



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-36 (Formerly 1-13)

Effective: 04/20/2023 Review: 04/20/2024 Replaces: 04/21/2021

## 2-36 POLICE-NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS AND RELEASE OF POLICE IDENTIFICATION

### Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

[1-1 Personnel Code of Conduct \(Formerly 1-04 and 1-4\)](#)

[1-2 Social Media \(Formerly 1-44\)](#)

[2-33 Rights and Safety of Onlookers \(Formerly 1-31\)](#)

B. Form(s)

[PD 1010 Media/Photographer Ride Along Agreement](#)

C. Other Resource(s)

New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA)

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

### 2-36-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rules and responsibilities that support the Albuquerque Police Department's (Department) commitment to the accurate and transparent dissemination of public information.

### 2-36-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department to work with the news media to inform the public about its efforts to keep the community safe.

N/A

### 2-36-3 Definitions

A. Communications Specialist/Public Information Officer (PIO)

A sworn or civilian employee who serves as a liaison between the Department and the news media.

B. Director of Communications

A civilian employee who oversees all communications meant to inform the public and Department personnel. The Director of Communications also serves as a PIO.

C. News Media



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Established newsgathering and reporting agencies and their representatives whose function is to inform the public and who abide by established ethical standards of professional journalism.

**7** 2-36-4 **Rules and Responsibilities**

A. The Director of Communications shall:

1. Coordinate with the Communications Specialist/PIO to provide responses to the news media;
2. Coordinate with the Chief of Police, command staff, and subject matter experts on external communication about policy, personnel, and Department priorities; and
3. Serve as the on-call Communications Specialist/PIO when necessary.

N/A

B. The Communications Specialist/PIO shall:

1. Coordinate with the Director of Communications to provide responses to the news media, which may include information about police responses to incidents;
2. Serve as the on-call Communications Specialist/PIO who is contacted through the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) about major incidents that may require the dissemination of public information through the news media; and
3. Contact the appropriate supervisor prior to releasing information pertaining to an on-going police incident or investigation.

C. Supervisors shall inform their chain of command of news media inquiries and actions taken with the Communications Specialist/PIO or Director of Communications to respond to inquiries.

D. On-scene supervisors shall:

1. Coordinate with the on-call Communications Specialist/PIO and/or the Director of Communications to determine a response to news media inquiries; and
2. Provide facts and details about an incident when contacted by the Communications Specialist/PIO and/or the Director of Communications.
  - a. On-scene supervisors and/or their supervisors are responsible for determining whether details of an incident can be released to the public.

E. Dissemination of public information to news media



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1. The Director of Communications shall determine how public information is disseminated to the public and the news media.
2. The Director of Communications shall determine who proactively receives news advisories, news releases and news alerts.
  - a. The Director of Communications may deny direct access to media representatives who do not conduct themselves professionally for news conferences, news advisories, news releases and news alerts, subject to appeal to the Chief or their designee under the following non-exclusive conditions:
    - i. One or more instances of interfering with law enforcement operations or investigations, including, but not limited to, violations of established crime scene perimeters;
    - ii. Disruptive action that interferes with news conferences including, but not limited to, talking over the speaker or other journalists, asking questions without being called upon, and intimidating or harassing the speaker or other City employees; or
    - iii. Harassing behavior toward Department personnel that interferes with personnel's ability to disseminate public information.
  - b. The Director of Communications will maintain a list of media representatives and personnel and other recipients of news advisories, news releases and news alerts.
3. The Communications Specialists/PIO shall use digital tools, which include email and/or social media platforms to disseminate public information.
  - a. The information usually in the form of news advisory, news release or news alerts may be disseminated directly to news media representatives through social media or published on a Departments website.
  - b. The information may also be disseminated to the new media through the use of news conferences which may be conducted in person or through online platforms.

F. Additions to Access to Crime Scenes and Critical Incidents

N/A

1. Department personnel shall not discuss or disseminate information to the news media without specific authorization from a supervisor and/or Communications Specialist/PIO (refer to SOP Personnel Code of Conduct and SOP Social Media for sanction classifications and additional duties).
2. Department personnel shall ensure that the news media representatives respect the established perimeters of the scene.
3. Department personnel shall not prohibit newsgathering practices outside the established perimeters, consistent with SOP Rights and Safety of Onlookers.



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4. If a conflict arises regarding the location of the news media, the on-scene supervisor and/or Incident Commander (IC) shall have authority to resolve the conflict with the news media.

N/A

a. The supervisor and/or IC may contact the Communications Specialist/PIO for assistance to resolve the conflict with the news media.

N/A

5. The IC or Communications Specialist/PIO may grant the news media closer access with approval of the IC as long as it does not interfere with law enforcement operations.

6. If appropriate, the IC will establish a news media staging area to conduct media updates.

a. The IC will notify ECC dispatcher of the location of the staging area.

b. To allow for effective communication, the staging area will be the preferred location for updates.

c. Department personnel shall comply with the Rights of Onlooker policy for any individual who does not want to remain in the staging area.

7. The Communications Specialist/PIO shall work in cooperation with the news media to ensure that live broadcasts do not disclose information endangering law enforcement personnel or the general public.

G. Media Ride-Alongs

1. Requests for news media ride-alongs shall first be considered by the Director of Communications.

a. The request shall then be approved by the Deputy Chief.

2. The person requesting a ride-along shall complete the Department Form Media/Photographer Ride Along Agreement.

N/A

H. Multi-Agency/Multi-Jurisdictional Investigations

The lead investigative agency will provide or coordinate the release of public information.