

# Medina Police Department

Subject: <b>News Media Relations</b>	Policy Number: <b>3040</b>	<b>Media Relations 3040</b>
Reference: <b>Chief's Directive</b>	Pages: <b>2</b>	
Personnel: <b>Sworn and Non-Sworn Personnel</b>		
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## **3040.1 - GENERAL POLICY**

A well-informed public is essential to the existence of a democratic nation. To effectively exercise his/her franchise, a citizen must be aware of current events and the state of government. A free press serves the public by supplying needed information, by stimulating thought, and by providing a medium for expression. Crime, its results, and the efforts to combat it are all matters of continuing public concern.

The department is regularly involved in events at which members of the news media are properly present and performing their task of gathering information. The department actively seeks to establish a cooperative climate in which the news media may obtain information on matters of public concern in a manner which does not hamper police operations. However, certain information must be withheld from the news media in order to protect the Constitutional Rights of an accused, to avoid interfering with a department investigation, or because it is legally privileged.

## **3040.2 - INSPECTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS**

The public has an abiding interest in law enforcement and in the activities of the department. The news media and members of the public frequently direct inquiries to the department to fulfill such requests; however, the decision to release information will be determined according to the facts of each case in accordance with the guidance contained herein.

## **3040.3 - PUBLIC RECORDS OR DOCUMENTS WHICH WILL BE RELEASED**

In recognition of the declaration of strong public policy favoring the right of inspection of public records and documents by members of the public embodied in, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, as interpreted by the Minnesota Supreme Court, all public records and documents in the department shall be available for public scrutiny unless such public records or documents warrant special consideration before release by the Chief of Police or by his designees in accordance with current data privacy standards.

All information concerning policy and procedure will originate from the Chief of Police.

Budget requests and logistical information will be released only by the Chief of Police.

All comments referring to inter-departmental memos, orders, and communications will originate from the Chief of Police. Plans, personnel matters, and prepared releases concerning specific news items will be released only by permission of the Chief of Police.

Personnel photographs (and photographs of arrested persons) will be released only by permission of the Chief of Police. Investigative photographs will be released by the Chief of Police.

The Chief of Police may decide that information relating to cases which may involve potential civil liability to the City should be held until a review and approval has been obtained from the City Attorney's Office.

#### **3040.4 - NEWS RELEASES**

The department makes every effort to release information without partiality and accordingly varies the times when news releases are given to the media so that such releases do not operate to the advantage or disadvantage of particular media deadlines.

#### **3040.5 - NEWS MEDIA IDENTIFICATION**

To assure that the department is communicating with an authorized news media representative at the scene of a police incident, and to assure the representative that s/he will not be unnecessarily obstructed in the pursuit of his/her functions, the department will honor suitable credentials issued to news media representatives from their agencies.

#### **3040.6 - ENTRANCE TO AREA OF SERIOUS POLICE INCIDENT OR CRIME SCENE**

Police lines may be established to prevent persons from entering the area of a serious police incident or crime scene. Dependent upon the tactical situation and the likelihood of jeopardizing police operations, members of the news media may be allowed in such areas. Authorization for entry is dependent upon the possession of suitable credentials issued from news media agencies.

#### **3040.7 - WHERE NEWS MEDIA NOT AUTHORIZED**

While news reporters may be permitted in the area of a crime scene or a serious police incident, they do not have the authority to be within a crime scene or area which has been secured to preserve evidence or any location where their presence jeopardizes police operations.