

POLICE DEPARTMENT HANOVER PARK, ILLINOIS



DIRECTIVE: 582-S

REFERENCE STANDARDS: 46.1.10 54.1.1 54.1.2 54.1.3 54.1.4

SUBJECT: Public Information

POLICY: It is the policy of the Hanover Park Police Department to cooperate fully and impartially with the news media in fulfilling its responsibility of informing the public of events within the public domain that are handled by or involve the Police Department to the extent permitted by law or court rule or order.

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines and procedures for releasing information to the media.

I. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

- A. It will be the responsibility of the Police Chief, Deputy Chief of Support Services and the Village Public Relations Director to control the release of information to the media and public. This responsibility shall include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. Assisting media personnel in covering news stories at the scenes of incidents. (54.1.1a)
 - 2. Preparing and distributing department media releases. (54.1.1b)
 - 3. Arranging for, and assisting at media conferences. (54.1.1c)
 - 4. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information about victims, witnesses, and suspects. (54.1.1d)
 - 5. Coordinating and authorizing the release of information concerning confidential agency investigations and operations. (54.1.1e)
 - 6. Developing procedures for releasing information when other public service agencies are involved in a mutual effort. (54.1.1f)

II. INFORMATION RELEASE GUIDELINES

- A. All information released through media review, interviews, or press releases shall be made in accordance with this order and applicable state and federal statutes pertaining to freedom of information.
- B. The following information may be released unless otherwise restricted herein or restricted by the Freedom of Information Act: (Freedom of Information Act, 5/ILCS 140/1)
 - 1. The nature or type of an incident or substance of a complaint or charge;

2. The approximate location, date and time, injuries sustained, and a description of how the incident occurred;
3. The amount and type of property taken, including value when known;
4. The general address where the incident occurred;
5. Casualty figures, to include known dead or injured;
6. The fact that a juvenile has been taken into custody, including sex, age, and substance of charge;
7. Numbers of officers, or people, involved in an event or investigation and the length of the investigation;
8. The arrestee's name, age, description, residence, employment, and marital status;
9. If the substance or text of the charge is contained in a complaint, warrant, or indictment;
10. Amount of bond, scheduled court dates, and place of detention;
11. The scheduling or results of any stage in the judicial process.

C. The following information may not be released without the approval of the Chief of Police, or his designee, prior to the release:

1. Any information concerning the rules and regulations, general orders, and standard operating procedures of the Hanover Park Police Department;
2. Any information concerning litigation, complaints, charges, or other action pending against any member, members or persons attached to the police department;
3. Any information surrounding any juvenile investigation, incident, or arrest other than specified in Section II.B.6. of this order;
4. The identity of any critically injured or deceased person prior to notification of next of kin;
5. Investigative information and information of an evidentiary procedure;
6. The specific cause of death until determined by the county coroner;
7. Contents of suicide note.

D. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 3.6 – Information Not Available For Release

1. The character, credibility, reputation or criminal record of a party, suspect in a criminal investigation or witness, or the identity of a witness, or the expected testimony of a party or witness;
2. The possibility of a plea of guilty to the offense or existence or contents of any confession, admission, or statement given by a defendant or suspect or that person's failure to make a statement;
3. The performance or results of any examination or test, or the nature of physical evidence expected to be presented;
4. Any opinion as to the guilt or innocence of a defendant or suspect in a criminal case;
5. Information that the lawyer (or investigator) knows or reasonably should know is likely to be admissible as evidence in a trial; or

6. The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime, unless there is included therein a statement explaining that the charge is merely an accusation and that the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

III. PROCEDURES FOR PRESS RELEASE (54.1.1b)

- A. Official department press releases will be prepared and provided to the media for any incident in which a Sergeant, Lieutenant, the Deputy Chiefs, or Chief of Police determines that the most appropriate method of announcement is the press release. A copy of that release will be provided to the Director of Public Relations upon its release.
- B. The Chief of Police or designee shall contact the Public Relations Director and request a draft of any press release to publicize special events, programs or achievements.
- C. If it is determined that it is in the best interest of the Police Department that only a formal press release be issued, regarding an incident/event, no other statement will be released without the approval of the Chief of Police.
- D. A master file of all Department press releases will be maintained by the Public Relations Director and by the Chief. They will be logged chronologically by the calendar year.
- E. Press releases shall be disseminated by Sergeants, Lieutenants, Deputy Chiefs, Chief of Police or the Public Relations Director with copies available in the Records section of the Police Department.
- F. Press releases shall be utilized to officially release newsworthy information concerning promotions, projects, programs, or other activities of the Department.
- G. Press releases will be disseminated to the major and local media via fax and a copy shall be placed with the daily bulletin. Copies will be disseminated to the Village Manager, Public Relations Director and Village elected officials.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR MEDIA REVIEW OF OFFENSE AND INCIDENT REPORTS

- A. To allow easy and timely media access to departmental incident reports, the following procedure is established:
 1. The day shift clerk will maintain the Daily Bulletin file for the news media. A copy of the Daily Bulletin shall be provided and maintained in the media book for a period of ten days provided the guidelines set forth in II.D. are adhered to.
 2. Requests by the media for specific information will be in accordance with Section II.B.
- B. Requests by the media for other than authorized information shall be referred to the Deputy Chief of Support Services or the Chief of Police or their designee.

V. PRESS CONFERENCES

- A. Formal live press conferences will be conducted in the Village Hall counsel chambers.
- B. The Chief of Police or his designee shall be the official Police Department's spokesperson at all press conferences.
- C. The Public Relations Director shall be present at all press conferences. The Public Relations Director will assist in the scheduling and coordinating of all formal press conferences.

VI. ON-SITE MEDIA ACCESS/GUIDELINES

- A. Generally all news releases will be made at the Police Department.
- B. In the event of major fires, natural disasters, or major crime scenes, the Department will make every effort to allow media access for photographs and television within limitations of public safety, civil rights restrictions, and crime scene integrity. Care should be taken to control media access at locations where such access would interfere with law enforcement operations. (46.1.10a) (54.1.3)
 - 1. Media requests for information at major scenes shall be directed to the Public Relations Director upon arrival at the scene.
 - 2. In the case of a major event or a large-scale disaster or catastrophe, the department will provide a public information area for the news media.
- C. The Department has adopted the following guidelines for police/press relations. Members shall comply with these guidelines and follow them when making decisions regarding media access to accident, crime or disaster scenes.
 - 1. The Hanover Park Police Department does not issue press credentials, but reserves the right to deny access of a journalist to a scene if that member violates any of the guidelines set forth in section VI of this directive.
 - 2. Journalists may be asked to show their press credentials.
 - 3. Journalists may not resist, obstruct, or oppose an officer in the lawful execution of a legal duty. The presence of a photographer at an accident, crime or disaster scene, and the taking of pictures or the asking of questions relative to the incident do not constitute unlawful interference and should not be restricted.
 - 4. Journalists have the responsibility and right to photograph and to report events that transpire on public property.
 - 5. Police Department members will assist the media in covering news stories at the scene of incidents.
 - 6. Denial of access to crime scenes is sometimes necessary to an investigation because of crime scene processing or collection of evidence. The reason for such a denial should be explained to the journalist and access granted as soon as it is practical under the conditions.
 - 7. A journalist may not be restricted from taking pictures or asking questions even though the officer may disagree with the nature of the pictures or the questions.

8. When journalists are present, under their own initiative or by being granted access to an area under police control, officers will not attempt to restrict any of their actions, unless their actions are clearly interfering with an on going investigation.
9. Journalists apprehended for violating the law will be dealt with in the same manner as any other violator.
10. As long as the journalist does not violate the law, or directly interfere with an investigation, the Police Officer should not impede the journalist.
11. Police officers should neither encourage nor discourage the photographing of suspects or defendants when they are in public places. Officers should not deliberately pose a person in custody for the press.

VII. MULTIPLE AGENCY INCIDENTS REQUIRING MUTUAL RESPONSE (54.1.1f)

- A. Information involving the Hanover Park Police Department may be released according to guidelines set forth in this order unless such release would affect other agencies in the performance of their duties.
- B. Information requests that affect other agencies or Village departments should be referred directly to the affected agency or department. This requirement shall not be used to avoid or defeat media access to information that is within the purview of the Hanover Park Police Department.
- C. In the event that the Village Emergency Operations Center is activated in response to a major disaster/catastrophe, all media contacts will be made through the Village's ESDA Information Officer (Public Relations Director).

VIII. POLICY DEVELOPMENT (54.1.2)

- A. Upon request, a copy of this directive will be provided to any news media representative/agency.
- B. News media representatives are encouraged to participate in the process of developing policies and procedures relating to the news media and make recommendations to the Chief of Police or Public Relations Director to improve existing policy.
- C. It is the Police Department's intent to maintain a good rapport with the news media and to develop a professional and viable working relationship.

IX. PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER TRAINING (54.1.4)

- A. Personnel assigned as a Public Information Officer or designated to perform that function shall receive training for the position.