

<p><b>Accreditation Standards:</b> 54.1.1, 54.1.2, 54.1.3; CFA 28.01, 28.02, 28.03, 28.04</p> <p><b>Revisions:</b> 08/97; 07/07; 10/07</p> <p><b>References:</b> FSS Chapter <a href="#">119</a></p>	<p><b>University of Florida Police Department</b></p>  <p><b>Department Standards Directive</b></p>	<p><b>Responsibility:</b> Community Services</p> <p><b>Pages:</b> 5</p> <p><b>Attachments:</b> None</p>
<p><b>TITLE: PUBLIC INFORMATION</b></p>		

## 7200 Public Information

**7200.1 Purpose** The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for the implementation and management of a Departmental public information system.

**7200.2 Discussion.** The University of Florida Police Department has established a cooperative climate with the news media. By providing the news media and the community with information on Department administration and operations, a relationship of mutual trust can be maintained. The media shall be extended the same courtesy afforded the general public.

**7200.3 Policy.** It is the policy of the University of Florida Police Department to release information on matters of public interest in a manner that does not interfere with criminal investigations or Department operations and consistent with FSS Chapter [119](#) (Public Records Law).

**7200.4 Procedure.** Under the authority of the Director, the Coordinator Education/Media Communications or designee shall serve as the spokesperson for the Department and will handle the release of all information. The Director or designee will be notified as soon as possible of all incidents concerning Department liability or which may result in heightened community interest.

### **A. Responsibilities of the Coordinator Education/Media Communications shall include, but not be limited to:**

**1. Face Sheet Procedures and Distribution.** The Coordinator Education/Media Communications will review the police incident reports on a daily basis (Monday through Friday). After review, copies of the

face sheet of reports shall be placed on the "Media" board at the Patrol front desk. This is to be updated daily, except weekends and holidays;

**2.** Assisting news personnel in covering routine news stories, and at the scene of incidents;

**a.** Act as a liaison with news media representatives and the Department for the dissemination of news to include but not be limited to:

**(1)** Specific incidents;

**(2)** Statistical information;

**(3)** Feature stories on Department activities, personnel, or changes;

**b.** Respond to incident scenes of concern to the public and handle informational release;

**3.** Responding to news media inquiries, in person or by telephone;

**a.** Be available in person at the Department to answer media queries during normal business hours;

**b.** Be available to answer media queries by telephone during normal business hours; or may be contacted by paging device after normal business hours through the Communications Section.



**B. Notification of Coordinator Education/Media Communications.** Patrol shift supervisors are responsible for notifying the Coordinator Education/Media Communications or designee of any incidents or situations that will likely generate media interest.

1. When at the scene, the Coordinator Education/Media Communications shall be solely responsible for issuing statements and official releases concerning the incident.
2. If the incident is of a significant nature that could reflect on the University or generate questions to other departments around campus (i.e. death, suicide, sexual battery, violent crime, employee arrested as suspect in a crime), the Media Coordinator will contact the Office of News and Public Affairs of the University of Florida.

**C. Issuance of Statements and News Releases.**

1. The Coordinator Education/Media Communications or designee will be the single point of contact for the Department for information released to the news media:

- a. At incident scenes,
- b. From Department records and statistics,
- c. On any on-going criminal investigation.

2. The Coordinator Education/Media Communications will serve as a liaison and may refer members of the media to appropriate persons within the Department for interviews.

3. News releases are prepared by the Coordinator Education/Media Communications in response to news worthy events and in support of preplanned Department activities. In order to ensure equal access, these releases will be made available on the media board located at the Patrol Division front desk (which is open 24 hours a day).

**4. News Release Procedures and Distribution.** Each news release shall include the topic of the release, the case report number and the name of the person who prepared the release. Once completed and approved by the Director or his designee, the following distribution shall occur:

- a. Two copies (including the original) to the Coordinator's files.
- b. One copy to the Associate Director.
- c. One copy to the Administration front desk.
- d. One copy to the Department records.
- e. One copy to the Department Communications Center.
- f. One copy to the "Media" board at the Patrol Station front desk.

**D. Absence of the Coordinator Education/Media Communications.** In the absence of the Coordinator, the Director will designate an individual authorized to release information to the media.

1. If the Coordinator is responding to a scene, but has yet to arrive, the ranking officer at the scene shall inform the media representatives that the Department spokesperson is enroute and a statement will be made upon arrival.

**E. Release of Multi-Agency Information.** Release of information pertaining to the mutual efforts between this Department and other agencies will be coordinated through all involved agencies. The agency having primary jurisdiction over the incident should be responsible for releasing information to the news media.

**F. Information to be Released.** The Department will release information to the news media in accordance with the Public Records Law FSS Chapter [119](#).

1. The following information is public record and shall be made available:
  - a. The time, date, location, and nature of a reported crime.
  - b. The name, sex, age and address of a person arrested, or the victim of a crime except as specified in **G. 1.**, below.
  - c. The time, date and location of an arrest.
  - d. The crime charged.
  - e. Under the provisions of Florida Statute a law enforcement agency may release for publication the name, photograph, and address of a child taken into custody if the child has been taken into custody by a law enforcement officer for a violation of law which, if committed by an adult, would be a felony, or the name, photograph, and address of any child who has been found by a court to have committed three or more violations of law which, if committed by an adult, would be misdemeanors.

**G. Information not to be Released.** The Department will not release certain information to the media pursuant to the Public Records Law FSS Chap. [119](#).

1. The following information shall not be released to the news media in criminal matters:
  - a. Under the provisions of Florida State Statute 119 any information which reveals the home or employment telephone number, home or employment address, or personal assets of a person who has been the victim of sexual battery, aggravated child abuse, aggravated stalking, harassment, aggravated battery, or domestic violence shall not be released provided the victim makes written request that such information not be released.
    - (1) Such information shall cease to be exempt 5 years after the receipt of the written request.
  - b. The victim of a sexual battery, child abuse or person under the age of 16 years old who is a victim of a sex offense.
  - c. Statements related to the character or reputation of an accused person or a prospective witness.
  - d. Admissions, confessions or the contents of a statement or alibi attributable to an accused person.
  - e. The performance or the results of any tests, or the refusal of the accused to take a test, or to participate in a line-up.
  - f. Statements concerning the credibility or anticipated testimony of a prospective witness.
  - g. The possibility of a plea of guilty to the offense charged or to a lesser offense, or any other judicial disposition.
  - h. Opinions concerning evidence or any argument in the case whether or not it is anticipated that the evidence or argument will be used at trial.
  - i. Name(s) and addresses of any subject sought for a crime, but not yet formally charged, unless help is wanted from the news media in an effort to locate the subject.
  - j. The contents of any suicide note.
  - k. Evidence collected in relation to a crime committed.

**l.** The name of a victim in a death investigation shall not be released until:

- (1) The victim has been positively identified.
- (2) The next of kin have been notified.

**m.** The provisions of subsection **l.** (1) and (2) above also apply in serious injury situations where death is imminent. If next of kin have not been notified within a reasonable amount of time, this information may be released.

**H. Media Credentials.** The University Police Department will recognize media credentials issued or honored by other agencies within the Alachua County area.

**1. Crime Scenes.** Crime scenes are established to preserve evidence and to ensure safety of persons. Crime scenes may be closed to all unauthorized persons including members of the media. However, in special situations media entry may be allowed after the crime scene has been secured, the area has been searched, and the preservation and processing of all evidence has been completed, but only with the approval of the ranking supervisor in charge of the investigation.

**a.** After a crime scene has been processed and released, only the responsible University personnel, legal occupants or their designee, may grant permission to media personnel to enter private areas, dwellings or the surrounding curtilage to gather news.

**b.** Media personnel may photograph or report anything they observe when legally present at an emergency scene.

**2. Natural Disasters/Catastrophic Events/Major Fires.** Upon producing valid credentials, authorized media representatives may enter any area closed because of danger to public health or safety. The risk of possible danger remains with the individual media person involved. It is not the responsibility of the Department to provide for the safety of media representatives who voluntarily choose to enter a restricted or closed area. Should the danger escalate, the Director or designee may order anyone from the area.

**I. Procedure for Changes to Public Information Policy.** The Coordinator Education/Media Communications shall be responsible for identifying issues that may occur between the Department and the media. This policy shall be available on the Department website to make it easy for the media to provide input. This input shall be taken into consideration in the formulation of new policies.

**7200.5 Glossary.** None.

DJB 01/96 Filed: Public Information 7200; Rev. MVV 06/98

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Linda J. Stump, Director**

Effective Date: **October 29, 2007**