



Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF, PNP
Camp BGen Rafael T Crame, Quezon City

SEP 11 2023

DPCR (G7) 230522-0301

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No.: 2023-053

REVISED MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

1. REFERENCES:

- a. Republic Act (RA) No. 10173, known as the "Data Privacy Act of 2012";
- b. RA No. 9344, known as the "Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006";
- c. RA No. 9165, known as the "Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002" as amended by RA No. 10640;
- d. NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2021-0596 dated June 8, 2021 entitled, "Approving the Transfer of the Public Information Office (PIO) and the Office of the Spokesperson to the Office of the Chief, Philippine National Police (OCPNP)";
- e. PNP Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2020-081 dated November 2, 2020 entitled, "PNP Critical Incident Management Operations Procedure (CIMOP) Revised 2020";
- f. PNP MC No. 2019-046 dated August 6, 2019 entitled, Police Community Affairs and Development Master Plan entitled: "TAGATAGUYOD";
- g. PNP MC No. 2006-022, dated November 21, 2006 entitled, "PNP Media Relations Policy";
- h. General Orders No. DPL-18-03 dated January 3, 2019 entitled, "Restructuring of the Police Regional Offices" Pursuant to NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2019-009 dated January 3, 2019; and
- i. PNP People's Freedom of Information Manual 2018.

2. RATIONALE:

This PNP MC sets forth the revised guidelines and procedures in establishing good working relations with the media while observing the public's right to information as guaranteed by the Constitution.

3. SITUATION:

The PNP recognizes the importance of media in providing information and education. As a valuable partner of the PNP, the media equips and empowers the community with information that promote awareness and public safety. Therefore, the PNP supports the role of the media in upholding the public's right to information guaranteed by the Constitution.

As a background, a policy on PNP media relations was crafted in 2006. Then, it was a guiding manual for all actions about media relations. It is more than a decade that the policy mentioned above is enforced, hence, some of its provisions



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must be supplemented with directives to make media relations more responsive to the current situations. Among the focus of the issued directives is the prohibition of a firing-line presentation of suspects to the media. Additional directives include the observation of the sub-judice rule when a case is already under the court's jurisdiction, the prohibition of releasing details involving victims of sex crimes and abuses, and Children In Conflict with the Law (CICL).

Continuous technological innovations have also influenced the information landscape, the same working environment as the media. Relevant research on how people get their source of news showed a significant impact on media. Results of the survey showed that 88 percent of Filipinos get digital news using online channels, which include social media as their source of news, while 16 percent access the news through print (Statista, 2022). Information has also spread faster than usual with social media platforms. The public no longer needs to wait for the traditional evening news with the netizens providing details on social media as the story unfolds or real-time updates.

Cognizant of this development, the PNP social media policies were crafted to address the changes on how news and information reached the public. Furthermore, the PNP, being one of the official sources of information concerning law enforcement, has emphasized the observation of the Data Privacy Law in social media policies.

Media, being the source of news, has also expanded its circle from the traditional media like editors, reporters, and journalists to new media like bloggers, vloggers, and podcasters, also known as content creators. Moreover, this is the age of online platforms or digital news/information delivered faster and in real-time. With all these changes, the PNP must enhance its protocols into more effective and efficient guidelines to adapt to the aforementioned developments to sustain a solid and harmonious relationship between the PNP and the media.

A sound police-media relations policy that is relevant to the changing time shall invigorate measures to increase awareness of public safety and security as well as transparency in the PNP organization. Moreover, it shall be a key to mutually beneficial Police Community Relations (PCR) media relations and partnership as each shall carry their roles and functions as steps toward nation-building.

4. PURPOSE:

This policy aims to establish specific guidelines in promoting harmonious police-media relations to provide the public with value-laden information as the police and media perform their duties and responsibilities.

5. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

The following terms, words, and phrases shall mean or be understood as follows:

- a. Accredited Media – refers to a news media representative duly recognized by the PNP through its Public Information Office (PIO) and allowed access to gather news information about the PNP.



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- b. Content Creator – refers to someone who creates digital content for entertainment or educational purposes to be performed or expressed through online channels, especially social media. They are also known as Influencers, Vloggers, Bloggers, Podcasters, etc.
- c. Crisis – an emergency that is a threatening condition which requires urgent action or response.
- d. Critical Incident – Any incident or event whether human-induced or natural disaster including declaration or directives that requires the implementation of special task by one or more government agencies with the direct or indirect involvement of the PNP on the conduct of police interventions and operations.
- e. Embedded Media – refers to news media representatives who join actual police operations.
- f. Freedom of Information (FOI) – refers to the right of the people to information on matters of public concern, and adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest, subject to the procedures and limitations provided in Executive Order No. 2 series of 2016.
- g. Incident Commander (IC) – person designated to provide the overall supervision of the incident. He manages the force and resources necessary to address the crisis. The IC assumes the overall command once the Critical Incident Management Task Group (CIMTG)/Disaster Incident Management Task Group (DIMTG) is activated to ensure efficient and effective integration of resource and delivery of public services.
- h. New Media – refers to any media delivered digitally, such as LED and other internet-related forms of communication like social media.
- i. News – It is the reporting of current events.
- j. News Media Representative – refers to a credible individual employed by an agency who gather information and reports on newsworthy events.
- k. Police-Media Relations – refers to fostering good interaction with the media. It is how the police deal with and interact with members of the working press and how the media respond to them.
- l. Press Release – refers to the official statement issued by the PNP to the media. Press releases are purely factual; and address a specific issue or concern or may be promotional in nature. The media often relies on press releases to form the factual basis for their subsequent articles.
- m. Public Information – refers to the information for the general public's consumption.



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- n. Public Information Officer (PIO) – refers to the official authority who serves as a central source of information for release by the PNP and responds to requests for information by the media and the community.
- o. *Subjudice* Rule – means that when a legal matter or controversy has come under the jurisdiction of a court, nobody, including the press and other media should interfere by publication or public clamor with the court's proper handling of the proceeding.
- p. Spokesperson – refers to the officially-designated authority who acts as the PNP's mouthpiece and usually speaks on behalf of the Head of Office.
- q. Task Group Commander – the overall in charge of an office/unit who has the full authority for making decisions and providing directions to manage an incident or planned event.
- r. Traditional Media – refers to any media delivered through broadcasts such as television and radio, and print media.
- s. TRIMP – refers to Television, Radio, Internet (Social Media), Messaging/Mobile Phones, Print (Magazines/other printed materials). An Acronym to describe the media platforms in the PNP.

6. GUIDELINES:

a. General Guidelines:

- 1) As a general policy, PNP personnel shall establish a good working relationship with the media. The members of the media shall be treated with utmost courtesy at all times;
- 2) During incidents, media presence shall be regarded as part of the public information process such as gathering information subject to policies stipulated therein;
- 3) Public Information Officers/Designated Spokespersons are the designated authorized source of information;
- 4) In the National Headquarters (NHQ), the Chief, PNP designates Official Spokesperson under the Office of the Chief, PNP (OCPNP);
- 5) At the NHQ level, the Public Information Office shall be under the OCPNP as Personal Staff;
- 6) At the PRO level, the Assistant Regional Community Affairs and Development shall be the concurrent Regional PIO (RPIO) under the Office of Regional Community Affairs and Development Division (RCADD);
- 7) At the PRO level, the Spokesperson shall be designated by the Regional Director;



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- 8) At the National Support Unit (NSU) level, the PIO shall be designated by the Administrative Officer;
- 9) At the NSU level, the Spokesperson shall be designated by the Director, NSU;
- 10) At the PPO/CPO level, the Assistant Chief Provincial Police Community Relations Section (PCRS) is the concurrent PIO under the Office of PCRS;
- 11) At the PPO/CPO level, the Spokesperson shall be designated by the Provincial/City Director;
- 12) At the MPS/CPS level, the PIO and Spokesperson shall be designated by the Chief of Police;
- 13) Public Information Officer and Designated Spokesperson shall, in releasing information, strictly observe this policy, the provisions of applicable laws particularly RA No. 10173, RA No. 9344, and PNP People's Freedom of Information Manual and Human Rights;
- 14) Releasing of information that are speculative, baseless and opinion is strictly prohibited;
- 15) Ensure the presence of the Deputy Chief, PIO or the most senior officer in the absence of the PIO;
- 16) During critical incident or crisis, the PIO shall serve as the personal staff of the Incident/Task Group Commander of the CIMTG. PIOs shall be responsible for the collection, preparation of press statement/media briefs, and release of unclassified/declassified vital information about the incident to the media, general public, and other appropriate agencies and organization;
- 17) Embedded media during police operations shall not be allowed, *however, media representative shall be present only during the physical inventory of evidence as provided by RA 9165, Section 21 (1):*

"The apprehending team having initial custody and control of the drugs shall, immediately after seizure and confiscation, physically inventory and photograph the same in the presence of the accused or the person/s from whom such items were confiscated and/or seized, or his/her representative or counsel, a representative from the media and the Department of Justice, and any elected public official who shall be required to sign the copies of the inventory and be given a copy thereof," and;

- 18) Ensure the application of *Subjudice* Rule which restricts comments and disclosure of judicial proceedings with the media, particularly on cases already in the court's jurisdiction.



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b. Specific Guidelines:

1) **Roles of the Chief, PIO/RPIO**

- a) Act as the amplifier of accomplishments;
- b) Ensure that assistance is accorded to media in covering routine news stories;
- c) Ensure the preparation and distribution of press releases;
- d) Ensure preparation in conducting press conferences;
- e) Ensure information about victims, witnesses, and suspects are coordinated and authorized prior to release to the public;
- f) Provide assistance in crisis communications;
- g) Coordinate the release of information that concerns confidential police operations and/or investigations;
- h) Provide assistance/guidance to PNP personnel on media-related matters;
- i) Coordinate all public information activities of the PNP and its different units;
- j) Maintain a roster of media reporters with their contact details for faster coordination/communication on official matters;
- k) Ensure that messaging is aligned with PNP strategic communications;
- l) Monitor current affairs, news, and stories in the AOR;
- m) Ensure appropriate action against circulating fake news, misinformation, disinformation or false information affecting the organization, in relation to public safety and order;
- n) Ensure a good rapport between the PNP and the media through fellowships and constant coordination/communication on official matters; and
- o) Ensure the observance of guidelines and procedures on media accreditation and the issuance of media passes for uniform application by all PNP units/offices (when necessary).

2) **Roles of the Spokesperson**

- a) Provide official position of the heads/chiefs of offices/units on the current events or pertinent issues through scheduled briefings, direct responses to media inquiries, press conference, and interviews;



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- b) Rectify circulating fake news, misinformation, disinformation or false information affecting the organization in relation to public safety and order; and
 - c) Prepare official statements on behalf of the head/chief of office/unit.
- 3) **Guidelines on TV, Radio, Telephone, and Social Media interviews and guesing of PNP personnel as requested by the media (Public Affairs to include Documentary Films/Stories purposes)**
- a) Secure a copy of request or coordination from the requesting media entity. In some cases, a formal request is not necessary;
 - b) Seek approval of the head of office/unit;
 - c) Upon approval, request the prepared/set of questions and topics from the media prior interview/guesting;
 - d) Notify ahead the requesting media on the approved questions or topics to be discussed by the invited PNP resource person;
 - e) Ensure that prepared answers for the listed questions and topics are approved by head of office/unit;
 - f) Advise resource person to consult respective PIOs prior interview/guesting;
 - g) Ensure that discussions during interviews focus only on the approved questions/answers by the head of office/unit;
 - h) Ensure answers are based on facts, results of investigations, policies, and laws; and
 - i) Avoid arguments with the media particularly those not covered by approved questions.
- 4) **Guidelines in Crafting Press Releases/Statements**
- a) Coordinate with the office/unit concerned which has jurisdiction over the incident;
 - b) Secure the essential details of the incidents;
 - c) Verify details with the authorized police officer or in charge;
 - d) Secure a validated written report/message from the unit concerned as the basis for press releases/statements;
 - e) Determine facts that can be included in the press release/statements based on the policies on releasing information;
 - f) Request approval from the higher authority; and



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g) Disseminate press releases/statements with the expressed approval of the higher authorities.

5) **Guidelines in Releasing Information to the Media**

- a) Verify the details of the story from the authorities concerned prior to release;
- b) Ensure that details are based on the results of the investigation;
- c) Ensure that details of press releases/statements do not hamper the ongoing investigation;
- d) Ensure that release of information or other details of victims, suspects, and arrested persons will not lead to their identification;
- e) Ensure that only photos, names, and details of crimes committed of validated wanted persons are published and disclosed to the public. This shall include details in case of their arrests;
- f) Ensure publication/disclosure of the details of those in the list of validated wanted persons and upon their arrest;
- g) Avoid premature release of information that may interfere with the investigation or apprehension, such as the nature of leads and other specifications;
- h) Ensure that announcement on the cause of death shall be based on the official findings of the medical examiner;
- i) Avoid opinions or speculations on all incidents;
- j) Ensure that press releases and statements are based on the investigation; and
- k) Avoid releasing information upon arrest and formal charging of a suspect, but prior to adjudication, unless there is an expressed permission of the unit head/chief.

c. Responsibilities:

1) **DPCR**

- a) OPR in the implementation of this MC;
- b) Ensure the successful implementation and attainment of the objectives of this MC; and
- c) Perform tasks as directed.

2) **DO**

- a) Provide PIO with accomplishments of PNP offices/units;



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- b) Provide necessary operational support to ensure the successful implementation of this MC; and
 - c) Perform other tasks as directed.
- 3) **DIDM**
- a) Provide updated investigative data/reports on the violations of safety protocols with indicated covered period from the requesting party; and
 - b) Perform other tasks as directed.
- 4) **DC**
- a) Allocate necessary fund support in the implementation of this MC; and
 - b) Perform other tasks as directed.
- 5) **PIO**
- a) Act as the mouthpiece of the office/unit;
 - b) Disseminate information either through press releases, press conferences, interviews and the like, to clarify issues and answer questions involving the interest of the PNP;
 - c) Establish close links with personalities in the media industry;
 - d) Provide timely information thru social media, including live streaming;
 - e) Responsible for the documentation of PIO-related activities and submission of necessary reports; and
 - f) Perform other tasks on order.
- 6) **NSUs**
- a) Prepare the IMPLAN for the successful execution of this MC;
 - b) Support TRIMP to re-echo PNP accomplishments and reinforce communications; and
 - c) Perform other tasks as directed.
- 7) **PROs**
- a) Prepare the IMPLAN for the successful execution of this MC;
 - b) Maximize TRIMP to re-echo PNP accomplishments and reinforce communications;
 - c) Produce and distribute Information, Education, and Communication-related materials if necessary;



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- d) Strengthen communication with internal audience and press corps for unified and synchronized action; and
- e) Perform other tasks as directed.

7. PROCEDURES:

a. Protocols at the Scene of the Crime

- 1) Ensure coordination with office/unit concerned prior presentation of evidence or the crime scene to the media and other witnesses; and
- 2) Ensure media presence during physical inventory of confiscated, seized, and /or surrendered dangerous drugs, plant precursors, essential chemicals, instruments/paraphernalia and/or laboratory equipment as prescribed under Section 21, RA No. 9165 as amended by RA No.10640.

b. Protocols in Non-Criminal Matters/Incidents

- 1) Ensure that media shall not interfere with the mission of the police, fire, medical, or other emergency relief workers;
- 2) Ensure control of media access to and movement within the fire lines to avoid interference with the mission of authorities;
- 3) Establish a safe media observation point or area for the convenience of reporting the incident or recording the event;
- 4) Ensure control of media access to uncleared areas of incidents to avoid the possibility of injury or death; and
- 5) Ensure access to contents of the information shall not interfere with law enforcement proceedings, including pending investigations.

c. Protocols in Dealing with the Media

- 1) Ensure that only authorized/accredited media representatives will be allowed reasonable access to the PIO and the unit head/chief as governed by existing policies;
- 2) Recognize authorized identification from all legitimate local, national, and international news organizations;
- 3) Restrict any media representative who fails to present valid identification in PNP offices. It can be used as a ground to deny access to requested information or incident scenes;
- 4) Release information to the media as promptly as circumstances allow, objectively and without partiality;
- 5) Determine the agency or department with primary jurisdiction during inter-agency operation which shall disseminate appropriate press statements/releases;



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- 6) Presentation of suspects in a "firing line" to the media is strictly prohibited. This practice aligns with our commitment to upholding the dignity and rights of individuals under police custody;
 - 7) The news media representative can be utilized to inform the public about the arrest of suspects, providing relevant information such as the crime committed, its nature and circumstances, the time and place of its commission, and other persons involved to ensure transparency while respecting the rights of accused;
 - 8) Maintain the publication of pictures and other information of those in the validated list of wanted persons in various TRIMP channels for their immediate captivity/arrest.
 - 9) Ensure adherence to the provision of Section 43 (Confidentiality of Records and Proceedings) of RA No. 9344 when dealing with Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) to guarantee their rights and well-being; and
 - 10) Disseminate press statements/releases which are approved by the unit head/chief.
- d. **Protocols on the Release of Information Involving PNP Personnel**
- 1) Observe the PNP People's Freedom of Information and other policies in releasing information;
 - 2) Observe the constitutional rights of involved personnel, including the Data Privacy Act; and
 - 3) Release information based on results of investigation and other facts.
- e. **Media Accreditation Process**
- A media representative authorized to cover/gather news information about the PNP shall:
- 1) Submit to the PIO/RPIO a Certificate of Endorsement from their editor/station manager;
 - 2) An accreditation from the International Press Center must be presented to the PIO in the case of foreign media, while freelancers must submit their letter of intent;
 - 3) Fill-up the PIO/RPIO provided Accreditation Form; and
 - 4) Validity period of accreditation and/or renewal shall be identified by PIO/RPIO.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTION:

Any violation of the provisions of this MC shall be dealt with administratively, with severe penalties, in accordance with the provisions of NAPOLCOM MC 2016-002 (Revised Rules of Procedure before the Administrative



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Disciplinary Authorities and the Internal Affairs Service of the PNP), Republic Act No. 6713 (Rules Implementing the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees), and other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

9. REPEALING CLAUSE:

The 2006 PNP Media Relations Policy and all PNP issuances, memoranda, and regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this MC are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

10. EFFECTIVITY:

This MC shall take effect after 15 days from filing a copy thereof at the UP Law Center in consonance with Section 3, Chapter 2, Book VII of Executive Order Number 292, otherwise known as the "Revised Administrative Code of 1987," as amended. It shall be mandatory that this policy shall be reviewed after three years, and shall be subject to revision of existing scenarios/situation to enhance the effectivity of all the provisions therein.



[Signature]
BENJAMIN C ACORDA, JR
 Police General
 Chief, PNP *[Initials]*

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