite the media onto private premises without the permission of:
 - a. The owner; or
 - b. Person in charge of the premises.
- E. News media representatives shall not be permitted to interview a person in custody of the Erie Police Department.
- F. Officers, at the scene, shall take no action to discourage the news media from photographing or televising persons or scenes except as provided in the preceding paragraphs.
- G. Officers at the scene:
 - 1. Shall give no physical assistance to the news media in the photographing or televising of persons or crime scenes.
 - 2. Shall not direct, encourage, nor discourage victims, witnesses or prisoners to be photographed or televised by the media.
 - 3. Shall not interfere with the news media representatives in their attempt to cover the news unless they cause interference with the investigation of a crime.
- H. News media representatives who refuse to comply with police requests and thereby interfere with operations may be excluded from the scene.

V. MEDIA RELEASE RESPONSIBILITY IN A MULTIPLE AGENCY EFFORT

- A. When the primary responsibility for the investigation is with another agency, any requests for media releases will be referred to that agency.

- B. When the Erie Police Department initiates any activity in another jurisdiction, it shall be the responsibility of the Erie Police Department to prepare and release information to the news media. In some cases, this will require prior arrangement with the agency having jurisdiction.
- C. This department will make every effort to coordinate any media releases with the other agencies involved.

RULES:

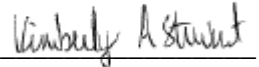
NONE

REFERENCES:

Wheat Ridge Police Department #2.20

Lamar Colorado Police Department #2300.00

Colorado Open Records Act CRS 24-72-201.



Kimberly A. Stewart
Chief of Police