

Media policy

The media guide is intended to assist the media in obtaining timely and accurate news information from the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

It is the policy of this department to ensure the public's right to know by establishing a consistent and cooperative means of communicating public information through the news media.

Information released to the media will only be restricted when information comes in conflict with the constitutional rights of an accused to a fair trial, when victims and witnesses are endangered, when the information directly impedes the successful completion of an investigation or the information is legally privileged.

It is the policy of this agency to have all inquiries from representatives of the media routed to the Public Affairs and Community Engagement Division.

If you need assistance with any matter, contact Public Affairs at 714-904-7042, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If after hours, contact the Watch Commander at 714- 628-7170.



CONTACT US

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ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

MEDIA GUIDE



DON BARNES
SHERIFF-CORONER

Disclosure of Crime & Arrest Reports

The following information will be provided according to Government Code Section 6254(f) unless the information would endanger the successful completion of an investigation or a related investigation or would endanger the safety of a person involved in an incident.

Arrestee information:

- Full name (except juveniles)
- Area of residence
- Occupation
- Date of birth
- Physical description (sex, descent, height, weight, eye color, hair color)
- Date and time of arrest
- Arrest location
- Factual circumstances of the arrest
- Booking date and time
- Bail amount
- Location held
- All charges, including warrants
- Parole or probation holds
- Time and manner of release

Non-releasable Information

- Identity of suspect prior to arrest
- Results of investigative procedures prior to arrest unless it:
 - Will aid in investigation
 - Assist in the apprehension of the suspect
 - Will warn the public of danger
- Investigative proceedings of deputy-involved shootings or other personnel matters
- Prior criminal record, reputation or character of suspect
- Any personal information about a juvenile arrestee, suspect, victim or witness.
- Confession or existence of a confession
- Deputies' opinion
- Information that may constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy
- Any photo, including booking photos, unless it:
 - Will aid in arrest or investigation
 - Will warn the public of danger
- Any information known to be inadmissible in court
- References to investigative procedures such as fingerprints, polygraph tests or ballistic tests.

Disclosure of Nature of Calls for Service

- Date, time, location of occurrence
- Time and nature of response
- Information regarding crimes alleged or committed or any other incident investigated
- Date and time of report
- Victim age
- Victim's name and area of residence, except victims of certain crimes
- General description of any injuries, property or weapons involved

Conditional Release of Information

- Death Release – In cases involving death, the victim's name will not be released until the next of kin has been notified and a clearance obtained from the Coroner's Office.
- Injury Releases – In cases involving serious injury, the victim's name will not be released until the next of kin has been notified.
- Suicide Notes – Contents of suicide notes will not be released, but the existence of a suicidal note may be acknowledged.
- Multi-Jurisdictional Investigations and Assisting Other Agencies – Inquiries will be referred to the agency with primary jurisdiction.

MEDIA ACCESS AT INCIDENT SCENE

Orange County Sheriff's Department may close the area under authority of:

409.5 (a) P.C. "...a menace to the public health or safety is created by a calamity such as a flood, storm, fire, earthquake, explosion, accident or other disaster...."

However,

409.5 (d) P.C. "Nothing in this section shall prevent a duly authorized representative of any news service from entering the area closed..."

Note: O.C.S.D. shall honor all current media passes

- A safety hazard to the press does not justify restriction: however, it is O.C.S.D.'s policy to warn the media of potential danger before allowing access.
- Crime Scene and Command Post areas may be closed to the media

If access is denied, O.C.S.D. has 3 obligations:

1. Restriction can only last as long as there is clear interference.
2. Must provide "Press Area" with maximum access possible under the circumstances.
3. May provide "Pool Camera" access to a limited number of the press.

