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.