

RELEASE OF INFORMATION, FAMILY CONTACTS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS	Document Number	GO 707
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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines governing the release of information resulting from a violent crime or a major incident.

2. PERSONS AFFECTED

All department personnel.

3. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Hawai'i Police Department that notifications to the public, press, and families following a violent crime or major incident be handled in a professional, timely, and sensitive manner.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. Supervisor

4.1.1. When a person is reported missing and information is received of serious injury or possible death of such person, the immediate family of the victim shall be notified of such information as soon as possible. The responsibility for causing such notification shall be borne by the supervisor of the investigating officer.

4.1.2. Upon the determination of death and the probable identification of the victim, it shall be the responsibility of the supervisor of the investigating officer to notify the immediate family regarding the new circumstances.

4.1.3. The supervisor of the investigating officer should consider the use of a Police Chaplain to assist in either case of notification.

4.1.4. In each case of the notification, the supervisor shall also notify his commanding officer that notification was in fact made, and of any requests from the immediate family which need to be given consideration. The supervisor shall also cause timely notification to the immediate family of significant new information which becomes known which will affect the emotions of the family, such as arrest of a suspect, release from custody of the suspect, and other information which does not compromise the investigation. If

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the new information is sensitive to the immediate family, but will be known to the media, it is important that the immediate family be made aware of the issue prior to learning of it from the media.

4.2. Member

4.2.1. Members shall be responsible for the initial investigation and the gathering of pertinent information for timely notification to the supervisor.

4.2.2. Members shall, whenever possible, defer public comment to the supervisor.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1. In all incidents involving homicides, including vehicular traffic deaths, timely media releases shall be issued by the supervisor of the investigating officer. The scope and content of the media release shall be as directed by General Order 701.

5.2. Subsequent significant developments in the case shall require an updated media release. The supervisor of the investigating officer shall assure that notification of the immediate family of victims is made prior to the issuance of such media release.

5.3. All members shall be careful of comments made to the public and the media so as not to divulge incorrect or confidential information. Adherence to the information contained on media releases is a good measure on what may be released.