

OGDEN CITY POLICE

Office of the Chief

Policy No: 17

Subject Press Release	Effective Date February 2018
Department Police	Replaces Policy Dated October 2014
Division All Police Personnel	Review Date February 2022
Authorized Signature 	

NOTE: This rule or regulation is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this agency, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assure that the public and the news media have accurate and factual information pertaining to Ogden Police Department reports without jeopardizing an ongoing investigation or violating anyone's right to privacy.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Ogden City Police Department that all employees shall follow the guidelines set forth in the procedure sections of the document. The policy does not supersede nor replace any existing policy with regards to the Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA) nor any law or ordinance. Press releases will be given only by the Chief of Police, division commander, duty lieutenant or an officer appointed by one of the previously mentioned supervisors.

III. PROCEDURE

Police case reports contain information that if used improperly by the news media could result in a violation of law, hamper an ongoing investigation, create

problems for prosecuting the case in court or cause unwarranted embarrassment to innocent parties.

A. Closed and Pending Cases

The department may release to the media certain information concerning cases that are currently under investigation or where a person has been arrested and in the court system. Press releases should be issued by either the Duty Lieutenant or the Lieutenant in charge of the investigation. Releases should be limited to the following:

1. General nature of the offense.
2. That the investigation is in progress and the general scope of the investigation.
3. The arrest and the general steps in the criminal proceedings.
4. A warning of danger concerning the behavior of a person involved when there is reason to believe that he may be a danger to the community.
5. The identity, age, address, and occupation of the arrested person.
6. If the suspect has not been arrested, information that may aid in his capture.
7. The facts, time and place of arrest and the identity of the arresting officers.
8. If the criminal history of a suspect relates to a current inquiry or investigation. The essential criminal involvement may be released.

The following information should not be released:

1. The names and addresses of the victim or witnesses.
2. Comments on the character, credibility, or reputation of a suspect, victim, or witness.
3. Contents of a confession or statement by the victim, witness, or suspect.
4. A criminal history or record of a suspect, victim, or witness.

5. The result of any test given or the refusal to submit to a test.
6. The specific details of an on-going case that would jeopardize an effective investigation.
7. Personal opinion.

Traffic Accident Release of Information:
Per Utah State Code 41-6a-404

(c) In accordance with Subsection (3)(a), the department or the responsible law enforcement agency employing the investigating peace officer shall disclose whether any person or vehicle involved in an accident reported under this section was covered by a vehicle insurance policy, and the name of the insurer.

(d) Information provided to a member of the press or broadcast news media under Subsection (3)(a)(iv) may only include:

- (i) the name, age, sex, and city of residence of each person involved in the accident.
- (ii) the make and model year of each vehicle involved in the accident;
- (iii) whether or not each person involved in the accident was covered by a vehicle insurance policy;
- (iv) the location of the accident; and
- (v) a description of the accident that excludes personal identifying information not listed in Subsection (3)(d)(i).

(e) The department shall disclose to any requesting person the following vehicle accident history information, excluding personal identifying information, in bulk electronic form:

- (i) any vehicle identifying information that is electronically available, including the make, model, year, and vehicle identification number of each vehicle involved in an accident;
- (ii) the date of the accident; and
- (ii) any electronically available data which describes the accident, including a description of any physical damage to the vehicle.

Officer Involved Shooting or Use of Force Release of Information:

When an officer is involved in a use of Force or Officer Involved Shooting the name of the officer SHALL not be released. The Chief of Police will have the discretion to review each case and coordinate a response. Prior to the release of the officer's name, the officer will be notified. The age, gender, and years of service of the officer may be released.

Social Media:

If a press release is disseminated to media outlets, the press release should be uploaded to the OPD-approved social media sites and saved on the x-drive under the press releases. Social media sites should be utilized to enhance and expedite critical sharing of information.

Approved Logo:

The department-approved press release form and social media sites should be consistent in logo presentation. The Ogden City Police coin is the approved logo. The Chief of Police may change the logo at any time.

