



## Edina Police Operations Manual

Policy Number  
900.00

Subject:

**NEWS AND MEDIA RELATIONS AND PRESS RELEASES**

Effective Date  
06/01/1993

Revised Date  
10/31/2019

Page 1 of 5

### PURPOSE:

This agency must have the support of the community to be successful. Establishing and maintaining an effective relationship with the news media is crucial to accomplishing this goal.

This Media Relations policy establishes guidelines regarding media relations and the release of information to the public through the news media.

**900.01**

### POLICY

No employee shall release any information that would jeopardize an active investigation, prejudice an accuser's right to a fair trial, or violate any law.

It is the policy of this agency to cooperate with the news media and to maintain an atmosphere of open communication. A positive working relationship with the media is mutually beneficial. To this end, information will be released to the news media in an impartial, accurate and timely fashion. It is the responsibility of each employee to abide by this philosophy of cooperation.

This directive regulates any contact or appearance when in uniform or in any other way that identifies a person as being associated with the Edina Police Department.

**900.02**

### RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELEASING INFORMATION

It is the ultimate responsibility of the Chief of Police to release information to the public. That responsibility may be delegated to the following personnel:

- **Public Information Officer or P.I.O.**  
The P.I.O. is the primary contact for the news media.
- **Supervisors**  
Supervisors with responsibility for a specific case/incident may be the secondary contact for the news media in the absence of the P.I.O.
- **Other Employees**  
The agency head, P.I.O., or supervisors may direct other employees to respond to media inquiries.

**900.03**

### ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER/FUNCTION

The P.I.O. function will support the agency and its personnel in matters involving the news media. To accomplish this, the P.I.O. will be available during normal

**Subject:****MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY****Page 2 of 5**

business hours and be on-call for emergencies and critical incidents at all other times.

The shift supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that the P.I.O. is informed of major incidents and all other events that may generate media interest.

**900.04      PROCEDURES****Subd. 1      Media Inquiries**

The agency will respond to all media inquiries in a timely and professional manner. During normal business hours, media inquiries shall be directed to the P.I.O. In the absence of a P.I.O, inquiries will be directed to the shift supervisor.

**Subd. 2      Interviews**

- a) The P.I.O. is responsible for assisting the news media by coordinating or giving interviews.
- b) Employees contacted directly by the media shall notify the P.I.O. of any interview requests. All conversations with members of the news media should be considered "on the record" and subject to being quoted.
- c) Employees will not initiate contact with the media regarding a law enforcement issue without supervisor approval.

**Subd. 3      News Releases**

- a) News releases shall be written and disseminated to the media and within the agency on major incidents and events of community interest or concern. A preliminary press release may be written and disseminated by the on-duty supervisor, in coordination with the P.I.O., governing general information about the incident.
- b) The supervisor who authors the Press Release shall insure that copies of the Press Release are distributed as follows:
  - 1. Chief of Police
  - 2. Deputy Chief
  - 3. Investigative Lieutenant
  - 4. Patrol Lieutenant
  - 5. Administrative Lieutenant
  - 6. Patrol Sergeants
  - 7. Public Information Officer
  - 8. Communications Center

**Subject:****MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY****Page 3 of 5**

- 9. Administrative In-Basket
- 10. Roll Call

**Subd. 4 News Conferences**

News conferences will be held only in connection with major events of concern to the community. The chief of police will be informed of all news conferences. The P.I.O. will facilitate the news conference, which may include the agency head or designee.

**Subd. 5 Access to Crime Scenes and Critical Incidents**

Agency personnel should be courteous to news media representatives at crime and critical incident scenes.

- a) At such scenes, agency personnel shall ensure that the media respect the established perimeter. Members of the media have no greater or lesser access to an incident scene than members of the general public.
- b) The P.I.O., with approval of the scene supervisor, may grant closer access to news personnel and their equipment, to the degree that it does not interfere with law enforcement operations.
- c) No member of this agency shall prohibit the media from news gathering practices, including photography and interviews, outside the established perimeter.
- d) If outside a designated perimeter, the news media representatives shall not be prevented from access to an area solely because of the possibility of their injury or death. If this is the only consideration, the media representative(s) should be advised of the danger and allowed to make the decision to enter on their volition. At no point is the media to cross a marked police line without approval from the on-scene supervisor.
- e) Information at crime/critical incident scenes will be released by the P.I.O. or scene supervisor.
- f) At critical incident scenes, the P.I.O. or scene supervisor will establish a media briefing area as close to the scene as safety and operational requirements allow.
- g) At critical incident scenes, members of the agency will work in close cooperation with the media to ensure that live broadcasts do not disclose any information that could endanger law enforcement personnel or the general public.

**Subject:****MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY****Page 4 of 5****Subd. 6 Public Records**

This agency and its members will abide by all local, state and federal laws governing the release of public records.

**Subd. 7 Access to Suspects**

Suspects or accused persons in custody shall not be posed or made available for media interviews by any member of this agency.

**Subd. 8 Joint Investigations/Other Agency Involvement**

In a multi-jurisdictional investigation, the lead investigative agency is responsible for providing or coordinating the release of public information. The P.I.O. or designee for the lead agency will share that information with all involved agencies in advance of public dissemination.

**900.05 INFORMATION RELEASE GUIDELINES**

The release of information is subject to restrictions placed by applicable local, state and federal laws. Information will not be released during an active investigation. Further, any information that would hamper the successful conclusion of an investigation or jeopardize the safety of affected persons will not be released.

**900.06 MEDIA RIDE-ALONGS**

**Subd. 1** Media ride-alongs allow members of the media to accompany law enforcement officers as they perform their duties. Members of the media shall follow the same ride along procedures set in the Edina Police Department ride-along policy.

**Subd. 2** The Fourth Amendment addresses residential privacy rights that attach to a community member's home. The very narrow exception that law enforcement has does not extend to private citizens, including the media. Employees shall not permit members of the media to accompany them onto private property when there is an expectation of privacy, nor will they assist in securing permission for media access from property owners.

**900.07 TRAINING**

This agency is committed to providing proper training for its Public Information Officer. Supervisors, line officers and other personnel who interact with the media will also be provided access to appropriate training.

**Subject:****MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY****Page 5 of 5****900.08      ETHICS**

It is the policy of this agency to treat members of the media with professionalism and ethical behavior. It is expected that the media will respond in a like manner and follow ethical guidelines established by their industry.

Members of the agency who believe they were treated unethically should contact the P.I.O.

**900.09      LIVE COVERAGE AGREEMENTS**

Live coverage agreements establish voluntary guidelines for the broadcast of live pictures or information emanating from critical incidents scenes such as hostage situations, barricaded subjects and other ongoing crises. This agency supports the creation, implementation and use of such agreements.

**900.10      MEDIA CREDENTIALS**

This agency acknowledges representatives from recognized media organizations who carry and/or display photographic identification issued by their employer. Anyone else is considered a member of the general public.

**900.11      ALTERNATIVE METHODS TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION**

It is the policy of this agency to pursue alternative methods of disseminating information directly to the public. These may include community newsletters, government access cable television shows, web sites and other social media, public appearances by agency members, public area bulletin boards and others.