



CS41

**MEDIA RELATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA**

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**Contents**

POLICY ..... 1

REASON FOR POLICY ..... 2

RELATED POLICIES ..... 2

DEFINITIONS ..... 2

PROCEDURES ..... 3

    Media Access ..... 3

    Media Liaison Officers ..... 3

    Communications by Other Employees ..... 4

    On Scene Members ..... 5

    Independent Investigations Office ..... 5

    Social Media ..... 5

    Publication of Non-Personal Information ..... 7

**POLICY**

1. The media is recognized as an essential pillar of democracy and, in fulfilling that role, also aids the Delta Police Department (Department) in its communications with the public.
2. The Chief Constable authorizes and directs Department employees' communications with representatives of print, broadcast or on-line media, with the aim of bringing to the attention of the public:
  - a) Department initiatives that the Chief Constable or delegate has determined merit promotion;
  - b) information about operational policing activities, where public awareness would aid in achieving desired outcomes of the operation, or protecting the general public, groups or specific persons, or Department employees or volunteers, from harm;
  - c) information related to investigations, in order to assist in the furtherance of the investigations or to protect specific persons, groups, or the public generally, from harm; and



- d) information that demonstrates Department transparency and accountability to the community, where operationally feasible.
3. It is expected that caution be exercised to not stigmatize diverse population groups when providing information to the media about individuals or groups of people with whom the Department has interacted operationally or as a result of an investigation.
4. Communication with the media shall seek to provide factual information and avoid speculation.
5. Disclosure of information that identifies or purports to identify an individual is governed by and must accord with law.
6. The Chief Constable shall provide direction to employees through Procedures, pursuant to this Policy, regarding the necessary organizational structure and processes for communications with the media.

### REASON FOR POLICY

7. To seek to communicate with the public through the media as effectively as possible.

### RELATED POLICIES

CS23 – Police Officer Accompaniment (Ride-Alongs)  
EA30 – Reportable Incidents of Injuries or Death (B.C. Police Act)  
EC11 – Conflict of Interest  
EC50 – Security & Confidentiality  
EC40 – Use of Personal Social Media  
IR70 – Protests & Civil Disobedience

### DEFINITIONS

8. For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions will apply:  
  
**Media:** means of communication, via television, radio, news, social media, and the internet, that reach or influence people widely in a public manner.  
  
**Media Liaison Officer:** designated employees responsible for media communications, including Public Information Officers or other delegated members.



**Social Media:** digital communication platforms that integrate user-generated content and user participation, including blogs, social media apps, networking sites, and content sharing sites (examples include Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, TikTok).

## PROCEDURES

### Media Access

9. Members are not to prevent media representatives from observing and recording events or interacting with persons, unless their actions interfere with police duties.
10. Under no circumstance may a member allow media representatives to access a crime or incident scene when:
  - a) dangerous or hazardous conditions exist;
  - b) the presence of the media might interfere with or obstruct emergency service personnel;
  - c) media presence could disturb evidence or a crime scene;
  - d) media presence might pose a danger to victims or others; or
  - e) media access would constitute trespassing, a violation of privacy, a violation of the law, or would harm a law enforcement matter.
11. Where media access must be restricted, and if practicable, members are to advise the media why they are not allowed to access a location.
12. Media on ride-alongs must be advised they are not allowed to record any person detained or arrested and may not be present during the execution of a search warrant.
13. Media ride-along requests may only be coordinated by a Media Liaison Officer and require approval of the Chief Constable or delegate.

### Media Liaison Officers

14. A Media Liaison Officer is available at all times, with an on-call Public Information Officer when an on-duty member is not available.
15. Media Liaison Officers are responsible for:



- a) approving media requests for direct interviews with Department employees;
  - b) providing advice and resources to employees being interviewed by the media;
  - c) forming and maintaining a close working relationship and liaising with the media;
  - d) screening and releasing Department information to the media, including on the Department's website;
  - e) releasing information related to major crime incidents, fatal or serious motor vehicle collisions or any other information considered newsworthy and appropriate for disclosure;
  - f) scheduling and conducting news conferences, including making necessary arrangements for facilities, preparation of materials for the media and scheduling necessary supporting employees;
  - g) assisting in the development of training materials for employees to support their understanding of the Department's media policy and the benefits of cooperating with the media; and
  - h) conducting periodic reviews of Department policy to ensure it remains current and making recommendations for revision.
16. A Media Liaison Officer will represent the Department when engaging with the media, particularly regarding serious cases or significant events.
17. In multijurisdictional incidents, a Media Liaison Officer will consult with the lead investigative agency before releasing any information.

### **Communications by Other Employees**

18. In the case of a major incident or serious investigations, the Duty Officer may lead and coordinate media communication in consultation with the Deputy Chief Constable i/c Community Policing Bureau, or the Chief Constable, where appropriate.
19. The Public Affairs Manager or other designated media and communications staff may post to social media, when authorized by the Chief Constable or a Media Liaison Officer.



**On Scene Members**

- 20. All media requests for information at the scene of an incident or investigation are to be directed to a Media Liaison Officer or the Duty Officer, and other members at the scene shall not supply the media with information concerning incidents or investigations.
- 21. Members may confirm visually evident facts to a member of the public or media representatives inquiring about the incident.

**Independent Investigations Office**

- 22. In the event of death or serious harm as a result of the actions of a member, only the Independent Investigations Office (IIO) investigator is authorized to make releases to the media regarding IIO investigations, except:
  - a) a Media Liaison Officer, or authorized member, may advise the media that an incident has occurred and that the IIO has been notified of the incident; and
  - b) a Media Liaison Officer, or authorized member, may issue an initial media release in consultation with the IIO.

**Social Media**

- 23. Only social media sites or accounts approved by the Chief Constable may be used for Departmental communications and are to be monitored and maintained by the Media Liaison Officers.
- 24. Department sanctioned social media pages shall, where practicable:
  - a) include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the Department's presence;
  - b) link to the Department's official website; and
  - c) indicate they are maintained by the Department and shall have Department contact information prominently displayed.
- 25. Social media pages, where practicable, should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the pages do not reflect the opinions of the Department, and shall clearly indicate that:
  - a) posted comments will be monitored;



- b) the Department reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments and personal attacks; and
  - c) any content posted is subject to disclosure.
26. Employees representing the Department via social media platforms shall, through those platforms:
- a) conduct themselves at all times professionally and as a representative of the Department;
  - b) identify themselves as an employee of the Department;
  - c) not post, transmit or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos related to Department training, activities or work-related assignments without authorization from the Chief Constable or delegate;
  - d) not engage in or contribute to political debate, unless authorized by the Chief Constable or delegate, including but not limited to liking, sharing or following posts or pages;
  - e) not conduct private business; and
  - f) observe and abide by all copyright and trademark restrictions in posting material to electronic media.
27. Employees may use Department equipment to access social media that is Department sanctioned or to inform themselves of Department matters.
28. Employees whose personal social media is linked to Department sanctioned social media must exercise caution when posting personal content, and ensure that they do not associate the content with their position in the Department, and must act in accordance with Policy EC11 – *Conflict of Interest*.
29. Employees may use Department sanctioned social media to assist with ongoing investigations, but must do so in accordance with law.
30. Covert accounts may be created for investigations with the approval of the Chief Constable or delegate and in accordance with law.



### Publication of Non-Personal Information

31. Where a request for information, made pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, involves non-personal information that may be of interest to the public or would be important for the public to know, the requested information may be published on the Department's website, or otherwise released or publicized, at the same time as it is released to the requester.

\*Revised Dates:  
1 May 2008  
11 October 2012  
16 June 2015  
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