

Media Relations

Effective media relations help build positive community relations, which translate into community support for the agency. A written media relations policy is critical to ensuring that all agency personnel understand the importance of media relations and their role in contributing to the agency's relationship with the media.

- **Regular meetings** between law enforcement personnel and members of the media are important to foster positive working relationships.
- Prior to developing media relations policies and procedures, agencies should identify **relevant stakeholders** and their needs to determine what information should be released, which communication models should be used to release the information, and any specific procedures that should be implemented.
- At least one person, such as a **public information officer**, should be responsible for working with the media, to include answering media inquiries; overseeing the dissemination of information; and advising other agency employees on issues pertaining to public information or interaction with the media.
- Since there is the potential for **all agency personnel** to encounter the media and/or work with the agency's information dissemination function, all employees should receive guidance on interacting with the media in a professional, ethical manner.
- Agencies should consider designating personnel responsible for maintaining and monitoring the agency's **social media pages**.
- Guidelines should be established regarding what information may be released to the community, taking into account **legal restrictions or obligations**. For example, the release of public records and other information to the public is regulated in the United States by local, state, and federal laws.
- Agencies should have standard operating procedures for **news releases** that specify how news releases will be written and disseminated.
- During **multi-agency investigations**, agencies should work together to designate a lead agency to ensure that a consistent message is released to the community and media.
- Agencies should develop procedures for working with the media at **incident scenes** to ensure the appropriate dissemination of information.