



## VALLEJO POLICE DEPARTMENT MEDIA RELATIONS

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The Vallejo Police Department seeks to cooperate with authorized news media representatives and to furnish appropriate information regarding incidents or events about which they inquire. In the interest of public safety, such cooperation is, of necessity, subordinate to the discharge of law enforcement responsibilities.

To assist you in understanding our policies regarding the release of information to the media, the Department provides the following guidelines:

1. **The Department releases information only to authorized media representatives**, defined as an employee of a news service, newspaper, or radio or television station or network, who are in possession of press credentials. In accordance with Government Code §6000, general distribution media outlets (newspapers, news groups) are defined as having paid subscribers. Persons other than authorized media representatives may submit a written Public Records Information request for information.
2. **The Department has designated a Public Information Officer (PIO) and the on-duty Watch Commanders as contacts for media personnel.** The Public Information Officer is primarily responsible for information concerning critical incidents and incidents of widespread public interest. The Watch Commander is primarily responsible for routine information on a day-to-day basis. With the exception of the Public Information Officer and the Watch Commanders, Department personnel are under no obligation to speak to media representatives, and, with the exception of the Public Information Officer, Department personnel are prohibited from making "off the record" or "not for attribution" remarks.
3. **The Department makes information available** through press releases, press conferences, designated field command post locations, the Department website, a press board maintained at the Information Desk and individual interviews.
4. **Department personnel will not release information which is not apparently factual, or which may compromise the safety of any person, the accomplishment of a critical police task or the integrity of an investigation.** Where it appears that the release of information will impair the progress of an investigation, Department personnel will inform the media and, if possible, provide an estimated time when such information may be released. Department personnel will not comment on information gathered from anonymous or other than official sources.

5. **Department personnel will not permit media interviews of suspects in Department custody prior to booking.**
6. **Department personnel will respond to media inquiries as their other duties permit. Off-duty personnel will not respond to routine media inquiries.**
7. **In accordance with the provisions of California Penal Code §409.5(d), authorized representatives of the news media may not be prevented from entering the scene of a disaster.** However, media representatives do not have the right to enter or remain at a crime scene where their presence may interfere with a criminal investigation.
8. **The following information will not normally be released, except by the Watch Commander or a designee, or by the Public Information Officer, or by the primary assigned investigator:**
  - a. Names, addresses or other identification of suspects, victims or witnesses.
  - b. Identifying materials that the suspect may have left at a scene.
  - c. Amounts of cash taken, left or overlooked by a suspect.
  - d. The specific content of statements by suspects, victims, witnesses or other involved persons.
  - e. Any information which could serve to forewarn a suspect or to facilitate an alibi.
9. **The following information will not be released, except by the Public Information Officer, or a designee:**
  - a. Comments or records regarding the character, reputation or prior criminal record of a suspect, victim, witness or any other identified person involved in an incident.
  - b. The perceived credibility of a suspect, victim, witness or any other person involved in an incident.
  - c. Admissions, confessions or alibis attributed to a suspect.
  - d. The results of any test taken by a person involved in an investigation, or the person's refusal to participate in an examination.
  - e. Any opinion regarding the quality of evidence discovered in an investigation.
  - f. Any comments regarding the presence or use of security devices or procedures.
  - g. The existence, or content, of suicide notes.
  - h. Information pertaining to the identity of juvenile victims, suspects or witnesses.
  - i. Information pertaining to victims of sexual assault who have requested that their information be withheld.