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|  | SECTION: | OPERATIONS | OPR-293 |
| | CHAPTER: | COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING | |
| | DIRECTIVE: | PUBLIC INFORMATION AND NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS | |
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293.01 SUMMARY

The Department must have the support of the community to be successful. Establishing and maintaining an effective relationship with the news media is crucial to accomplishing this goal. This media relations policy establishes guidelines regarding media relations and the release of information to the public through the news media.

It is the policy of the Department to cooperate with the news media and to maintain an atmosphere of open communication. A working relationship with the media is mutually beneficial. To this end, information shall be released to the news media in an impartial, accurate and timely fashion. It shall be the responsibility of each employee to abide by the philosophy of cooperation. No employee shall release any information that would jeopardize an active investigation, prejudice an accused person's right to a fair trial, or violate the law.

293.02 DEFINITIONS

PUBLIC INFORMATION COORDINATOR (PIC) – The Police Information Coordinator is the primary contact for the news media during normal business hours and is assigned to the Office of the Chief of Police.

ROUTINE INCIDENT INFORMATION (RII) - Unless otherwise prohibited or authorized, the Department provides Routine Incident Information (RII) which includes:

- The nature of the call for service
- The time, location and nature of the incident
- At what time the department dispatched an officer
- The general response of the department
- Any arrests made or summons issued

DAILY RESUME – The Resume is a recap of all persons arrested and significant reported crimes from the preceding 24 hours.

293.03 RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELEASING INFORMATION

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Chief of Police to release the information to the public. That responsibility may be delegated to the following personnel:

PIC – The PIC is primarily responsible for the execution of this directive during the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

SUPERVISORS – The on-duty Patrol Commander, Sergeant or Training Officer (T.O.) will be responsible during all other hours, but may request the PIC to respond when on-duty personnel are overwhelmed by the nature of the incident and cannot handle media inquiries. If the PIC is unavailable, the Community Advocacy Program Sergeant or Officers shall respond to assist with media inquiries when directed to do so by a Patrol Supervisor. In any event the Patrol Supervisor shall have final determination for PIC/CAP after hours call-out.

293.04 ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

The on-duty Patrol Commander or Sergeant shall be responsible for ensuring that the PIC is informed of major incidents and all other events that may generate media interest.

OTHER EMPLOYEES – Depending on the nature of an incident, availability of the PIC or other factors, the Chief of Police, PIC, or Supervisor(s) may direct other employees to respond to media inquiries.

The PIC function shall support the Department and its personnel in matters involving the news media. To accomplish this, the PIC shall be available during normal business hours and be on call for emergencies and critical incidents at all other times. Other PIC duties include:

- Provides RII to media personnel as requested.
- Acts as a liaison with media personnel at crime or incident scenes.
- Routinely notifies media of RII.
- Is available for on-air responses to the media.
- Prepares and distributes department news releases.
- Arranges and assists at news conferences.
- Coordinates and authorizes the release of RII and appropriate/authorized information.
- Coordinates and authorizes the release of other information about investigations.

ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE (con't)

- Update and maintenance of the Department Web Site.
- Production of a monthly Department newsletter.
- Production of the Department's Annual Report.

293.05 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Any employee who receives an inquiry from the media will refer the inquiry to the PIC during business hours without comment. After business hours, inquiries will be referred to the on-duty Patrol Commander or Sergeant. All department employees will reasonably cooperate with the PIC in carrying out public information functions. Unless otherwise prohibited in this directive, Telecommunicators may release information to the media that has been previously "aired" within one hour over the Police radio such as the location of a dispatched call and the general nature of the call.

293.06 GENERAL PROCEDURES

MEDIA INQUIRIES – The Department shall respond to all media inquiries in a timely and professional manner. During normal business hours, media inquiries will be directed to the PIC

INTERVIEWS – The PIC shall be responsible for assisting the news media by conducting interviews himself or herself or coordinating interviews with other qualified departmental personnel. Employees contacted directly by the media shall notify the PIC of any interview requests. All conversations with members of the news media should be considered "on the record" and subject to being quoted.

PRESS RELEASES – Press releases shall be written and disseminated to the media and to departmental employees on major incidents and events of community interest or concern. The department will release RII or as much information as possible at the times and places the PIC determines.

NEWS CONFERENCES – News conferences shall be held only in connection with major events of concern to the community. The Chief of Police shall be informed of all news conferences. The PIC shall facilitate the news conference, which may include the Chief of Police or other departmental employees.

DAILY RESUME – The Daily Resume is maintained by the on-duty Patrol Supervisor. The on-duty Patrol Supervisor, Investigations Supervisor and Drug Task Force Supervisor make entries on the Daily Resume throughout their shifts based on information in the reports they review or significant incidents they otherwise become aware of. The Daily Resume is distributed by e-mail to media outlets, Police Department employees, selected City officials, and other persons who have requested to receive the Daily Resume.

**GENERAL PROCEDURES
(con't)**

It should be distributed between 0700-0800 hours each morning. Before distribution, the on-duty supervisor should spell check and proof read the document for obvious errors. Paper copies of the Daily Resume are printed and stored in Records and made available for review by the public and media.

TIMELINESS OF ENTRIES IN DAILY RESUME

The Daily Resume should list all significant activity in each 24 hour period, regardless of whether the reports have been given final approval.

DAILY RESUME MANDATORY ENTRIES - The following information should be included on the Daily Resume unless the release of information would jeopardize an on-going investigation and/or the release is restricted by C.R.S., or City or Department police.

- All arrests
- All felony crimes, open or cleared cases, arrest and non-arrest situations.
- Crime Sprees where there are numerous cases and/or links.
- Fatal and serious injury traffic accidents.
- Mutual aid requests and responses.
- Major incidents that would generate significant media attention such as response to floods, fires, hazmat incidents, bomb calls, etc.

DAILY RESUME MANDATORY INFORMATION –

- a. Case number (in bold type)
- b. Offense titles (in bold type)
- c. Information on arrestee(s) in compliance with lawful Records release.
 - List name and age of adults
 - List sex and age of juveniles
 - List residency information (such as home addresses, “of Grand Junction”, “transient”, etc.) unless there is something of particular interest about residency, i.e. arrested of a murder suspect from another jurisdiction.
 - The term “**arrested and jailed**” shall be used when a custodial arrest occurred and the subject was transported to jail.

GENERAL PROCEDURES
(con't)

- The term “**arrested and released on summons**” shall be used when an arrested subject is released on a summons.
 - The term “**arrested and released pending charges**” may be used or released when a subject has been taken into temporary custody/detention for criminal conduct and released pending further investigation or filing of charges; however **no** identifying information about the subject shall be released, as subject has not been formally charged.
 - **Do not list** the name of known suspect(s) that have not been arrested **and formally charged.**
- d. Use “known/unknown person/male/female” for information on suspect(s) who remain at large.
- e. Description of incident to include major elements of the crime, type of property involved.
- f. Information on victims, if included, is limited to sex and age of victim.
- g. Dollar values for stolen or damaged property should be listed by statutory categories:
- less than \$100.00;
 - over \$100.00 but under \$500.00;
 - over \$500.00 but under \$15,000.00;
 - over \$15,000.00.
- DO NOT LIST EXACT DOLLAR AMOUNTS.** Values of stolen vehicles do not need to be listed.
- h. Location of incident
- i. Use exact address where arrests were made unless it could be used to identify a victim in a sexual assault or child abuse case.
- j. Use exact address and business name for property crimes and crimes against persons occurring at a business and for cases that are associated with the operation of the business.
- k. In **SEXUAL ASSAULT** and **CHILD ABUSE CASES**, list a quadrant of the City from N. 12th Street and North Avenue to protect the victim’s identity, unless the address of occurrence could not be used to identify the victim.

GENERAL PROCEDURES
(con't)

- i. List, in parentheses, the last name of the officer or officers involved in major aspects of the incident.
- m. List the time of occurrence or time of arrest.

SAMPLE DAILY RESUME ENTRY INFORMATION

- 04-061511 BURGLARY** – Unknown person(s) forced entry into ACME Dist. Inc., 2214 Main Street and damaged property valued at under \$500.00. (Officer name) 0001-0740
- 04-061569 THEFT** – A juvenile male, 16, was arrested and released on summons after he took property valued at less than \$100.00 from a residence in the 4120 Chipeta Avenue. (Officer name) 2130
- 04-061561 AUTO THEFT** – A known person took a white 1993 Pontiac Grand Prix from 910 W. Colorado Avenue. (Officer name) 0830
- 04-061499 CHILD ABUSE** – A known male was arrested and released pending charges after he slapped a 10 year-old male, causing minor injury in the southwest part of the City. (Officer name) 1300-1500
- 04-061596 WARRANT ARREST** – Jane Doe, 45, was arrested and jailed on an outstanding warrant when she was contacted at 1800 Elm Avenue. (Officer name) 1801
- 04-061334 SEXUAL ASSAULT** – An unknown male sexually assaulted the victim at a home in the northwest part of the City. (Officer name) 0130
- 04-061654 POSSESSION OF LESS THAN ONE OUNCE OF MARIJUANA / POSSESSION OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA** – Jane Doe, 18, was arrested and released on summons at 915 Mesa Court after she was found in possession of suspected marijuana and related drug paraphernalia. (Officer name) 2109
- 04-061257 3rd DEGREE ASSAULT / DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** – John Doe, 35, was arrested and jailed at 3200 Hill Avenue after he pushed the victim down a flight of stairs causing her injury and pain. (Officer name) 1830

GENERAL PROCEDURES
(con't)

- 04-061407 VIOLATION OF A RESTRAINING ORDER** – Jane Doe, 50, was arrested and jailed after she had been home at a home in the 100 block of Taos Drive in violation of a restraining order. (Officer name) 1725
- 04-061130 ROBBERY / MENACING** – An unknown male suspect entered 1234 Patterson Road (Business name), presented a handgun, demanded money, and left the business with an undisclosed amount of cash. (Officer name) 0900
- 04-061255 CHILD ABUSE** – John Doe, 32 was arrested and released on a summons at (Store name), 2000 North Avenue, after investigation revealed he struck a 4 year-old child causing injury. (Officer name) 1800
- 04-061039 NARCOTIC VIOLATION / CHILD ABUSE / WARRANT ARREST** – Jane Doe, 37, and John Smith, 41, were both arrested and jailed after an investigation revealed Doe was in possession of suspected methamphetamine, which was accessible to a small child, and Smith was found to have an outstanding warrant, bond \$1,500.00. This occurred in the northwest part of the City. (Officer name) 2100

ACCESS TO CRIME SCENES AND CRITICAL INCIDENTS –

Departmental personnel shall be courteous to news media representatives at crime and critical incident scenes. At such scenes, agency personnel shall ensure that the media respect the established perimeter. Generally, members of the media shall receive no more or less access to the incident scene than members of the general public. However, the PIC, with approval of the scene commander, may grant closer access to news personnel and their equipment, to the degree that it does not interfere with law enforcement operations.

- No member of the department shall prohibit the media from news-gathering practices, including photography and interviews, outside the established perimeter, unless it may compromise the safety of the media personnel.
- Only the PIC or scene commander shall release information to the news media at crime and critical incident scenes.

**GENERAL PROCEDURES
(con't)**

- At critical incident scenes, the PIC or scene commander shall establish a media briefing area as close to the scene as safety and operational requirements allow.
- At critical incident scenes, members of the department shall work in close cooperation with the media to ensure that live broadcasts do not disclose any information that could endanger law enforcement personnel or the general public.

PUBLIC RECORDS – All department employees shall abide by all federal, state and local laws governing the release of public records.

JOINT INVESTIGATIONS OR OPERATIONS INVOLVING ANOTHER AGENCY – In a multijurisdictional investigation, the lead investigative agency is responsible for providing or coordinating the release of public information. The PIC or designee for the lead agency shall share that information with all involved agencies in advance of public dissemination.

293.07 PUBLIC RELEASE OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

All requests for the release of statistical information from the media and/or the public shall be directed to the P.I.C. for release. The P.I.C. shall coordinate with the Crime Analyst, Communication Center, Records Section, CAP Unit, or other designed units, sections as applicable. In the event the P.I.C. is not available, the request shall be directed to the appropriate Division Deputy Chief.

293.08 INFORMATION RELEASE GUIDELINES

The release of information is subject to restrictions as required by applicable federal, state, and local laws. No member of this department shall release any information that would hamper the successful conclusion of an investigation or jeopardize the safety of affected persons.

NOTE: All requests for copies of any department reports, warrantless arrest affidavits or probable cause affidavits **approved and signed by the court** shall be referred to the Records Section for release according to applicable policies and laws.

MAY RELEASE – The PIC or designee may release the following:

- Basic information about a crime or incident.
- Basic information about victims, unless otherwise stated in this directive or protected by law.
- Description of suspects as authorized by the lead Detective.

**INFORMATION RELEASE
GUIDELINES (con't)**

- Basic description of weapons, vehicles used, stolen items (but not exact dollar amounts), injuries and condition of victims.
- The name, age, address, and other basic information about arrestees and the charges against them.
- Identification of a fugitive suspect for whom an arrest warrant has been issued.
- Criminal background of a fugitive if the fugitive is known or suspected to be dangerous.
- Information contained in arrest affidavits and other applicable crime or incident reports.
- Information regarding an incident or case involving state or local charges with the Western Colorado Drug Task Force may be released by the agency where the incident occurred (within the city of Grand Junction, Grand Junction Police Department's PIC as outlined in this policy, within Mesa County, Mesa County Sheriff's Office Information Coordinator).
- Any information that only the perpetrator of an offense could know only when authorized by lead Detectives.
- Information contained in any Department report, warrantless arrest affidavit or probable cause affidavits **approved and signed by the court** or investigative report after the case is closed or the lead Detective deems it permissible.
- Re-enactments of a crime i.e. Crimestoppers.
- Name, address, and family information of any deceased person(s) may be released only when positive identification and next of kin notification by Coroner's Office has occurred.
- Time, date, and location of arrest.
- Adult defendant's name, age, residence.
- Criminal charges **after an arrest**.
- Facts and circumstances about the arrest, such as resistance, pursuit, or possession or use of a weapon.
- The arresting agency and the arresting officer's name, unless release would jeopardize the officer's safety.

**INFORMATION RELEASE
GUIDELINES (con't)**

- Amount of bond.
- Scheduled dates for judicial procedures.

NOTE: Whenever a person is issued a summons or is incarcerated in the Detention Facility, the subject's name, date of birth, and the charge(s) for which they were arrested shall be released.

NEVER RELEASE – The PIC or designee shall not release the following **unless authorized by the Chief of Police or Deputy Chief:**

- Names of informants and witnesses except for traffic offenses.
- Any information regarding an incident or case involving federal charges with the Western Colorado Drug Task Force shall **not** be released and inquirer should be referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office ((970)241-3843).
- Names, addresses, and any other information that would identify the victim of a sex offense, child abuse, or any other crime where the privacy of the victim is protected by law. Addresses will be generalized to the degree of city quadrant.
- Comments about a suspect's character or reputation or opinions about the suspect's guilt or innocence.
- The name and address of a suspect's employer, unless the crime or incident relates specifically to the suspect's employment.
- Active criminal investigative information, active criminal intelligence information, and surveillance techniques.
- The identity of critically injured persons prior to notification of next-of-kin.
- Information about the existence or content of a suspect's confession, admission, or statement.
- A suspect's refusal to make a statement or submit to tests or examinations.
- Results of any tests or examinations, including blood alcohol content results.
- The identity, testimony, or comments or opinions about the credibility of any witnesses in any criminal case.

**INFORMATION RELEASE
GUIDELINES (con't)**

- Active internal investigations.
- Social Security number.
- The identity of a suspect who has not been charged.
- Conjecture about suspects or fugitives.
- Exact dollar amount taken in a robbery, theft, or burglary **except a report may be released to a crime victim.**

**293.09 RELEASE OF
INFORMATION ON
JUVENILES**

INFORMATION ON JUVENILES –

- The P.I.C. or designee shall not release the identity of a juvenile with exception of traffic records, including accident reports, may be released subject to the Criminal Justice Records Act.
- The P.I.C. or designee may release RII involving a juvenile suspect as long as the juvenile is not identified.
- Any case involving neglect, abuse, sexual assault, molestation, exploitation, or prostitution of a **victim** younger than 18 years of age is considered confidential. The PIC or designee may acknowledge that an investigation is underway and provide RII but may not identify the **victim** or any relationship between the suspect and the **victim**.

Per C.R.S. 19-1-304 and 24-72-302, the PIC or designee may release the identity of a juvenile if the juvenile has been charged with:

- A class 1, 2, 3, or 4 felony;
- Possession of a handgun;
- Any crime involving the use or possession of a weapon if the crime were committed by an adult;
- The juvenile is subject to revocation of probation for committing any of these crimes;
- The juvenile has been adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent.
- A photograph of a juvenile suspect or arrestee may only be released if charged as an adult.

293.10 GENERAL RULES

MEDIA RIDE ALONGS – Media ride-alongs allow members of the media to accompany Officers as they perform their duties. Members of the media may only be granted access for a ride along by the PIC or PIC designee. Department personnel must identify members of the media to property owners upon entering private property.

GENERAL RULES (con't)

It is up to the reporter to obtain consent before recording or reporting anything on private property. Media personnel are required to adhere to the same procedures as described in the “Patrol Ride-Along” (OPR-292) directive.

TRAINING – The Department is fully committed to and shall provide proper training for the Public Information Coordinator, Supervisors, Officers, and/or other personnel who interact with the media.

ETHICS – All Department employees shall treat members of the media professionally and ethically. It is expected that the media will respond in a like manner and follow ethical guidelines established by their profession. Employees of the Department or media representatives who believe they were treated unethically should contact the PIC

MEETINGS WITH THE MEDIA – Reaffirming the Department’s commitment to positive media relations, the Chief of Police and PIC shall meet on a regular basis with media representatives to discuss issues of mutual interest or concern. Proposed or anticipated changes in Department policy or procedures dealing with the media also shall be addressed at this time.

MEDIA CREDENTIALS – Department employees shall acknowledge representatives from recognized media organizations who carry and display photographic identification issued by their employer. Anyone else shall be considered a member of the general public.

293.11 CITY PROCEDURES FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

CITY POLICY – The City of Grand Junction makes every effort to make information readily available to the media and the public. It makes every effort to respond promptly and accurately to all media inquiries. The City recognizes that the media are valuable community partners in building an informed citizenry. The City pledges to increase mutual respect and open communication.

POLICE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

- **TYPE A** – Ongoing programs, routine operations, well-established procedures, factual day-to-day information. The majority of media inquiries fall in the Type A category. The on-duty Supervisor, the PIC and the investigating Officer are authorized to release Type A Information.

**CITY PROCEDURES FOR
RELEASE OF INFORMATION
(con't)**

- **TYPE B** – Policies currently under review or recently adopted by city council or department heads; major projects, proposals under discussion within 60 days before or after the inquiry; questions that involve an evaluation or opinion (for example, “What do you think about this?”). Refer inquiries to the appropriate Division Deputy Chief or Chief of Police.
- **TYPE C** – Highly controversial issues or events; lawsuits or pending legal actions; personnel issues; natural disasters; and emergencies. Refer inquiries to the appropriate Division Deputy Chief or Chief of Police.

