



Saint Paul Police Department

Pride - Professionalism - Partnerships

Office of Public Information

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Media Communications Plan

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Purpose: This communications plan will serve as the basis for the Saint Paul Police Department's Office of Public Information to work with its media partners and community members in order to help the public get accurate and timely information. A consistent and efficient plan will help media partners and SPPD Public Information personnel work more seamlessly while establishing a more clear understanding of expectations of each others' roles in various situations.

These practices are to be reviewed annually, as the tools for disseminating information are ever-evolving. At the time of review, media partners should be consulted as to what, if any, improvements can be made to the process.

At crime scenes: Whether the scenes are active crime scenes in which police investigators are on-site working to resolve an active situation or an investigatory scene in which investigators are gathering evidence of a crime that has taken place hours ago, guidelines for working with media partners will be similar.

- A brief, two-sentence summary of an incident will be sent through the SPPD Twitter account, **@sppdPIO**. A hashtag will be established with initial tweets to make it easier for media organizations to follow specific incident updates.
- Media organizations will be notified of media staging areas using the police department's Twitter account.
- Public Information personnel will commit to meeting reporters at the designated staging areas at designated times. In situations where there are ongoing, active scenes, Public Information personnel will take time to work with media representatives to coordinate intervals of scheduled updates. Variables to take into consideration should include:
 - Officer activity at the scene
 - Media representatives' deadlines

- In situations where there are ongoing, active scenes and between briefings, as reporters develop follow-up questions, they may e-mail or text inquiries to the designated Public Information representative. Answers to these may not be immediate.
 - To honor the competitive nature of the news business, these inquiries will not be addressed at the staging area unless two or more organizations have made the same inquiry. Rather, they will be answered by text, e-mail or phone call originated from the designated SPPD representative as availability allows.

- SPPD Office of Public Information personnel understand and appreciate the constraints staffing levels put on media availability and will try to accommodate other interview requests. However, there are no promises that SPPD personnel will be made available further once they have already been made available through regular media briefings. In instances where media are unavailable to make the designated briefing and SPPD personnel are unavailable further, media organizations will have to rely on other SPPD information vehicles to gain information, such as social media sites or possible media releases and advisories.

- Public Information personnel may send relevant updates through SPPD social media sites, including Twitter and department Facebook accounts:
 - Saint Paul Police Department
 - If incident is in a particular district:
 - Saint Paul Police Department – Eastern District
 - Saint Paul Police Department – Central District
 - Saint Paul Police Department – Western District

- After a scene is cleared and the last media briefing has been delivered, Public Information personnel may send a media release. In the event that a release is disseminated, instructions on how to gain access to follow up information will be detailed on the document.

Daily checks with Public Information personnel: Reporters will often go through the daily stack of public informational police incident reports at the SPPD records unit (367 Grove St., third floor). Those checks often produce follow-up inquiries from news organizations. SPPD Public Information personnel request that these inquiries take place before 10:30 a.m.

- Reports are typically available from the records unit on weekdays between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Exceptions to this are holidays, when the records unit is closed.

- The cost to print a report is \$0.25 per page. The records unit does not accept bills larger than \$10.00.

- Inquiries based off of these reports can typically be handled in person by Public Information Coordinator Howie Padilla or Public Information Officer Sgt. Paul Paulos.
 - Once reporters are done reviewing the reports, if it is before 10:30 a.m., they are asked to call the cell phone for the Office of Public Information, 651-755-7195. Either Padilla or Sgt. Paulos will then make arrangements to meet the reporter on the third floor to go over inquiries.
 - Inquiries based off of these reports can also be made by e-mailing both Padilla and Sgt. Paulos:
 - howie.padilla@ci.stpaul.mn.us
 - paul.paulos@ci.stpaul.mn.us
 - Inquiries that come after 10:30 a.m. will be answered as availability allows. If a significant incident is taking place, that incident will take priority over these inquiries.

Inquiries after hours, on weekends and on holidays: During certain hours, the SPPD Watch Commander (651-266-5627) can be the first point of contact to do a regular and initial check on incidents. If during an inquiry, the Watch Commander indicates that for a specific incident, the point of contact is now Office of Public Information personnel, inquiries regarding that incident are to go to the Public Information personnel's cell phone (651-755-7195). The Watch Commander should be first point of contact during the following hours:

- Weeknights, 7 p.m. to 3 a.m.
- Saturdays and holidays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 3 a.m.
- Sundays, 7 p.m. to 3 a.m.
 - Sundays before a holiday, a watch commander should also be available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- When a watch commander is not on duty, the Public Information personnel cell phone is the best point of contact.