

	LANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY	Number: G.O. 3.15
		Issue Date: March 21, 2005
		Revision Date: November 2, 2005; March 5, 2012; July 18, 2018
CHAPTER: Organization, Management and Administration		Related Policy: G.O. 3.16 (Public Appearances and Community Involvement); G.O. 4.01 (General Responsibilities of Employees - Procedure I. M. Release of Information, Procedure I. O. Security of Sheriff's Office Business)
SUBJECT: Media Relations		Related Laws: ORS 192.501

POLICY: Lane County Sheriff's Office is committed to transparency and to working cooperatively with media to ensure access to accurate and timely public information. The Lane County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer (PIO) is the main point of contact for the media and will generally coordinate the dissemination of public information. Release of information should be coordinated through the PIO whenever possible.

RULE: News media responses and contacts shall only be conducted and approved in accordance with procedures detailed in this General Order. If a request for information is denied to a member of the media the reason for that denial shall be fully and courteously explained. Media requesting police reports should complete a formal Public Records Request.

PROCEDURE:

I. Release Authority

- A. The Public Information Officer (PIO) will be the primary person releasing information to the media through traditional and social media channels, via telephone, or in person. Media requests should be routed to the PIO.
- B. The on-duty supervisor may contact the PIO outside of regular business hours at their discretion for events that are likely to garner media attention. The on-duty patrol supervisor or designee, has the authority to send out a news release or disseminate disclosable information to the media in the absence of the PIO as needed.
- C. Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, the Chief Deputy, and the Sheriff have the authority to disseminate information to the media. Deputies may disseminate information to the media with approval from a supervisor. Such dissemination should be coordinated through the PIO whenever possible.

II. Providing Information to the Media

A. News Releases

1. News releases shall be prepared on the Sheriff's Office News Release template unless time and circumstances do not permit.

B. Social Media

1. The PIO will be responsible for social media accounts for the Lane County Sheriff's Office. All social media accounts will be approved by the Sheriff or designee prior to opening such accounts.
2. The PIO may, at their discretion, delegate another person to assist with the social media accounts in an emergency or during major events.

C. On Scene Media Requests

1. When members of the news media respond to an incident scene under the control of the Sheriff's Office and requests information, the on scene supervisor is expected to provide information as appropriate to members of the news media on scene. The information provided to members of the media should be provided to the PIO to assist in any follow up media requests. If the Public Information Officer is on scene, news media should be directed to contact the Public Information Officer.
2. The Sergeant or Deputy in charge of an incident that is likely to garner media interest shall, as soon as possible, provide the PIO with sufficient disclosable information so that information can be released as appropriate.
3. Members of the news media shall not be denied access to incident scenes under the control of the Sheriff's Office, unless:
 - a. The incident scene is on private property the news media member has not been granted permission to enter from the property owner. Sheriff's Office personnel shall not grant news media access to private property without the property owner's consent [(*Wilson v. Layne, U.S., 1999 WL 320817 (May 24, 1999)*, and (*Hanlon v. Berger, U.S., 1999 WL 320818 (May 24, 1999)*)]. Sheriff's Office personnel are not obliged to obtain consent of a private property owner on behalf of news media.
 - b. The presence of the news media would interfere with investigative or operational efforts.
 - c. The Sergeant or Deputy in charge determines that the news media members would be exposed to physical harm.

4. Members of the news media are permitted to take photographs, video and audio recording of any area they are allowed access.

III. Disclosure Guidelines

A. Per ORS 192.501, it is generally appropriate to disclose or report the following:

1. The arrested person's name, age, city of residence, and similar biographical information.
2. The charge(s).
3. The identity of and biographical information concerning both the complaining party and the victim. If a doubt exists, the Division Commander or Sheriff will make the final decision on information release.
4. The identity of the investigating and arresting agency and the length of the investigation.
5. The circumstances of arrest, including time, place, resistance, pursuit, and weapons used.

B. It is seldom appropriate to disclose for publication or report prior to trial the following:

1. The contents of any admission or confession, or the fact that an admission or confession has been made.
2. Opinions about an arrested person's character, guilt or innocence.
3. Opinions concerning evidence or argument in the case.
4. Statements concerning anticipated testimony or truthfulness of prospective witnesses.
5. The results of fingerprints, polygraph examinations, ballistic tests, or laboratory tests.
6. Precise descriptions of items seized or discovered during investigations.
7. Prior criminal charges and convictions.
8. The name of a deceased person should not be announced until the next-of-kin has been notified, or a reasonable time has elapsed.

9. No information will be released that could interfere with the successful investigation of any offense or incident.
10. Dates of birth and residence addresses of persons identified in a release.

IV. Media at the Lane County Adult Correctional Facility

- A. The presence of the news media will not interfere with any operational aspects occurring in the facility. On duty or off duty Sheriff's Office personnel are not obligated to consent to a news media interview or to be photographed.
- B. Outside of the facility.
 1. News media sources may conduct interviews and recordings outside the Jail facility without the approval of the Jail Commander, as long as the interview or recordings are being conducted on the sidewalk and off the property of the Jail facility.
- C. Jail Courtroom
 1. Members of the news media are prohibited from taping or recording any court proceeding at the Jail, unless specifically authorized by the judge.
 - a. Video cameras or recording devices will not be allowed inside the Jail courtroom or inside the public waiting area of the Jail visiting area.
- D. Inside of the Facility
 1. Members of the news media may be granted access inside the facility under the direct control and escort of Sheriff's Office personnel with the approval of the Jail Commander.
 2. Housing areas may be video recorded with the approval of the Jail Commander. Unless a waiver is signed, the identities of inmates must be protected in all recordings.
 3. Recordings and interviews may be terminated if it is determined that the news media members would be exposed to physical harm.
 4. Members of the news media will not be permitted to have direct contact with any inmate housed inside the jail or have access to video tape or record any housing or holding area where inmates are housed without the approval of the Jail Commander and appropriate signed releases from any inmate that is identifiable in the video footage.

5. The news media will not interfere with any staff member's performance of duties or with any operational aspects occurring inside the jail facility.
 6. Recordings and interviews may be terminated if it is determined that the news media members violate the terms of the policy or would be exposed to physical harm.
- E. Members of the news media may request to interview, video or record inmates housed in the jail.
1. Media must forward a request to the Jail's Administration Section to request an interview with an inmate or to request to video tape or record an interview with an inmate.
 - a. The written request must be on the official news media letterhead.
 - b. The request must include the name of the inmate they want to interview, record, or video tape.
 - c. The purpose of the media contact must be included in the written request.
 - d. The names of the interviewer and camera operator, if applicable, must be listed in the request.
 - e. The request must include the recording equipment the news media want to bring into the jail facility.
 2. The Jail Commander or designee must approve all requests prior to the request being forwarded to the inmate for review.
 3. A copy of the news media written request and an authorization for interview waiver will be forwarded to the identified inmate.
 - a. If the inmate refuses to sign the waiver, the media source will be notified and the interview request will be denied.
 - b. If the inmate accepts and signs the waiver, the completed waiver and media request letter will be forwarded to the Jail Shift Supervisor for scheduling.
 - c. The Jail Shift Supervisor will contact the news media source with the approved interview date and time and notify the PIO of the upcoming interview.
 - d. Video and recording devices will only be allowed if the inmate being interviewed agrees to be recorded.
 4. Approved inmate interviews and recordings will be conducted on the visiting tiers in the public waiting area of the Jail visiting area through the glass partition unless otherwise authorized.

- a. Any video or recording equipment must be inspected and clear the security screening process at Jail Reception.
- b. The Jail Commander may set time parameters on the interview to ensure it does not interfere with jail operations.
- c. Recordings and interviews may be terminated if it is determined that the news media members have violated the terms of the policy or would be exposed to physical harm.