

WOLFEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

SOP 6.3

Date Issued: 12/27/2019

Review: 03/25/2021

[Note: This written directive is for the internal governance of the Wolfeboro Police Department and, as provided by RSA 516:36, is not intended and should not be interpreted to establish a higher standard of care in any civil or criminal action than would otherwise be applicable under existing law.]

By Order of:
Dean J. Rondeau, Chief of Police

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Policy To provide the media and the public with information while ensuring that individual rights are protected.
To foster a mutual trust, cooperation and respect with the media.

Purpose The purpose of this directive is to provide information on:

- General Guidelines Dissemination of information
- News releases Prohibited information
- Crime Scenes Coordination with other agencies
- Major Incidents News Media Input
- RSA 91: A

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Public Information

General Guidelines

This order is in addition to the restrictions set by RSA 91:A Right to Know Request and Freedom of Information Act Request.
The Chief or his designee will be in charge of public information
The Chief shall be notified prior to the release of information regarding a significant event or high-profile incident.
No information is to be released in criminal murder cases, all information is to be released through the Attorney Generals Office.
No information will be released when an outside agency is involved in a mutual incident, inquiries will be directed to a joint press release coordinator
Officers at the scene of traffic accidents or incidents may give limited interviews to news personnel.
Employees are to assist news personnel in covering stories, but within the confines of this order.

Approved New Releases

The police printed log can be released to representatives of the media for review.
Releases that have been authorized by the Chief or his designee
All releases will be given to the dispatch office for distribution, unless a supervisor provides for other arrangements based on the incident.
The call back supervisor will be available when needed for information
During business hours the Chief's Office will handle inquiries.
All information that will be released will be coordinated with the appropriate agencies and the Chief dealing with:

- Release of information about victims, witnesses & suspects.
- Internal affairs.
- Information on confidential investigation .

Guidelines on Information Allowed to be Released

Identity of the victim. (when not in prohibited areas)
Name, age, residence, occupation and family status of subject charged
Information necessary to aid in the apprehension of the person formally charged.
To warn the public of any danger the person formally charged may present.
Facts & circumstances of an arrest.
Identity of the arresting officer.
Description of the evidence seized.
Name of court, hearing date and bail information.
If subject was arrested on a warrant.

Press Conferences

The Chief of Police will arrange press conferences when it seems appropriate.
Coordinated with other agencies involved.

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Prohibited Information

The following information shall not be released to the media or public

- Prior Criminal records.
 - Character or reputation of the accused.
 - Juvenile suspects, victims, arrested or complainants.
 - Existence of, or contents of any confession.
 - Results of any examination or tests.
 - Identity, testimony or credibility of any witness.
 - Victim of a sexual crime.
 - Abused or neglected child.
 - Information on a victim (death or Serious injury) until all the next of kin are notified.
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- Information about on-going litigation.
 - Confidential medical information.
 - Specific causes of death, until officially determined by the medical examiner.
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Prohibited actions

Deliberate posing of any person in custody for the news media
Interviewing of any person in custody by news personnel.

Crime Scenes

No news representative will be permitted access to a felony crime scene without the consent of the Carroll County Attorney or NH Attorney General's Office.
News representatives will be limited to a public area unless authorized.

Major Incidents

Once the Incident Command System is set up at a major incident all access by the media will be limited by the Public Information Officer at the scene.

News Media Input

Representatives of the media will be forwarded a copy of this order for suggestions on policy improvement on a biennial basis.

RSA 91:A

See SOP's Right to Know Law 6.4
Right to Know Request and Freedom of Information Act Request.