

Media and Public Relations

404.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the guidelines for public and media contact and release of information. This policy applies to all employees.

404.2 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

- Executive Committee;
- County of Riverside Board of Supervisors Policy A-44, Media Relations;
- California Penal Code § 409.5(d);
- California Welfare and Institutions Code § 827.5;
- California Government Code §§ 3303(e), 6250;
- California Public Records Act.

404.3 POLICY

The ultimate authority and responsibility for the release of information to the media shall remain with the Chief Probation Officer or designee. Only the Chief Probation Officer or designee shall release information to the media. Information released to the media shall be in accordance with law, standing court order and Board of Supervisors Policy A-44 (Media Relations) to ensure accurate, consistent information dissemination.

Employees participating in public speaking engagements shall comply with the procedures established in this policy.

404.4 MEDIA RELATIONS

Probation employees shall immediately notify the appropriate Chief Deputy and the Public Information Specialist (PIS) via the chain of command in the event of an emergency or other event likely to generate media interest.

Probation employees shall report all media contacts to the appropriate Chief Deputy and the PIS via the chain of command.

Division Directors shall collect and forward all news articles regarding their division or employees to their Chief Deputy and the PIS.

404.4.1 MEDIA REQUEST

Any media request for information or access to a probation location shall be referred to the appropriate Chief Deputy and the PIS via the chain of command utilizing the Report of Information Request by Media form (Attachment).

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404.5 MEDIA ACCESS

Authorized members of the media shall be provided access to scenes of criminal investigations, emergencies and other probation activities subject to the following conditions (Penal Code § 409.5(d)):

- (a) The media representative shall produce valid press credentials that shall be prominently displayed at all times while in areas otherwise closed to the public.
- (b) Media representatives may be prevented from interfering with emergency operations and criminal investigations.
 - 1. Reasonable effort should be made to provide a safe staging area for the media that is near the incident and that will not interfere with emergency or criminal investigation operations. All information released to the media should be coordinated through the Chief Probation Officer or other designated spokesperson.
- (c) No member of this department who is under investigation shall be subjected to media visits or interviews without the consent of the involved employee (Government Code § 3303(e)).
- (d) Media interviews with individuals who are in custody should not be permitted without the approval of the Chief Probation Officer or designee and the express consent of the person in custody.

A tactical operation should be handled in the same manner as a crime scene, except the news media shall be permitted within the outer perimeter of the scene, subject to any restrictions as determined by the supervisor in charge. Employees shall not jeopardize a tactical operation in order to accommodate the news media. All comments to the media shall be provided by the Chief Probation Officer or designee.

404.5.1 PROVIDING ADVANCE INFORMATION

To protect the safety and rights of officers and other persons, advance information about planned actions by probation personnel, such as movement of persons in custody or the execution of an arrest or search warrant, shall not be disclosed to the news media, nor shall media representatives be invited to be present at such actions except with the prior approval of the Chief Probation Officer.

Any exceptions to the above should only be considered for the furtherance of legitimate law enforcement purposes. Prior to approving any exception, the Chief Probation Officer will consider, at minimum, whether the release of information or presence of the media would unreasonably endanger any individual, prejudice the rights of any person or is otherwise prohibited by law.

404.6 SCOPE OF INFORMATION SUBJECT TO RELEASE

The department maintains information pertinent to law enforcement activities which may be subject to release per the Public Records Act. Upon request, the following information shall be made available through the PIS:

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The date, time, location, case number, type of crime, extent of injury or loss, and names of individuals (except confidential informants) involved in crimes occurring within this jurisdiction unless the release of such information would endanger the safety of any individual or jeopardize the successful completion of any ongoing investigation.

The date, time, location, case number, name, birth date and charges for each person arrested by this department unless the release of such information would endanger the safety of any individual or jeopardize the successful completion of any ongoing investigation.

The time and location of other significant probation activities with a brief summary of the incident subject to the restrictions of this policy and applicable law.

At no time shall identifying information pertaining to a juvenile arrestee (13 years of age and under), victim or witness be publicly released without prior approval of a competent court. The identity of a youth 14 years of age or older shall not be publicly disclosed unless the youth has been arrested for a serious felony (Welfare & Institutions Code § 827.5) and the release of such information is made available through the PIS.

Identifying information concerning deceased individuals shall not be released to the media until notification of next of kin or otherwise cleared through the Coroner's Office.

Any requests for copies of related reports or additional information shall be referred to the PIS. Such requests will generally be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250, et seq.).

404.6.1 RESTRICTED INFORMATION

It shall be the responsibility of the PIS to ensure that restricted information is not inappropriately released to the media by this department. When in doubt, authorized and available legal counsel should be obtained.

404.7 PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

In the event that a department employee is asked to give, or solicits an outside presentation, advance notice shall be provided to the Division Director or designee. Presentations shall be limited to engagements and topics approved by the Division Director or designee. All presentation materials shall be reviewed and approved by the Division Director or designee in advance of the speaking engagement. The Chief Deputy shall be notified prior to any speaking engagement.

Presentations shall not include photographs revealing the identities of department clientele, confidential or privileged information, or content otherwise prohibited by law.

Employees interacting with the public in this manner are representatives of the department and shall conduct themselves in a professional manner. Personal opinions, especially those inconsistent with departmental position, shall be avoided. Whenever possible, employees involved in public speaking engagements are encouraged to enroll in departmental or County training courses designed to enhance related skills.

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08/03/2017

05/22/2013

01/02/2002

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Attachment:

[1. Report of Information Request by Media](#)



RIVERSIDE COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Serving Courts • Protecting Our Community • Changing Lives



MARK A. HAKE
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

REPORT OF INFORMATION REQUEST BY MEDIA

Date:

To: Chief Deputy - Administration
Chief Deputy - Field Services
Chief Deputy - Institutions
Public Information Specialist

From:

Agency/newspaper/radio/T.V. station requesting information:

Date, time of request:

Information requested:

Information given:

Referral made to: