



Peterborough Police Service

Media Relations

General Order AI-029

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1.0 Policy

- 1.1 The media is one of the Service's means of providing information to the community. It is essential that the Service maintains good relations with local media representatives, while complying with applicable legislation relating to the **Youth Criminal Justice Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)** and **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)**.
- 1.2 The Service will be as transparent as possible balancing the integrity and the needs of the investigation/incident and public safety and interest.
- 1.3 To ensure that relationship, the following General Order shall be followed.

2.0 Media Release Binder Locations

2.1 The Media Release binder can be found in the following locations:

- 1) the office of the Officer-in-Charge;
- 2) the Media Relations Office

3.0 Release of Major or Significant Incidents

3.1 When a major or significant incident occurs, the Officer-in-Charge shall consider notifying the Duty Inspector (or designate) prior to sending out a "Special Media Release" advising the nature of the incident and any pertinent information releasable at that time, including suspect descriptions, etc. The release shall be sent as soon as practicable.

3.2 Also refer to section 6 of this policy and Appendix A regarding Major Cases.

4.0 Media Releases

4.1 Monday to Friday (Except for Statutory Holidays)

- 1) A media release will be issued Monday to Friday by the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator or their back up (Operations Staff Sergeant or designate) through the official website www.peterboroughpolice.com.
- 2) The Operations Staff Sergeant, or designate, shall cause this function to be performed when the Media/Communications Coordinator is not available. This member shall send information on all incidents meeting the Media Release criteria for the previous twenty-four (24) hours, except those that fall under the exclusions in paragraph 5.2.
- 3) When a member of the media makes a formal inquiry with the Service, the inquiry shall be directed to the attention of the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator or the Operations Staff Sergeant, or designate, if the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator is not available.
- 4) All requests for information on background or feature stories where there is no immediate deadline, shall be referred to the Media/Communications Coordinator who will coordinate with the appropriate personnel for approval.
- 5) Other than as set out above, members shall treat as confidential the official business of the Service, and shall not impart information relating to the official business to anyone, except:
 - a) Under an order of a Court;

- b) As directed by a Sworn Senior Officer
- 6) Members who are unsure whether or not to release information shall consult with a supervisor.

4.2 Weekends and Statutory Holidays

- 1) Media releases on weekends and statutory holidays are only issued for major or significant incidents as outlined in sections 3 and 6 of this policy.
- 2) The Officer in Charge (OIC) shall issue media releases when required on weekends and statutory holidays when the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator is not available.
- 3) The OIC may consult with the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator and/or the investigator as to what information will be released.
- 4) For Major Cases as outlined in section 6 and Appendix A, the Major Case Manager shall be consulted prior to any information being released.

5.0 Media Release Guidelines

5.1 The incidents meeting the Media Release criteria include:

- Assaults - Assaults in public places (downtown bar areas & schools);
- Assault Bodily Harm or Aggravated Assault including Threatening;
- Controlled Substances - Cultivation and/or trafficking offences only;
- Counterfeit Money - If multiple incidents occur;
- Escape Custody;
- Arson;
- Fraud - Multiple charges or Incidents over \$5,000.00;
- Suspect Apprehension Pursuits;
- Mischief;
- Motor Vehicle Collisions (See Section 9);
- Fatal Motor Vehicle Collisions;
- Thefts from Vehicles - If multiple incidents and there is a pattern;
- Weapons - All arrest incidents involving weapons;
- Bomb Threats;
- Robbery;
- Loss of Life (excluding suicide and natural causes); and
- Public Interest - Any item of public interest or which the Police feel is newsworthy.

5.2 The Media Relations/Communications Coordinator and in lieu, the Officer-in-Charge, are authorized to give members of the media information, except where:

- 1) An investigation may be hindered or obstructed by the release of the information;

- 2) It may be of direct assistance to criminals or suspects;
- 3) It may jeopardize the safety of an individual, in particular victims or witnesses;
- 4) It is of a confidential nature (i.e. Drug or Intelligence cases);
- 5) It is considered official business of the Service such as personnel matters, budget. [Section 4.1 5) and section 13]
- 6) The release is prohibited by the **Police Services Act** (O.Reg. 265/98 "Disclosure of Personal Information"), or successor legislation, MFIPPA (Exception: Section 32 of the Act), FIPPA; or
- 7) If relates to the identity of a young offender charged under the **Youth Criminal Justice Act**.

5.3 The media release may include:

- 1) The nature of the crime - break and enter, murder, robbery, etc., (when positively determined only).
- 2) The location of the crime (Ex. closest major intersection general terms only).
- 3) When the crime occurred (General terms - not exact hour).
- 4) Any weapons used (discretion).
- 5) Any items taken (discretion). The amount of money/cash involved in an incident may be released if it involves a Government agency. The amount of money/cash will generally not be released in the case of private individuals or businesses. The estimated value of property may be released to the media. (Exception: If the value of property or amount of money/cash is mentioned in a court information or revealing the amount or denomination (ie. coin collection) would assist in an investigation, the dollar amount may be released).
- 6) Whether or not there are suspects or suspect vehicles, and description (discretion).
- 7) The name of the investigating member or other special investigator, e.g. Coroner or Pathologist.

5.4 The age, gender and municipality (no street numbers) of a person charged with an offence, as defined by Ontario Regulation 265/98 of the **Police Services Act**, may be included in the media release for incidents meeting the Media Release criteria. For purposes of this section, a person shall be deemed to have been charged with an offence if he or she:

- 1) Is arrested and released in accordance with Part XVI of the **Criminal Code of Canada**; or
- 2) Is served with a summons under Part III of the **Provincial Offences Act** for which an individual may be arrested, even if an information has not been laid at the time the summon is served (Ont. Reg. 265/98, s.1); or
- 3) Is charged with, convicted or found guilty of an offence under the **Criminal Code of Canada**, the **Controlled Drugs and Substances Act** or any other federal or provincial act (Ont. Reg. 265/98, s. 3). Break and Enters (Residential and commercial)

5.5 Personal information may be released when:

- 1) There is a grave health and safety issue or hazard. (Example: fugitive at large and revealing their identity will help protect the community and assist in apprehension.)
- 2) The individual consents.
- 3) Records are available to the general public.
- 4) Compelling circumstances exist which affect the health and safety of an individual.
- 5) It will assist in locating or contacting the next of kin or a friend of a person who has been injured, is ill or deceased.
- 6) It will help identify a deceased person or a person suffering from memory loss after all other attempts have been unsuccessful.
- 7) Other factors may result in a decision to disclose an individual's personal information to the public. Example there is a compelling public interest in the matter.

5.6 Personal information of a victim, witness or suspect shall not be released, except for general information that would not serve to identify them (i.e. a 22 year old female).

5.7 No personal information concerning a young person shall be released without a Youth Court Judge's Order.

5.8 No personal information of crime victims shall be released without their expressed consent.

5.9 The identities of sexual assault/domestic incident victims or witnesses shall not be released to the media. The identity of the accused in a sexual assault/domestic incident will not be released if by doing so we would reveal the identity of the victim. (e.g. victims in incest cases or sexual assault on wife or sister)

- 5.10 The identities of Young Persons (under 18 years old) who are victims, or witnesses, of Criminal offences shall not be released to the media.
- 5.11 After an arrest is made, the following may be released:
- (1) Age, gender and municipality where the accused resides. (Exception: If essential to the investigation or in the interest of public safety, the name of the accused may be released.)
 - (2) Charges
 - (3) Circumstances surrounding arrest.
 - (4) Time and place.
 - (5) Date and location of Court appearance.
 - (6) Special or unusual conditions will always influence what may be released. If you cannot release any part of 5.11 (1) to (5), explain why to the media. If necessary, consult a superior or the investigating officer.
- 5.12 In order not to jeopardize future trials, Members authorized to release information to the media shall NOT:
- 1) Discuss or disclose any evidence. (Do not give evidence. This may cause application for a "Change of Venue")
 - 2) Disclose admissions, confessions, statements or possible pleas;
 - 3) Refer to the accused's character, reputation, previous charges etc;
 - 4) Release the names of Young Offenders charged;
 - 5) Speculate or express opinions, e.g. "The person responsible works in the area", and "probably works for the company", etc;
 - 6) Release information that is detrimental to the police investigation. e.g. "We're looking for a certain item or article". The accused or family may destroy the item;
 - 7) Make statements such as: "We know who the culprit is but do not have enough evidence for an arrest";
 - 8) Make statements concerning the character, reputation, credibility of or anticipated testimony of a prospective witness;
 - 9) Disclose the results of any test or examination taken by the accused, or their refusal to take any tests;
 - 10) Discuss the possibility of a plea.

6.0 Major Cases

- 6.1 The following criteria offences are deemed to be major cases:
- 1) Homicides as defined in subsection 222 (4), Criminal Code of Canada, and attempts;
 - 2) Sexual assaults, and all attempts (for the purpose of this standard, is deemed to include sexual interference, sexual exploitation and invitation to sexual touching);
 - 3) Occurrences involving non-familial abductions and attempts;
 - 4) Missing person occurrences, where circumstances indicate a strong possibility of foul play;
 - 5) Occurrences suspected to be homicide involving found human remains;
 - 6) Criminal harassment cases in which the offender is not known to the victim; and,
 - 7) Any other case designated as a major case by the Major Case Management Executive Board.
- 6.2 No Member of the Service shall release information regarding a major case unless authorized to do so by the Major Case Manager.
- 6.3 When authorized to release information by the Major Case Manager, the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator, or other designated person, shall consult the Media Relations section of the Major Case Manual. (Appendix "A")
- 6.4 In a single jurisdiction investigation, the Major Case Manager shall consider consulting with the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator prior to any public appeal to review the content and the medium of delivery.
- 6.5 In a multi-jurisdictional investigation, public appeals shall be the subject of discussion among the multi-jurisdictional Major Case Manager, the Joint Management Team, Major Case Managers, Media Relations/Communications Coordinator and, where appropriate, the Crown Attorney to review the potential impact of the appeal.

7.0 Deceased Persons

- 7.1 Names of deceased persons shall not be released unless required for investigative purposes and approved by the Divisional Commander. When possible, next of kin will be notified in advance of the name being released.

8.0 Special Investigations Unit (S.I.U.) Investigations

- 8.1 Any media releases that involve an investigation by the Special Investigations Unit (S.I.U.) pursuant to General Order [AI-052 Special Investigation Unit](#), will be made only by members of the S.I.U.

9.0 Motor Vehicle Collisions (M.V.C.s)

9.1 The following information regarding Motor Vehicle Collisions may be released:

- 1) Date, time and location (closest intersection) of the M.V.C.
- 2) If a M.V.C. results in a death, the age, gender and municipality where the deceased resided (i.e. a 27 year old male Peterborough resident passed away as a result of a motor vehicle collision at Charlotte and Park Sts.) will be released after the next of kin have been notified.
- 3) General description of the incident, without opinion.
- 4) Road and traffic conditions.
- 5) Age and gender of the accused, the municipality where they reside and the charges under the **Highway Traffic Act** (HTA) may be released.

Note: No personal information regarding Young Persons can be released.

10.0 Public Release of Person(s) of Interest

- 10.1 Members of the Service wishing to publicly release a Person(s) of Interest bulletin shall have the request approved by the Inspector in Charge of Operations or Criminal Investigations prior to any release being made.
- 10.2 Once approved, all public releases of Person(s) of Interest shall be done by the Corporate Communications Coordinator or designate.

11.0 Release of Photographs to the Media

- 11.1 Photographs may be released if:
 - 1) A wanted person is at large and an arrest warrant has been issued
 - 2) Public assistance is requested (i.e. to help locate a missing person), with the approval of the subject's next-of-kin;
 - 3) The person poses a risk and the release is authorized by the chief of Police or designate.
- 11.2 Media requests for photographs taken under the authority of the **Identification of Criminals Act**, shall only be granted if a wanted person is at large and public assistance is requested; and the request is approved by the Chief of Police or designate.
- 11.3 Suspects and accused shall not be posed by the police for photographing by the media.

12.0 Conduct when dealing with the Media

12.1 Members liaising with the media shall:

- 1) Identify themselves
- 2) Refer to the media as “media”, not “press”.
- 3) Update the website and encourage those interested in receiving media releases to subscribe to the “News” page of the website.
- 4) Give reasons when information cannot be released.
- 5) Be prepared.
- 6) Be totally honest.
- 7) Be sure of the facts - if you don't know, offer to get the answer.
- 8) Ask that direct quotes be read back for verification.
- 9) When possible, give live interviews in uniform for sworn Members and in business attire for civilians.

12.2 Members liaising with the media shall NOT:

- 1) Release information that could impair a prosecution.
- 2) Hypothesize, speculate, offer opinions or guess.
- 3) Offer prejudicial information regarding suspects or charged persons.
- 4) Use technical terms or police jargon.
- 5) Couple the word “good” with “arrest”.
- 6) Forget comments are never “off the record”. Expect that all comments in an interview could be used
- 7) Forget that electronic devices can be recording at any time

12.3 Preparations and adherence to these guidelines will ensure positive media relations. This will also make members confident and comfortable in their dealings with media representatives.

12.4 In live interviews, members speaking to the media should attempt to forget the camera or recorder and present the information to the interviewer.

12.5 Accuracy, integrity, preparation, cooperation, transparency, and a candid

approach will lead to good media relations. All media representatives should receive the same information at the same time unless one is doing a particular story.

- 12.6 Where it is appropriate, members speaking to the media should ask for a delay in the public dissemination of the information. This Service has had excellent cooperation from all local media in this regard. The member making this request must provide valid reasons for the requested delay.

13.0 Media Access

- 13.1 Members of the media shall receive daily media releases posted to the website: www.peterboroughpolice.com.

13.2 Media Access to a Crime Scene:

- 1) Generally, media representatives, including photographers, shall not be permitted access to the scene of a crime, major fire, natural disaster or other catastrophic event, unless permitted by the person in charge or in the case of a major case, the Major Case Manager. If approved, the media representative shall be accompanied by an authorized Member of the Service.
- 2) Media representatives, including photographers, shall not be permitted access to the inside perimeter of a scene when:
 - a) Dangerous or hazardous conditions exist.
 - b) The presence of media representatives may interfere or obstruct emergency services personnel.
 - c) Their presence poses a danger to the victims, themselves or others.
 - d) Their presence may disturb evidence or a protected scene.
 - e) Access would constitute trespassing or the violation of another **Act**.

- 13.3 If it is deemed necessary to restrict the movement of the media at a scene, it is important that the reasons be explained fully and without undue delay.

14.0 Media Enquiries about Policy or Internal Matters

- 14.1 Members receiving enquiries from the media concerning a Service policy or Internal/**Police Services Act** matter shall refer such enquiries to the Chief of Police or designate.

15.0 Retention of Media Releases

- 15.1 The Media Relations/Communications Coordinator shall:

- 1) Ensure that the current year and previous year's media releases are available on the web site.
- 2) Remove media releases that are older than the current and previous year.
- 3) Save the media releases that have been removed from the website electronically for two years in the event of an FOI request, civil matter etc.
- 4) After two years of inactivity, the media releases shall be purged from the electronic file provided the release is not subject to an FOI request, civil litigation etc.

For example: In 2022, the web site will contain the media releases for 2022 and for 2021. Media releases from 2020 and 2019 will be maintained electronically by the Media Relations/Communications Coordinator. Anything 2018 and older and not subject to an FOI request, civil litigation etc. shall be purged from the electronic file.

- 5) Major Case Managers shall retain all Major Case media releases regardless if the retention period noted above in 15.1 has passed.

This General Order shall become effective this 24th day of September, 2002.

Order amended this 18th day of February 2004.

This General Order has been reviewed this 20th day of October 2011.

This General Order has been reviewed and amended throughout this 17th day of February 2022.

This General Order has been updated to include section 10.0 Public Release of Person(s) of Interest this 15th day of September 2022.



Tim Farquharson
Acting Chief of Police

Appendix “A”

Ontario Major Case Management Manual 2017 Media Relations

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this standard is to provide a consistent approach for contacts with the media in the investigation of major cases. The investigation may be affected by the information released and the manner in which it is released to the media. The release of unauthorized information can seriously impact the investigation or a criminal proceeding. A positive working relationship with members of the media should be maintained.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Release of Information

1. The Media Liaison Officer shall be the designated spokesperson for release of information to the media.
2. Notwithstanding section 1, the Major Case Manager may authorize another member of the investigative team to speak to the media when circumstances dictate.
3. No member shall release information unless authorized to do so by the Major Case Manager.
4. When a member of the investigative team receives approval from the Major Case Manager to prepare a news release, the member shall:
 - a) research, compile and draft the pertinent information;
 - b) submit the information to the Media Liaison Officer for editing;
 - c) submit the draft release to the Major Case Manager for final approval;
 - d) forward the approved release to the Media Liaison Officer who shall circulate the release to media outlets; and,
 - e) forward a copy of the approved release to the File Coordinator.
5. In preparing all news releases, the Major Case Manager shall consider consulting with a member of the police service who has received media relations training.
6. The Major Case Manager and the Media Liaison Officer shall consider the release of proactive public safety messages.
7. Consideration shall be given to releasing the following information:
 - a) time and location of the occurrence;
 - b) general description of the victim; and,
 - c) generic description of the crime.

8. Consideration shall be given to releasing the following information after an arrest and the laying of a charge:
 - a) information in relation to the accused person, including name, address and age;
 - b) charges laid;
 - c) time and location of the arrest;
 - d) circumstances of the arrest;
 - e) investigating unit; and,
 - f) date and location of the accused person's first court appearance.
9. Media requests for photographs, taken under the authority of the Identification of Criminals Act, shall only be granted if:
 - a) a wanted person is at large and public assistance is requested; and,
 - b) the request is approved by the Chief of Police or Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police or designate.
10. If a photograph of a missing person or victim is requested by the media, permission shall be received from an immediate family member or the victim prior to releasing the photograph if practicable.
11. Suspect(s) and accused person(s) shall not be posed by the police for photographing by media representatives.
12. All news releases and information contained in public appeal(s) shall be made available to all media outlets.

Information Release Prohibitions

1. The following information shall not be released to the media:
 - a) the name, address of a young person charged with an offence, except in accordance with a Judge's Order (age, sex and general area of residence can usually be released);
 - b) information that would identify a victim except:
 - i) in homicide cases, following notification of next of kin;
 - ii) in compelling circumstances when the health or safety of an individual may be affected;
 - iii) where disclosure is necessary to continue the investigation (e.g., in cases of non-familial abductions);
 - iv) when a compelling public interest in disclosure of the personal information clearly outweighs the individual's right to privacy (e.g., in cases of non-familial abductions); and,
 - v) in compassionate circumstances, to facilitate contact with the next-of-kin

or a friend of an individual who is injured, ill or deceased.

- c) information relating to an accused as follows:
 - i) the existence of an alibi, admission, confession or statement;
 - ii) the reputation, character, or criminal record of an accused;
 - iii) any tests taken by, refused by, or offered to the accused; and,
 - iv) any evidence or information that may prejudice a trial.
 - d) any other information that, in the view of the Major Case Manager, may prejudice the investigation.
2. In sexual assault cases, information that may identify the victim shall not be released. Such information may include the name of the accused person(s).

The Crime Scene

- 1. In the event the Major Case Manager allows media access to the crime scene, the media representative shall be accompanied by either the Media Liaison Officer or another member of the investigative team.

Media Interviews

- 1. When a member of the investigative team is assigned to meet with a member of the media in connection with a special news feature, the Major Case Manager and the Media Liaison Officer shall:
 - a) brief the member;
 - b) where possible and when necessary, attend the interview; and,
 - c) ensure a written report is submitted to the File Coordinator with the results of the interview and the names of the individuals who were in attendance.
- 2. Upon receiving the approval of the Major Case Manager, a member of the investigative team shall consider providing information to the media at a crime scene as follows:
 - a) identifying him/herself as a member of the investigative team and giving a brief rationale as to his/her presence;
 - b) introducing the Media Liaison Officer, if available, and indicating that the Media Liaison Officer will be the regular contact for the media in relation to the investigation;
 - c) releasing as much information as possible, including confirmation of the type of case under investigation without compromising the investigation;
 - d) confirming with the media that, if the need arises, the member, along with the

- Media Liaison Officer, will personally meet with the media; and,
- e) if necessary, indicating that the assistance of the media may be sought as the case develops.

Public Appeals

1. In a single jurisdiction investigation, the Major Case Manager shall consider consulting with the Media Liaison Officer, prior to any public appeal, to review its content and the medium of delivery.
2. In a multi-jurisdictional investigation, public appeals shall be the subject of discussion among the Multi-jurisdictional Major Case Manager, the Joint Management Team, Major Case Managers, Media Liaison Officer and, where appropriate, the Crown Attorney to review the potential impact of the appeal.