

Fauquier County Department of Fire Rescue

Rule and Regulation

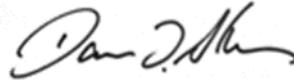
No. 116

Public Information and Media Relations

Effective Date: July 1, 2010
Revision Date: January 30, 2018

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Forms:

Approved By: Darren L. Stevens, Fire Rescue Chief



PURPOSE

To establish a procedure for release of Fauquier County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management generalized incident information to the news media. To foster and maintain a positive working relationship with all news media outlets and correspondents.

SCOPE

This regulation applies to all Fauquier County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management personnel (operational and administrative).

I. POLICY

- A. The release of information of any type shall be limited to the fire chief, assistant fire chief, deputy chief, fire marshal or the working battalion chief. Except as noted above, no other individual shall release information on behalf of the department.
- B. Should a representative of the media contact an individual other than those listed above they will be referred to one of the above mentioned individuals.
- C. It will be the responsibility of all department supervisors to inform an on-duty battalion chief of department information felt newsworthy.
- D. When information involves the interaction of federal, state or local agencies, the release of information will be coordinated through the fire chief or his/her representative.

II. PROCEDURE

- A. The Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management is responsible for the release of generalized vital information regarding the following:
 - 1. Fires and explosions that require fire department assistance
 - 2. Hazardous material incidents
 - 3. Any other incident when the Department has primary responsibility

Desire to Serve

Ability to Perform

Courage to Act

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- B. Information regarded as "public record" will be available for duly accredited members of the media. This may include a general scenario of the incident, number victims, agency or units involved in the incident and hundred block of an incident. Never release information which may jeopardize an investigation. Specific information regarding the fire marshal's or sheriff's office investigation on an incident will be released by that office.

III. NEWS MEDIA ACCESS

- A. All members of the fire department will extend every courtesy to members of the news media at the scene of an incident. Media vehicles, equipment and representatives shall be permitted to locate closer to the incident scene than the general public without obstructing operations or creating a safety concern.
- B. On all working incidents the incident commander shall consider appointing a media liaison officer. All media representatives are to be directed to him/her upon arrival. At no time shall a member of the fire and rescue department obstruct the news media in the performance of their duties unless personal safety is in imminent risk or operational tasks compromised.
- C. It will be the responsibility of every member of the department to see that a professional atmosphere is presented to every media representative who may be present on any incident. Overall media relationships will be coordinated by the fire chief or his/her designee.