

## 110.00 - PUBLIC RELATIONS

### 110.01 General Procedures

- (1) Public support is the heart of any public endeavor. It is highly important that citizens and police officers understand and appreciate the problems and responsibilities of each other. Public relations therefore becomes a factor in all police effort.
- (2) Good public relations involves doing. The police themselves are the most important factor in the determination of police attitudes. The day-to-day contacts between police officer and the public is the focal point of public relations, for it is in these contacts that public support develops. The public's acceptance or rejection of a police officer's efforts is largely a reflection of the character and behavior of the officer.
- (3) Under normal conditions, citizens are not particularly critical of police service, but when the public is aroused by even mere inference or innuendo of laxities in police services, their resentment, even if erroneous in conception, will be most difficult to overcome and particularly so if no effort has been made by the police to clear up or dispel the implications.
- (4) Public support cannot be created by publicity stunts, self-serving oratory, or other shortcuts. Public support is the end product of faithful, honest, and effective service to all the people in the community. Public support must originate with the people.

### 110.02 Ethics, Gifts, and Gratuities

- (1) Title II, Chapter 2, Article IV of the Revised Municipal Code of the City and County of Denver, relating to ethics is of particular interest to all police personnel. All personnel of this Department shall be required to abide by all sections of this Ordinance. The following excerpts are reproduced here for emphasis and applicability.
  - a. .2-51(5), "Substantial conflict of interest" shall mean such a conflict of interest that it is reasonably probable that it might tend to affect the judgment or actions of an officer or employee in the performance of duties as such officer or employee.
  - b. .2-54, UNLAWFUL ACTS - Subject to the provisions of Section 2-53(b), it shall be unlawful:
    1. .(3) - For any officer or employee to become surety on the official bond of any other officer or employee.
    2. .(4) - For any officer or employee to hold any other public office or employment which is incompatible with their duties as such officer or employee.
    3. .(5) - For any officer or employee to have any direct interest in any contract with the City and County of Denver, not related to their employment.
    4. .(7) - For any officer... to fail to report in writing to their appointing authority any employment or other business activity in which they propose to engage, prior to accepting the same or taking part therein.
    5. .(8) - For any officer... who is presently engaged in any employment or business activity, apart from or other than the performance of their duties as such officer or employee, who has not heretofore, reported in writing to the appointing authority such employment or business activity.
    6. .(9) - For any officer... to fail to report promptly to the appointing authority any situation in which such officer or employee reasonably feels or should feel that they may or may not become involved in a substantial conflict of interest.
    7. .(11) - For any officer or employee to solicit or receive any pay, commission, money or anything of value, or derive any benefit, profit or advantage, directly or indirectly, from or by reason of any dealings with or service for the City and County of Denver by themselves or by authority from or by reason of any improvements, alterations or repairs required by the authority of the city, except lawful compensation or salary as such officer or employee.

8. .(12) - For any officer or employee to accept or use, unless authorized by law or ordinance to do so for some public purpose, directly or indirectly, from any railroad, telegraph, telephone, company, or from any owner of any public utility franchise in the City and County of Denver, any pass, frank, free ticket, free service or other services upon terms more favorable than those granted to the public generally.

c. .2-53(a) - The Board of Ethics shall render advisory opinions to officers, officials, and employees and former officers, officials, and employees with respect to this article. Such advisory opinions shall be rendered pursuant to the written request of the individual or individuals involved or concerned. The Board of Ethics may, in its discretion, publish its advisory opinions with such deletion as may be necessary to prevent disclosure of the identity of the individual or individuals involved or concerned.

(2) The policy of the Denver Police Department regarding the acceptance of gifts and gratuities by officers is: Officers will not accept gifts or gratuities that relate to the performance of their duties at any time. The policy Statement is further clarified as: No officer will accept any gift or gratuity intended to influence the performance of their duty. No officer will accept any gift or gratuity for performing a function not permitted by the Operations Manual or Rules and Regulations of this Department. Nor will any officer accept any gift or gratuity for failing to perform a function as required by the Operations Manual or Rules and Regulations of this Department. This policy Statement does not supersede RR-203, Accepting Gifts from Persons of Bad Character, RR-204, Soliciting, Accepting Gifts, Gratuities, or Title II, Chapter 2, Article IV of the Revised Municipal Code of the City and County of Denver relating to ethics. This policy is in addition to these provisions and is intended to place additional restriction on the acceptance of gifts and gratuities.

(3) It is the policy of the Denver Police Department that police officers and CSA employees working for the Police Department will not be permitted to attend City Auctions, unless they are acting in their official capacities.

The Board of Ethics has determined that police officers, city employees, their family members, or anyone not related but who is purchasing an item at a city auction for the direct benefit of a police officer or city employee are doing so in violation of the Code of Ethics and the Charter of the City and County of Denver.

### 110.03 Criticism of Other Agencies

- (1) In matters which police officers believe to be justified complaints and/or criticism of other city agencies, the complaints and/or criticism shall be channeled through the chain of command.
- (2) The voicing of complaints and/or criticism against other city agencies, without following the chain of command, can only lead to poor inter-agency relationships.
- (3) In the performance of all phases of police work, a positive impartial attitude shall be displayed.
- (4) Personnel of the department shall not criticize in public the District Attorney's Office or the Courts concerning the circumstances surrounding the release of defendants or the disposition of cases.

### 110.04 Media Relations

- (1) Department members may respond immediately to news media inquiries. If not personally knowledgeable about the subject, officers should refer the person seeking the information to a superior, the chief investigator, or the Public Information Office.
- (2) All Members of the media will be treated equally and fairly and will receive accurate accounts of the Department's activities. Each incident will be considered in light of its particular circumstances. Some of the factors to be considered before releasing information are:
  - a. Will the release effect the Department's ability to investigate a case or jeopardize an investigation
  - b. Will the release unnecessarily embarrass an innocent person
  - c. Will the release promote pretrial prejudice to the extent that a fair trial might be difficult or impossible

- (3) Any member of the Department may ask for proper credentials prior to releasing any information.
- a. Proper credentials include those from the Colorado Press Association, Secret Service Press Pass, Associated Press, United Press International, or similar type media identification from local or national radio and television organizations
  - b. When telephone requests for information relating to a case under investigation are made and the identification of the caller is in doubt, the caller should be referred to the Public Information Office
  - c. In those instances when the identity of the caller is unknown and a delay in the release would be impractical, identity should be determined by calling the news agency before any release is made
- (4) Media Relations at the Scene of an Incident
- a. It will be up to the police officer or fireman in charge to permit or deny permission to cross police or fire lines to obtain news information
  - b. Crime Scenes should be secured as soon as possible. All evidence should be processed before allowing members of the news media access. No member of the news media shall be allowed in an area if there is a possibility of evidence being damaged, destroyed, or altered
  - c. At the scene of hostage situations, barricaded suspects, or other major crimes, members of the news media shall not be allowed access to any area that would disrupt police operations, or would jeopardize any department personnel or citizens other than the member of the news media. In these situations:
    1. An attempt will be made to provide the media with a specific location as near to the scene as practical. This area will be determined by the situation commander
    2. Video and radio depictions of tactical police operations that could be received by a suspect will be prohibited.
  - d. The news media will be granted reasonable access to areas at non crime scenes. Common sense will determine the amount of access in those situations where life and property are jeopardized. When practical, consideration shall be given to the technical aspects required by the media for broadcasts.
  - e. There shall be no attempt to censor or prevent the media from recording the aspects of a non-crime scene. The responsibility for the broadcast rests with the media. If a member of the media is denied access to a certain location he/she will be provided an explanation of the reason for doing so.
  - f. Authorized agents of the media shall be permitted access on private property under the above guidelines upon consent of the owner or agent of the property, or without such consent, where agents are willing to assume responsibility for such acts, so long as access does not hinder police operations.
- (5) Photographs, Films, Videotapes
- a. The news media shall not be allowed to photograph persons in custody within areas of department buildings considered "off limits" to the public at large. Officers may not prevent photographs of persons in custody while in public places, such as seated in police cars and being escorted through the lobby.
  - b. Authorized agents of the media shall be permitted to take pictures of all incidents on public property so long as the taking of such photographs does not delay police investigation or the efforts of the police to minister to injured persons.
  - c. Photographs of Evidence
    1. Unless it otherwise interferes with a police investigation, the news media will be permitted to photograph certain evidence, such as large amounts of contraband narcotics or recovered property, when on display within the confines of the police building. When the investigation is to this point, officers are encouraged to notify the news media, since in all probability this will be their only opportunity to photograph the material prior to the time it is sealed as evidence.

2. No person shall be included in any photograph, film, or videotape of the display.
3. Whenever the material has been sealed as evidence, and placed in the appropriate container, it will not be reopened for any publicity purpose, but will be conveyed directly to the Property Section. The first consideration of an officer in this procedure is to comply with the rules for the proper preservation of evidence.
- d. All members of the media shall be prohibited from photographing federal prisoners under any circumstances after the prisoner has been booked and is confined in the Detention Facility or the Police Building. (Department of Justice - Rules and Regulations.)
  1. If a federal officer is present during proceedings prior to the prisoner being booked, it shall be his/her decision whether to allow photographs
  2. If a federal officer is not present during proceedings prior to a federal prisoner being booked at the Detention Facility, photographs will be allowed in public areas during transport
- e. Departmental pictures of persons or occurrences shall be used by the news media only with permission of the Chief of Police, the command officer responsible for a specific investigation, or the Public Information Office.
- f. Members of the media shall not be permitted to pose a person in custody, nor shall any member of this department deliberately pose a prisoner for such purposes.

(6) Suspect Interviews

- a. Authorized agents of the news media shall be permitted to interview suspects in the detention facility upon the written approval of the commanding officer in charge of the investigation, the prosecuting attorney's office, the appropriate defense attorney, and the commander of the facility.
- b. No member of the news media shall be allowed to interview a federal prisoner under any circumstances while such prisoner is in our custody. (Department of Justice - Rules and Regulations.)

(7) Exceptions

- a. Nothing in the foregoing procedures shall be interpreted as making the police department jointly responsible with any authorized member of the media in a civil or criminal action resulting from any incident or publication.
- b. The Communications Bureau will normally only release verifications of addresses of radio dispatches, not details of incidents or a resume of activity. Status of any investigation or occurrence can only be released by the bureau or district handling the case or the Public Information Office.

(8) Special Report/News Release

- a. When information released is of such volume or importance to constitute a news release, or when officers are involved in a situation that may become a major newsworthy event, officers may fill out a Special Report/News Release, DPD 279 and forward it to the Public Information Office as soon as possible for distribution.

(9) Situations Involving Other Agencies or Jurisdictions

- a. Whenever any agency other than the Denver Police Department initiates an activity within the City and County of Denver, that agency is responsible for releasing information about its activity to the news media.
- b. Whenever the Denver Police Department initiates an activity in another jurisdiction, the Department is responsible for releasing information to the media after advising the other jurisdiction about the activity.
- c. In death investigations, the release of information to the media regarding the victim will be made subject to the notification of relatives and with the approval of the coroner.
- d. When the Office of Emergency Preparedness is the coordinator of any activity, the Public Information Office will assist as needed or directed.

- (10) Media requests to ride in police vehicles shall be referred to the Division Chief of the Division to which the request is being made, or to the Chief of Police through the Public Information Office. The Division Chief involved or the Chief of Police may authorize such requests when it is determined to be of mutual interest to the Department and to the public, and will not be detrimental to normal police operations.

#### 110.05 Guidelines for Release of Information to the News Media

- (1) BEFORE AN ARREST, the release of information will be coordinated with the officer or investigator in charge of the incident.
- a. Officers MAY release:
    1. Location, time, and description of an offense, property damage, and any injuries sustained by the victim.
    2. Identity of the victim with the exception of victims of sex crimes or homicides. See OMS 110.04(9)c.
    3. The existence of suspects, information about unidentified suspects, such as physical and vehicle descriptions, identification of suspects for whom a warrant has been issued, criminal background in compliance with OMS 109.04.
    4. Method of receiving complaint, length of investigation, and officer in charge.
  - b. Officers WILL NOT release:
    1. Identity of suspects interviewed but not arrested.
    2. Identity of witnesses who could be subjected to danger or embarrassment, particularly sex crime victims, including any information that might identify them.
    3. Information regarding physical evidence, valuables not stolen, amounts taken in robberies or burglaries, and information known only to the guilty person.
    4. Any information regarding juvenile suspects, such as names, addresses, records, mug shots.
    5. Misleading or false information and conjectures regarding possible suspects or fugitives.
    6. Identity of homicide victims. See OMS 110.04(9)c.
    7. Any information regarding police shootings without the approval of the Commander of the Crimes Against Persons Bureau.
    8. Any Grand Jury information to either the public or media without prior approval from the Chief of Police.
- (2) AFTER AN ARREST, the release of information will be coordinated with the officer or investigator in charge of the incident.
- a. Officers MAY release:
    1. Adult suspect's identity, including residence, occupation, marital status, time and place of arrest, the exact charge, and facts or circumstances relating to the arrest, such as possession of a weapon or contraband recovered.
    2. Duration of the investigation and agency responsible for the arrest including identity of the officer. Undercover and other operations where the officer may be jeopardized may require withholding the identity of the officer.
    3. Pretrial release, detention arrangements including place of detention and amount of bond, and scheduled dates for the stages in the judicial process.
  - b. Officers WILL NOT release:
    1. Names of juvenile suspects.
    2. Name of the suspect's employer without the approval of the Commander of the Crimes Against Persons Bureau.

3. Comments about the credibility of testimony, guilt or innocence of the suspect, or the character or reputation of the suspect including prior criminal record with the exception contained in OMS 109.04.
  4. Information about the existence or content of a confession or statement made by the suspect, and the results of any examinations or tests conducted.
  5. The refusal of the suspect to make a statement or submit to any tests or examinations.
  6. Information concerning the suspect's direction or assistance in the recovery of contraband or evidence.
  7. Any information received from an informant without the approval of a supervisor in the Investigative Division.
- (3) Once a case has been presented to the District Attorney or City Attorney, no police officer should comment on that case without first referring the matter to, or obtaining permission from the prosecuting agency. Officers will not comment on the charges they think the prosecuting agency will file or whom the charges will be filed against.
- (4) Nothing in this procedure excludes officers from replying to charges of misconduct that are publicly made against them, or from participating in any legislative, administrative, or investigative hearing. These procedures do not supersede any more restrictive rules governing the release of information.
- (5) Officers are responsible for the information they release and they should exercise their best judgment in cooperating with the media in order to ensure that their information is factual and accurate.

**110.06 Public Information Office**

- (1) When called to assist at a major crime scene or incident controlled by the Denver Police Department or during the investigation of a major crime, the Public Information Office will assist in governing the activities of the news media. Information released by the Office will be cleared through the chief investigator or the officer in charge of the scene.
- (2) Members of the Public Information Office are subject to call twenty-four (24) hours a day and can be available when needed. In their absence, the ranking officer or investigator in charge may handle media relations as outlined in OMS 110.04 and 110.05.
- (3) When the volume of inquiries makes it impractical to deal with the media, the Public Information Office should be requested to assist. After the Public Information Office has been briefed by the ranking officer or investigator in charge, the Office is responsible for media relations and/or the preparation of a Special Report/News Release. When called to assist, a member of the office will:
  - a. Respond to the scene or Headquarters to take charge of disseminating information to the media
  - b. Make notifications or request the assistance of other officers in making notifications to the media
  - c. Assume responsibility for initiating other needed notifications
- (4) At the scene of a major crime, hostage situation, disasters, barricaded suspects, or any other situation generating mass media coverage, the situation commander, at his/her discretion may request the assistance of the Public Information Office through the Communications Bureau. If requested, a member of the Office will:
  - a. Respond to the scene and establish a media area
  - b. Disseminate information from the field commander
  - c. Coordinate actions of the media
- (5) The Public Information Office will act as a mediator in matters of disagreement between the media and the Department.
- (6) The Public Information Office will be available to all members of the Department regarding any information or rumors generated either inter-departmentally or from outside sources.

- (7) All members of the Department are encouraged to seek the assistance of the Public Information Office in any police matter relating to the media.
- (8) The Public Information Office may contact any member of the Department for information regarding a newsworthy event.
- (9) Acting under the authority of the Chief of Police, members of the Public Information Office may waive the normally required search and copy fee for reports, records, and mug shots for members of the media if it is in the best interest of the public and the Department.

**110.07 Speaking Engagements, Attending Conventions, Publications**

- (1) All officers must obtain permission from the Chief of Police before filling speaking engagements, attending any convention, or preparing any publication as an official representative of the Denver Police Department.
- (2) Officers who want to fill a speaking engagement shall submit their request in duplicate on DPD 500, Speaking Engagement Request. All information required on the form must be included.
  - a. This form will be forwarded through the Chain of Command for approval by the Chief of Police. Upon approval, one copy will be returned to the officer making the request. The second copy will be retained in the officer's station file.
- (3) Articles prepared for publication must be submitted in their entirety for approval prior to publication.
- (4) Requests to attend conventions, training sessions, etc. shall include the date, time, location of the meeting, and a brief statement regarding the benefit to the Department and a statement of the cost. A report covering subject matter shall be submitted upon return to the Department. See OMS 116.04(2).

