

City of Virginia Beach Police Department

Public Affairs & Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Field Guide



A Guide for Department Personnel

- Guidelines for the release of information

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Purpose

This document is provided as a guide for responding to Public Affairs/Media inquiries which will facilitate the free flow of information between the Department, the news media and the general public, while protecting the cases of both the accused and the prosecution from prejudicial publicity.

Personnel are reminded that there is a distinct and defined difference between departmental records and information immediately released on specific incidents

Policy

The Department recognizes the right of the public and the news media to be fully and accurately informed on all matters concerning public safety. The following guidelines for the release of information are provided in an attempt to continually meet with and understand the needs of the news media. Members of this Department are directed to cooperate fully with the news media and this Field Guide is provided to ensure responses to inquiries are consistent and within legal requirements.

Role of the Public Affairs Officer

The Public Affairs Office shall coordinate the release of all general information concerning Department policies and operations as well as specific statements on controversial issues that might arise concerning the police. Additionally, this information shall be conveyed to the media in a timely manner. The Public Affairs Office will facilitate interviews with sources directly involved in the topic of interest.

Release of Information

The challenge is seeking the balance between:

- The First Amendment right to free speech, a free press and the importance of the public's right to know what their police are doing;
- The Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial, free of public pressure or a jury biased by news heard or read that a subject is guilty.

Criminal Arrest Information:

- In accordance with Virginia State Code [2.2-3706](#), the Virginia Beach Police Department recognizes its responsibility to provide information relating to the identity of any individual, **other than a juvenile**, who is arrested and charged, and the status or charge or arrest shall be released.
- As such, upon the procurement of an arrest warrant, the following information may be released: Name, sex, age, address, employment of the arrested person, arrest charge, location time and bond information. Booking photographs shall be provided upon request and as they become available.

Criminal History:

- Virginia State Code [19.2-389](#) defines to whom criminal history may be legally disseminated.

Criminal Incident Information:

- In support and accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, the following information **is required** to be released upon request:
- **General description of the criminal activity reported.** This means the nature of the offense. The specific criminal charge, which may be involved, need not be specified.
- **The date and general location the alleged crime was committed.** The specific date should be provided if known, and if the specific time is not known, then a time frame should be provided as possible. Street and hundred blocks are the most frequently used methods of identifying a location. If possible, include a community or subdivision.
- **Identity of the investigating officer.** This can include the reporting officer, investigating officer or detective.
- **A general description of any injuries suffered or property damaged or stolen.** Phrases such as “stab wound”, “gunshot wound”, “life-threatening injuries”, or “non-life threatening injuries” are proper. Property may be described specifically or in general terms.

Protected Information:

- The identities of victims, witnesses or undercover officers need not be disclosed, but may be at the discretion of the agency unless otherwise prohibited by law.
- Also exempted from mandatory disclosure is information, which reveals investigative techniques or procedures, though the Department has the option to disclose these techniques or procedures.

Information that cannot be released

- **Members will not provide the name of any arrested person under the age of 18. If information is demanded, contact the City Attorney's Office.**
- Information that may jeopardize an ongoing investigation or the safety of any individual.
- Information that may cause a suspect to flee or result in the destruction of evidence.
- Information about the existence or absence of any confession, admission of guilt or statement made by the accused.
- Members shall not comment about the character/reputation of any arrested person, nor offer any opinion about either the guilt/innocence of the accused or the merits of the case.
- Information about the presence or absence of any examinations or tests conducted in the course of an investigation.
- Members shall not release the identity, testimony or credibility of any prospective witness.
- Members will not provide the name of any victim of a sex offense.
- Members shall not provide home address or telephone number of any member of the Department.
- Members shall not release the identity of any Department member involved in a serious incident, such as a shooting, automobile accident, etc., until the appropriate Department supervisor has approved the release.

Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA)

All persons requesting the documents or records of the department should be forwarded to the Professional Standards Office. Department personnel may accept requests, but must forward the request immediately to Professional Standards Office for completion or assistance.

It is the objective of the Virginia Beach Police Department to ensure that citizens of the Commonwealth have ready access to records in the custody of the Department

It will be the policy of the Department to release as much information as possible, to the extent that such release does not constitute a violation of law, compromise the safety of privacy of any person or interfere with the efficient operation of the Department.

All records in the possession of the Department are open to the public unless the Department specifically elects to exercise an exemption provided by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, State Code [2.2-3700](#), or any other Virginia or federal statutes.

Public records in the possession of the Virginia Beach Police Department will not be denied, except with proper cause, to citizens of the Commonwealth, representatives of the print news media, with circulation in the Commonwealth and representatives of radio and television stations broadcasting in or into the Commonwealth.

The Department will strive to disclose the maximum amount of information, in accordance with the interpretation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Requests for records

All requests will be submitted to the Custodian of Records for the Virginia Beach Police Department. The Custodian of Records is a sworn member of the Department, working within the Professional Standards Office. The Commanding Officer of Professional Standards appoints the Custodian of Records.

Upon receipt of a request, the Custodian of Records will time/date stamp the request, and that time/date will be considered the official date of notification.

The Custodian of Records will consult with the Office of the City Attorney and other regulatory bodies as necessary to determine which, if any, of the records requested will be provided to the requestor.

Within five working days of the official receipt of the request, the Custodian of Records will:

- Provide the requested records.
- Advise the requestor in writing that the requested records will be entirely withheld because law prohibits the release, the requestor has not identified the requested records with any reasonable specificity or the custodian has exercised the discretion to withhold the records in accordance with the exceptions provided by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
- Advise the requestor in writing that the records will be provided in part and withheld in part because the release of part of the records is prohibited by law or the custodian has exercised his discretion to

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withhold a portion of the records in accordance with the provisions provided by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

- Advise the requestor in writing that the requested records cannot be provided within the five workday period. In these cases, the custodian will exercise the act's provision to extend the response period by a total of seven days. If the custodian still cannot provide the requested information by the extension date, the custodian will contact the requestor and determine if some mutually agreed upon date for the response can be reached. If no mutually agreed upon date can be reached, the requestor will be advised to contact the appropriate court for relief.
- Advise the requestor in writing that the records will not be provided because they do not exist. The Department is not required to create records, however, if adapting an existing document or electronic database can create a record, then modification to the existing document will be accomplished in order to allow release of the information.
- If a request for a future record or record that does not exist is received, the requestor will be advised that this request will be denied in writing.
- If a request for records, which are found not to be records of the Department, is received, the request for these records will be denied in writing.

If all or any part of the response is to withhold the requested records, the Custodian must respond to the requestor in writing with the identity, volume and subject matter of the withheld records. The Custodian will cite each category of withheld records and the specific code section, which authorized the withholding of the records. The code section cited to deny a release of information could be part of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act or any other section of the Code of Virginia or Federal Law that restricts or prohibits the release of information.

Cost Recovery Procedures for Virginia Freedom of Information Act Requests

1. It will be the policy of the Virginia Beach Police Department to recover costs associated with responses from requests filed under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as allowed by § 2.2-3704(f).
2. If the requested records under the Freedom of Information Act exist and are fully or partially disclosable, the FOIA Sergeant or his/ her designee shall consult with the appropriate staff to determine the cost involved to assemble the records for inspection and copying.
3. The following costs shall be charged at the rate indicated, not to exceed the actual cost:
 - Staff search time will be charged by the actual time spent and will be assessed based on the hourly rate of the lowest paid staff in the office that can process the request.
 - Materials, such as monochrome photocopies, color photocopies CDs, DVDs, etc. will be charged at the actual cost to the agency

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of the material and applicable service charge. The custodian of record will maintain a list of current pricing and make it available upon request. Actual incidental out-of-pocket costs necessary to assemble the records (e.g. phone, postage) will be charged.

4. If the requester has asked for an advance determination of the cost, or if the cost is expected to exceed \$200 (2.2-3704(h)), the requester shall be notified of the advance cost determination. No further action shall be taken until the requester responds, and the requester must agree to pay the estimated amount before any further processing of the request is performed. If requestor does not request an advanced determination of costs and the actual cost is expected to be less than \$200.00, it will not be necessary to notify the requestor in advance. A bill for the actual costs will be sent to the requestor along with the records requested.
5. All payments for processing FOIA requests must be made payable to the City Treasurer and returned to the Police Department's Internal Affairs Division (2509 Princess Anne Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23456) for proper credit. The FOIA sergeant or his/ her designee will mark the account in IAPro as paid, and will deliver all monies received to the City Treasurer for deposit.
6. Payment for the processing of Freedom of Information Act Requests will be due upon receipt. However, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3704(i) if payment is not received within thirty (30) calendar days, the requestor shall not be able to make additional FOIA requests until the balance in arrears is paid in full.
7. Any records to be disclosed shall be assembled for inspection and copying by Police Department employees under the direction and supervision of the FOIA Sergeant, or other designated sergeant assigned to the Internal Affairs Division who will handle the disposition of such information to the requestor.

Other Requests for Information

Office of Internal Affairs supervisors and Police Services Division employees tasked with the release of law-enforcement records may handle requests for information made by the following or similar entities and routine requests for information are not subject to the process and fee structure set forth in this field guide:

8. State mandated advisory committees or boards;
9. Local, state and federal Law Enforcement agencies, departments or representatives;

Legal Reference:

Code of Virginia

§ 2.2-3700, § 2.2-3704(f), § 2.2-3704(h), 2.2-3704 (i)

City of Virginia Beach Administrative Directive AD 8.01:

<http://beachnet/organization/administrative-directives/admindrecitives/AD801.pdf>

Police Lines

In accordance with Virginia State Code 15.1-140, the police department will establish no crime scene perimeter larger than necessary. Media shall be advised that crossing an established perimeter can result in charges of obstruction of justice. Media may not obstruct the police in the performance of their duties. The department shall not attempt to exercise control over media reporters or photographers who are behind police perimeters. Officers may not interfere with newsmen's activities as long as their actions remain within the confines of the law.

Upon the response of a Public Affairs Officer, the officer will contact the supervisor in charge of any crime scene, major fire, natural disaster or other catastrophic event, or unusual occurrence and determine the most suitable location for a "media point". Once the "media point" has been established, all releases to the media will be made from this location.

Every effort should be made to contact a Public Affairs Officer at the scene of an incident, however, if the Public Affairs Officer is unavailable, the highest-ranking supervisor assigned to the incident shall assume responsibility for the release of information.

Public Affairs Office Notifications/Responses

The Public Affairs Office shall be notified of any incident where the news media are, or may be present, as set forth in General Order 18.01, (Public Affairs). The Public Affairs Officer is encouraged, whenever possible, to respond to the scene of such incidents or to coordinate the release of information as specified in statutes and Department policy.

The Public Affairs Officers or designees shall be notified as soon as possible in each of the following instances:

- Death or serious injury of police personnel on or off duty
- Police vehicle accidents resulting in serious injury or death
- Any shooting incident involving police personnel, on or off duty
- Any riot, near riot, or public demonstration
- Any incident of a serious or unusual nature which involved a city official or employee
- Homicide
- Fatal Traffic Accidents, or any accident when the "Nightingale" is requested
- Drownings
- SWAT or hostage negotiation callouts
- Any cases wherein the media begin making other than normal inquiries
- Bank robberies
- School bus accidents
- School related incidents involving a police response
- Any unusual serious injury or death, such as industrial accident
- Military aircraft or vehicle accident
- Bomb, suspicious package or biohazard cases

Statements by Other Department Members

Other members of the Virginia Beach Police Department operating within the guidelines of the Department General Order, as well as this Field Guide, do not need permission to speak to members of the media. Members are directed to notify the Public Affairs Office of the date of the interview/statement, substance of the information they provided, name of the news organization and the name of the interviewer. This information is documented in a log in the Public Affairs Office.

Any member who accepts a speaking engagement as a representative of this Department shall notify the Public Affairs Office by email or memo at least seven days prior to the event.

Military Operations

If news media arrive at the crash scene of a military aircraft or motor vehicle before military authorities are present, Department members are to restrict media from danger areas and advise them that all information will be requested from the Military Service Public Affairs Officer (PAO). Only accurate, factual information directly concerning police activities is to be provided, and, whenever possible, that information should be coordinated with appropriate military authorities.

No force shall be used to prevent the media from photographing military crash scenes. Photographers should be reminded that photographing classified equipment is a federal criminal offense that may also be detrimental to national security. Department members shall advise the military authorities if such photographs are taken.

Multi-Agency Operations

In the event the Virginia Beach Police Department becomes involved in a mutual aid effort with other agencies, the agency having primary jurisdiction shall be responsible for releasing or coordinating the release of information.

No member of the Virginia Beach Police Department shall release information from another agency without first obtaining permission from that agency and any such release shall be conducted by the Public Affairs Office.

Public Affairs Response: Death or serious injury of police personnel on or off duty

Public Affairs Response Outline

Death or serious injury of police personnel on or off duty

At the scene of a death or serious injury of police personnel, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene may release information to news media at the scene, **after the Chief of Police, or his designee, authorizes the release.**

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators.

The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description of the injuries suffered.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If a suspect is involved in the incident, follow guidelines for release of charges as provided in the paragraph titled "Release of Information".
- Generally, names of the injured or deceased **will not** be released at the scene, as next of kin notifications must be accomplished.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident, if authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee. Names of the injured or deceased officer will only be released after notification of next of kin has been accomplished and Chief of Police, or his designee, has authorized the release.

ALL PERSONNEL ARE REMINDED THAT JUVENILE INFORMATION IS PROTECTED IN MOST CASES AND FOIA, REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS, IS HANDLED PRIMARILY BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Public Affairs Response: Police vehicle crashes resulting in serious injury or death

Public Affairs Response Outline

Police vehicle crashes resulting in serious injury or death

At the scene of a police vehicle crash resulting in serious injury or death to someone other than the officer, the Public Affairs Officer, Fatal Crash Team Supervisor, or Supervisor at the scene may release information to the news media at the scene, after the Chief of Police, or his designee, authorizes the release.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators.

The following information may be released:

- General description of the crash.
- Date, time and general location of the crash.
- General description of any injuries suffered and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- Generally, the names of injured or deceased **will not** be released at the scene, as next of kin notifications must be accomplished. Age and sex of injured/deceased may be released prior to release of names.

Subsequent media releases can, if authorized, include more detailed information about the incident, causal factors and if next of kin notifications have been accomplished, names of injured and/or deceased may be released.

Any criminal charges as a result of the crash can also be released; however, the appropriate authority with this information must be consulted prior to release.

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Public Affairs Response: Shooting incident involving police personnel, on or off duty

Public Affairs Response Outline

Shooting incident involving police personnel, on or off duty

At the scene of a police involved shooting, whether on or off duty, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene may release information to the news media at the scene, after the Chief of Police, or his designee, authorizes the release.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators.

The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description of the injuries suffered.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If a suspect is involved in the incident, follow guidelines for release of charge/arrest information as provided in the paragraph titled "Release of Information".
- Generally, names of injured or deceased **will not** be released at the scene, as next of kin notification must be accomplished.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident, if authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee. Names of the injured or deceased will be released after notification of next of kin has been accomplished and Chief of Police or his designee has authorized the release.

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Public Affairs Response: Riot, near riot or public demonstration

Public Affairs Response Outline

Riot, near riot or public demonstration

At the scene of a riot, near riot or public demonstration, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene may release information to news media at the scene.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators.

The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description if any injuries were suffered.
- Identity of the investigating officer(s).
- If a suspect is involved in the incident, follow guidelines for release of charge/arrest information as provided in the paragraph titled "Release of Information".

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident.

Public Affairs Response: Bomb, suspicious package or biohazard incidents

Public Affairs Response Outline

Bomb, suspicious package or biohazard incidents

At the scene of a bomb, suspicious package or biohazard incident, the Public Affairs Officer, with approval of the on-scene commander, may release information to the news media at the scene. Information can be coordinated with Fire or EMS Public Affairs Officer, as they will likely respond to the incident as well. The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description of any injuries suffered and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- Generally, names of the injured or deceased will not be released at the scene, as next of kin notifications must be accomplished. Age and sex of the injured/deceased may be released prior to release of names.

Tactical procedures shall not be released during the incident; however, at the conclusion of the incident, tactical procedures may be released if approved by the on-scene commander or EOD Unit Supervisor.

Subsequent media releases can, if authorized, include more detailed information about the incident and if next of kin notifications have been accomplished, names of injured and/or deceased may be released.

Any criminal charges as a result of this incident can also be released; however, the appropriate investigating officer must be consulted prior to release.

Public Affairs Response: Homicide, shooting or other serious assault

Public Affairs Response Outline

Homicide, shooting or other serious assault

At the scene of a homicide, shooting or other serious assault, the Public Affairs Officer or the Supervisor at the scene may release information to the news media at the scene, after the Detective Supervisor authorizes the release. The following may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description of the injuries suffered.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If a suspect is involved in the incident, follow guidelines for release of charge/arrest information as provided in the paragraph titled “Release of Information”.
- Generally, names of injured or deceased **will not** be released at the scene, as next of kin notification must be accomplished.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident, if authorized by the Detective Supervisor. Names of the injured or deceased will be released after notification of next of kin has been accomplished and authorized by the Detective Supervisor.

ALL PERSONNEL ARE REMINDED THAT JUVENILE INFORMATION IS PROTECTED IN MOST CASES AND FOIA, REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS, IS HANDLED PRIMARILY BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Public Affairs Response: fatal/Serious injury traffic crashes

Public Affairs Response Outline

Fatal/Serious injury traffic crashes

At the scene of a fatal or serious traffic crash, the Public Affairs Officer, Fatal Crash Team Supervisor or Supervisor at the scene can release the following information to news media representatives at the scene.

- General description of the crash.
- Date and general location of the crash. General description of any injuries suffered and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If possible, any causal factors, speed and alcohol are the most common. These should be verified and authorized by the Fatal Crash Team Supervisor prior to release.
- Generally, names of injured or deceased will not be released at the scene, as next of kin notifications have not been accomplished.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the crash, causal factors and if family notifications have been accomplished, names of injured and/or deceased may be released. Any charges as a result of the accident can also be released, however, the Fatal Crash Team Supervisor or Investigating Officer must verify charges prior to release.

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Public Affairs Response: Drowning or other water related accident/incident

Public Affairs Response Outline

Drowning or other water related accident/incident

At the scene of a drowning or other water related accident resulting in death or serious injury, the Public Affairs Officer, Supervisor at the scene, or Marine Patrol Supervisor, if a boating accident is involved, may release information to the news media at the scene. The following information may be released:

- General description of the accident/incident.
- Date, time and location of the accident/incident.
- General description of any injuries suffered and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- Generally, the names of the injured or deceased **will not** be released at the scene, as next of kin notifications must be accomplished. Age and sex of the injured/deceased may be released prior to release of names.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident, causal factors and o\if next of kin notifications have been accomplished, and names of the injured and/or deceased may be released.

Any criminal charges as a result of the accident/incident can also be released; however, the appropriate investigating officer with this information must be consulted prior to release.

ALL PERSONNEL ARE REMINDED THAT JUVENILE INFORMATION IS PROTECTED IN MOST CASES AND FOIA, REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS, IS HANDLED PRIMARILY BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Public Affairs Response: SWAT and/or Hostage Negotiation Callout Incidents

Public Affairs Response Outline

SWAT and/or Hostage Negotiation Callout Incidents

At the scene of a SWAT or Hostage Negotiation incident, the Public Affairs Officer, with approval of the on-scene commander, may release information to the news media at the scene. The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and location of the incident.
- General description of any injuries suffered and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- Generally, names of injured or deceased will not be released at the scene, as next of kin notifications must be accomplished. Age and sex of injured/deceased may be released prior to release of names.

Tactical information **shall not** be released during the incident; however, at the conclusion of the incident, tactical information may be released if approved by the on-scene commander, or tactical unit commander.

Subsequent media releases can, if authorized, include more detailed information about the incident and if next of kin notifications have been accomplished, names of injured and/or deceased may be released.

Any criminal charges as a result of the incident can also be released; however, the appropriate investigating officer must be consulted prior to release.

Public Affairs Response: Bank robberies

Public Affairs Response Outline

Bank robberies

At the scene of a bank robbery, the Public Affairs Officer, or the Supervisor at the scene may release information to the news media at the scene, after the Detective Supervisor authorizes the release. The following may be released:

- General description of the robbery.
- Date, time and general location of the robbery.
- General description of the injuries suffered, property damaged and items taken.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If a suspect is involved in the robbery, follow guidelines for release of charge/arrest information as provided in the paragraph titled “Release of Information”.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident, if authorized by the Detective Supervisor. Names of the injured may be released if appropriate.

ALL PERSONNEL ARE REMINDED THAT JUVENILE INFORMATION IS PROTECTED IN MOST CASES AND FOIA, REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS, IS HANDLED PRIMARILY BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Public Affairs Response: School bus crashes

Public Affairs Response Outline

School bus crashes

At the scene of a school bus crash, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene may release information to the news media at the scene. Coordination with school authorities, Department of Media and Communications Development at 263-1075, whether the bus involved in a public school bus, or private school bus, should be attempted, however, if this is not accomplished, media releases should not be delayed. If the accident involves serious injuries or a fatality, refer to the Fatal/Serious injury traffic crashes portion of this document for release procedures. The following information may be released:

- General description of the crash.
- Date, time and general location of the crash.
- General description of minor injuries and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If possible, any causal factors. Causal factors should be verified by the investigating officer prior to release.
- Generally, names of the injured will not be released at the scene; however, ages may be released.
- Name of the school may be released.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the crash, causal factors and traffic charges; however, the investigating officer should be consulted prior to release.

Public Affairs Response: School related incident involving a police response

Public Affairs Response Outline

School related incident involving a police response

At the scene of a school related incident involving a police response, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene, may release information to the news media at the scene. Coordination with school authorities should be attempted, Department of Media and Communications Development at 263-1075, however, if this is not accomplished, media releases should not be delayed.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators.

Special attention must be paid in order that names of juveniles involved are not released. If the police response involved a situation listed previously in this document, such as SWAT, or serious assault, then the procedures listed in those specific tabs should be followed. Otherwise, the following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and location, to include the name of the school involved, of the incident.
- General description of minor injuries and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If a suspect is involved in the incident, follow guidelines for release of charge/arrest information as provided in the paragraph titled "Release on Information".
- Generally, the names of the injured will not be released at the scene, as most likely, the injured will be juvenile students. Names of adults injured may be released.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident. The investigating officer should be contacted if any criminal charges are authorized for release.

Public Affairs Response: Unusual serious injury or death

Public Affairs Response Outline

Unusual serious injury or death

At the scene of any unusual serious injury or death, such as an industrial accident, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene, may release information to the news media at the scene. Coordination with the appropriate authority on site should be accomplished prior to any news release; however, the information should not be delayed if this is not accomplished. The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description of any injuries/deaths and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If possible, any causal factors. Causal factors should be verified by the investigating officer prior to release.
- Generally, names of the injured or deceased will not be released at the scene, as next of kin notification must be accomplished. Ages and sex of those involved may be released in lieu of names.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident, if authorized by the investigating officer. Names of the injured or deceased may be released after notification of next of kin has been accomplished and verified by the investigating officer.

Public Affairs Response: Military aircraft/vehicle crash

Public Affairs Response Outline

Military aircraft/vehicle crash

At the scene of an incident involving a military aircraft or vehicle crash, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene may release limited information, regarding police activities. All other information should be coordinated with the appropriate military authorities Public Affairs Officer.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators. MCG can be reached after hours by contacting the Communications Supervisor.

Commander Naval Region Mid-Atlantic (Norfolk) - 322-2853

U.S. Army Base at Fort Story - 422-7101
After hours - 878-5050/3326

U.S. Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek - 462-8425
After hours - 462-7385

U.S. Naval Air Station Ocean and
Dam Neck Naval Base - 433-3131/3132
After hours - 433-2366

Public Affairs Response: Incident of a serious or unusual nature involving a city official or employee

Public Affairs Response Outline

Incident of a serious or unusual nature involving a city official or employee

At the scene of a serious or unusual incident involving a city official or employee, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene may release information to the news media at the scene, after the Chief of Police or his designee, authorizes the release.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators. MCG can be reached after hours by contacting the Communications Supervisor.

The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description of any injuries suffered.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If a suspect is involved in the incident, follow guidelines for release of charge/arrest information as provided in the paragraph titled "Release of Information".

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident.

Public Affairs Response: Vehicle crashes involving any City vehicle resulting in serious injury or death

Public Affairs Response Outline

Vehicle crashes involving any City vehicle resulting in serious injury or death

At the scene of a fatal or serious traffic accident involving a City of Virginia Beach vehicle, the Public Affairs Officer, Fatal Crash Supervisor or Supervisor at the scene can release the following information to news media representatives at the scene.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators. MCG can be reached after hours by contacting the Communications Supervisor.

- General description of the crash.
- Date and general location of the crash.
- General description of any injuries suffered and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If possible, any causal factors, speed and alcohol are the most common. These should be verified and authorized by the Fatal Crash Team Supervisor prior to release.
- Generally, names of injured or deceased will not be released at the scene, as next of kin notifications have not been accomplished.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the crash, causal factors and if family notifications have been accomplished, names of injured and/or deceased may be released. Any charges as a result of the accident can also be released, however, the Fatal Crash Team Supervisor or Investigating Officer must verify charges prior to release.

ALL PERSONNEL ARE REMINDED THAT JUVENILE INFORMATION IS PROTECTED IN MOST CASES AND FOIA, REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS, IS HANDLED PRIMARILY BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Public Affairs Response: Serious or unusual incident at City Facility

Public Affairs Response Outline

Serious or unusual incident at City Facility

At the scene of a serious or unusual incident at a City Facility, such as an industrial accident, the Public Affairs Officer or Supervisor at the scene, may release information to the news media at the scene. Coordination with the appropriate authority on site should be accomplished prior to any news release; however, the information should not be delayed if this is not accomplished.

When possible, notification of the incident should be made to the City's Media and Communications Group (MCG). MCG will not release police information to the media. MCG will coordinate release of appropriate internal information to the City Manager and the Management Leadership Team, the City Council, or other impacted department directors and administrators. MCG can be reached after hours by contacting the Communications Supervisor.

The following information may be released:

- General description of the incident.
- Date, time and general location of the incident.
- General description of any injuries/deaths and/or property damaged.
- Identity of the investigating officer.
- If possible, any causal factors. Causal factors should be verified by the investigating officer prior to release.
- Generally, names of the injured or deceased will not be released at the scene, as next of kin notification must be accomplished. Ages and sex of those involved may be released in lieu of names.

Subsequent media releases can include more detailed information about the incident, if authorized by the investigating officer. Names of the injured or deceased may be released after notification of next of kin has been accomplished and verified by the investigating officer.

ALL PERSONNEL ARE REMINDED THAT JUVENILE INFORMATION IS PROTECTED IN MOST CASES AND FOIA, REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS, IS HANDLED PRIMARILY BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS