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| ***REPLACE WITH YOUR MASTHEAD*** |
| **VFIS logo black JPG** | **SOG Title:** |
| **SOG Number:** |
| **Original Date:** | **Revision Date:** |
| **ABC Fire Department General Operating Guideline** |

**Public Information Officer – Media Guidelines**

***This is a sample of a standard operating guideline (SOG) on this topic. You should review the content, modify as appropriate for your organization, have it reviewed by your leadership team and if appropriate your legal counsel. Once adopted, make sure the SOG is communicated to members, implemented and performance monitored for effective implementation.***

**Policy:**

It is the policy of this organization to cooperate with the media as well as keep the public informed. This guideline is to assist the assigned Public Information Officer (PIO) with requests for comment or incident information from the print, television, radio and other media which directly or indirectly affects the organization.

**Purpose:**

To set procedures and guidelines, to establish an information division at incidents, and/or set guidelines when dealing with the media.

**Procedure:**

Command will be responsible for the management of public information at major incidents as soon as practical. Command will establish a Public Information Division. Prior to the arrival or availability of the organization’s PIO, Command may assign an officer to the initial Public Information Division if needed.

1. The PIO will gather and write the information in a structured manor. Command will establish the location of the Public information Division so as to provide public information access to the Command Post, but not interfere with operations. The media should never be allowed access to the command post while operations are active.
2. The PIO designation division will be “Information”.
3. The PIO will be responsible for requiring all media representatives to stay in a safe zone away from the incident.
4. Each division officer is responsible for the safety of media personnel in their area. If media personnel create a safety problem or hinder operations, they should be requested to move, avoiding confrontation when possible. Engage police assistance if necessary.
5. If any organization member is approached by the media for a statement, the member shall direct the media to the PIO or in their absence, Command.
6. If an employee has been authorized by Command or the PIO to the media, the employee may request the organizations PIO to be present.
7. The assigned PIO shall keep the Incident Commander informed of all media released.
8. Command may notify the PIO of any incidents, whether large or small, if it appears it may be news worthy.
9. As a courtesy, media contacts and interviews made by administrative officers should be relayed in a timely manner to the PIO in an effort to maintain consistent relations.

**WRITTEN RELEASES**

Any written public information releases that represent the department or identify the author as a member of the organization to be approved by the Fire Chief prior to submission.

The information should be provided in a final draft and include what source(s) the information will be sent to and a proposed print date.

The article will be returned to the author as soon as possible.

***This is a sample guideline furnished to you by VFIS. Your organization should review this guideline and make the necessary modifications to meet your organization’s needs. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury, harm or damage to personnel, property and the general public. For additional information on this topic, contact your VFIS Risk Control representative.***

**References:**