

Marketing and Communications

Media Relations Guidelines for Civil Air Patrol Air Force-Assigned and Corporate Missions

CAP Pamphlet 150-14

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS CIVIL AIR PATROL

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1. Overview

Civil Air Patrol public affairs officers and public information officers may be called upon to interact with the news media during Air Force-assigned and corporate missions. Especially during Air Force-assigned missions, proper clearance procedures must be followed before any news releases and photos from the mission are shared.

These media relations guidelines provide a framework to ensure that PAOs and PIOs have obtained permission to release information to the public and news media.

These guidelines will ensure that commanders, incident commanders, PAOs, and PIOs can share critical information to raise awareness of the role Civil Air Patrol plays in search and rescue, disaster relief, and other high-profile missions.

2. Air Force-Assigned Missions

News Releases

- Approval for typical Air Force-Assigned Missions (search and rescue, disaster relief, intercept, etc.) comes from First Air Force (AF), 11thAF, PACAF C-NAF, or CAP-USAF. Wings will make requests to the National Operations Center to obtain approvals from First AF, 11th AF, PACAF C-NAF, or CAP-USAF. The NOC will coordinate with NHQ/PA as appropriate.
- Before a request for approval from NHQ/PA, wings will secure approval from federal, state, and local customers for release of information and imagery and will note those approvals in all requests.
- For high-profile missions, NHQ/PA will edit content as appropriate and forward all requests for dissemination of news releases and photos to First AF Public Affairs office, 11th AF, and PACAF C-NAF as appropriate for approval. News releases and photos related to CAP-USAF approved missions should be sent to the CAP-USAF Liaison Region Office for coordination and approval. Find the CAP-USAF directory on the eServices homepage under "Contact Us."
- NHQ/PA will note desired turnaround time on requests for approval to First AF Public Affairs, 11th AF, and PACAF C-NAF and will call to alert staff when a release for a high-profile mission is being developed.
- Operational missions are executed at the wing level with support from subordinate units. The responsibility for use of social media for mission activities rests with the incident commander and will be overseen by the incident PIO or a member designated by the incident commander under the direction of the incident PIO. The incident PIO will ensure that CAP social media operations are conducted in accordance with CAP regulations and don't violate operational security requirements. These activities will be accomplished in consultation with or directly by or through the wing PAO and commander to ensure a consistent public presence and positive impression are maintained between day-to-day activities and mission operations.

Media Flights

- All flights carrying media personnel will be coordinated through the NOC — no exceptions. For AFAMs, the NOC will coordinate Air Force approval following the non-CAP passenger approval process.
- Early notification of media ride-along requests to the NOC and NHQ/PA is critical — the sooner the better. Early requests increase the probability of ride-along approval. Don't wait until you know the specific names of media representatives to ride along. The names can be provided later.

3. Corporate Missions

News Releases

- Corporate ("C") mission news releases are approved at the wing level by the commander or the commander's designees, but assistance is always available from the NOC and NHQ/PA.
- PAOs will work with the NOC and NHQ/PA for approval of local releases for high-profile events or activities related to corporate missions.

4. Tips for All Missions

- Appropriate lead time is essential for securing approvals. Don't expect a same-day turnaround when submitting approval requests after 1 p.m. Central Time. PAO/PIOs should alert the NOC and NHQ/PA when a release is under development or has been forwarded for approval using the phone numbers and email addresses below. Timeliness is critical; deadlines may need to be adjusted to take advantage of media opportunities. PAO/PIOs must alert the NOC and NHQ/PA to current and changing timetables as well as changing IC and PIO responsibilities. Please understand that though the staff will work to meet short suspenses, the NOC and NHQ/PA aren't the approval authorities and can't guarantee approval.
- If you have any questions, call and ask for help. The NOC duty officer is available 24/7/365 at 888-211-1812 or opscenter@capnhq.gov. NHQ/PA is available during duty hours at 334-296-5881 and after hours via the NOC email or at mac@capnhq.gov.

4. Imagery vs. Publicity Photos

Imagery

- Disaster imagery (damage photos) taken for customers is generally considered their property, unless the customer approves CAP to use the imagery. The wing will work with customers to include getting their written approval for CAP to use images captured during the mission in the customer's initial mission request. Imagery posted for public view by the customer or as part of the mission process such as those on the Hazards Data Distribution System or the FEMA GeoPortal doesn't require additional written approval.

- CAP can't store/retain most imagery (except photos used for publicity purposes) due to legal issues.
- Members can't keep pictures for themselves. Members using their own cameras to take images will need prior approval from the NOC and must plan to turn over all imagery to the customer.

Publicity Photos

- Nonmembers must give approval to CAP to use their photo for publicity purposes. Email approval is acceptable.
- If the background of the photo is sensitive, it will require approval by the NOC and/or NHQ/PA (and possibly the AF) before release. For example, photos inside another agency's facilities or with another agency's personnel in the background will require coordination with that agency. The member who desires to use this photo for publicity purposes should get written approval locally beforehand to expedite this process.
- Photo approvals should be obtained at the same time news releases are approved.
- A good photo may not be usable if we can't get approval to use it because nobody documented who was in it.

6. Natural Disaster Coverage

- When you see preparedness messages, alerts, and warnings on TV for large areas, especially multiple states, consider the mission to be high-profile. Although the wing commander approves local news releases generated from "C" missions, PAOs will coordinate with the NOC and NHQ/PA for all news releases and photos related to high-profile natural disasters.
- Most high-profile natural disaster missions will be AFAMs, meaning that any related news releases and photos will require higher-level approval. Send requests to the NOC and NHQ/PA. The NOC and NHQ/PA will coordinate with First AF Public Affairs, 11th AF, or PACAF C-NAF as appropriate for approval. NHQ/PA coordinates the release of photos and information with other NHQ offices if necessary and edits the releases before going to the Air Force.

7. Issues Management

- Develop proactive media messages
- Prepare a daily issues management report that tracks key issues and recommends courses of action

8. Logistics

- Publish daily updates online
- Provide media contact lists
- Provide a daily report of media coverage

- Provide a copy of WMIRS reports to members involved in missions, issued daily by NHQ's National Operations Center
- Prepare an after-action report