

**MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GENERAL ORDER**

CHAPTER 1 - ADMINISTRATION
GO-01-04
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DATE
09/12/12

NEWS MEDIA RELEASES

POLICY

It shall be the policy of this Office to courteously respond to all news media requests in as timely a fashion as circumstances dictate.

DEFINITIONS

ROUTINE NEWS RELEASE consists of answering media inquiries over the telephone. Typically, media organizations want general information on newsworthy events.

FORMAL NEWS RELEASE consists of a written press release containing relevant details of an event, a crime series, or other news useful to the public. Formal News Releases are usually issued through the Investigations Division during business hours.

SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE consists of information released either verbally or in written form from the Major Crimes Task Force, Coroner Division or the Office of Emergency Services.

PROCEDURE

All local news media entities shall be provided with three phone numbers to call for inquiries:

1. DAYTIME/BUSINESS HOURS: (criminal) Investigations Division 499-7265
2. DAYTIME/BUSINESS HOURS: (non-criminal death cases) Coroner Division 499-6043
3. EVENINGS/WEEKENDS/HOLIDAYS: (all types) Comm Center Supervisor: 499-7243

The news media is informed of newsworthy events by using one of three news release types:

ROUTINE NEWS RELEASES

The Supervising Dispatcher is authorized to release the following types of information to the news media when a Formal News Release has not been issued:

1. Nature of the incident
2. Location of the incident.
3. General information excluding the names and addresses of those involved.

These types of releases generally describe traffic accidents, fires, flooding, aircraft accidents, road closures and evacuations. Good judgement should be used when identifying the specific location due to privacy concerns of victims or locations of tactical importance.

Inquiries for Incidents involving in-progress crimes or SRT call-outs should be referred to the Watch Commander. No information should be released regarding active surveillance details or warrant service attempts.

Inquiries for incidents involving active criminal cases (including homicides) or officer-involved deaths shall be referred to the Investigations Division.

Inquiries for all other types of death cases shall be referred to the Coroner Division.

FORMAL NEWS RELEASES

Formal News Releases will be issued in writing by either the Watch Commander or the Investigations Division. These types of releases are uploaded to the Sheriff's website (www.marinsheriff.org) following incidents of media interest and include more details than Routine News Releases. Information concerning serious crimes, notable arrests, death cases (including homicide) and public safety bulletins are released in this manner.

When newsworthy incidents occur during the evening, weekend or holidays the Watch Commander may answer questions from the media via telephone or issue a Formal News Release. During business hours, newsworthy incidents will be released from the Investigations Division.

Sometimes news releases generate follow-up inquiries and a point of contact should always be included in a Formal News Release. For cases involving crime (excluding Task Force cases), the contact number shall be for the Investigations Division, 499-7265. For non-homicide death cases the contact number shall be for the Coroner Division, 499-6043.

SPECIAL NEWS RELEASES

On occasion, the Major Crimes Task Force, Coroner Division, and Office of Emergency Services may issue news releases with their own point of contact. Any inquiries regarding these types of releases should be referred to the Division issuing the release. When the Emergency Operations Center is open, a special number will be provided for media inquiries.

When this Office is tasked with the investigation of a crime occurring in another jurisdiction, the investigation of an officer-involved death in another jurisdiction, or an in-custody death, a special agreement will be made as to the agency responsible for issuing news releases and responding to media inquiries.

RELATED STANDARDS:

None.

AFFECTED DIVISIONS:

All.

DATE OF REVISIONS:

10/19/89
7/12/93
7/15/89
9/3/99

11/27/01
09/12/12

By order of:

Robert T. Doyle
SHERIFF