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| Release of Information to the Media and the Public | Related Policies: | |
| *This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee’s civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.* | | |
| Applicable KY Statutes: KRS Ch. 61.870 to 61.884 | | |
| OSHA: | | |
| NFPA Standard: | | |
| Date Implemented: | | Review Date: |

1. **Policy:** It is the policy of the fire department to provide accurate, factual, and credible information to the public
2. **Purpose:** To establish a procedure for the fire department’s flow of information between the department, the news media and the general public.
3. **Procedure:**
4. Members shall treat the official business of the Department as confidential, including matters which are under investigation, personnel issues, and information subject to medical confidentiality laws. Members shall not release information which the public does not by law have access to, except when required by law, or with the approval of the Fire Chief. This does not prohibit explaining Department routine to visitors. Members will make every effort to protect patient privacy in accordance with state and federal laws.
5. Members shall not release, disseminate or broadcast information as a ***spokesperson*** for the department without permission through chain of command. Members shall at all times exercise diligence to avoid holding themselves out to the public as being spokespersons for the department except when duly authorized.
6. Members shall not deliver any address, lecture or speech on a matter pertaining to this Fire Department as a ***spokesperson*** for the department without the approval of the Fire Chief. Request for such approval shall be forwarded through official channels. In this regard, members are prohibited from using their rank, title or position as a member of this department for personal or financial gain.
7. The incident commander at an incident that attracts media attention may provide general information and a brief interview explaining what transpired. Information released shall be limited to known facts of a non-confidential nature. The identify of victims, confidential medical information, and matters under investigation by the department, the state fire marshal, law enforcement, or other agencies shall not be disclosed. When any other personnel receive a request from the media or the public for information about the incident, the request shall be immediately referred to the incident commander, the fire chief, or the public information officer when assigned.

**Editor’s Note:** This information mirror’s language in the general rules and regulations. If that policy is adopted this separate provision need not be adopted.