CHAPTER 1

POLICY

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CHAPTER 1

POLICY

1. GENERAL.

a. Media relations is a general term which describes the California Highway Patrol (CHP) activities directed toward accomplishing the Department's mission, meeting the Department's objectives, and attaining the Department's goals through information dissemination to print, television, radio, Internet and social news media.

b. The Office of Primary Interest (OPI) for CHP media relations is the Office of Community Outreach and Media Relations (COMR).

c. The Department considers the media as a conduit in which to communicate with and educate the public on matters of importance.

d. The Department proactively establishes effective community relationships and partnerships, to educate and improve services to the public.

e. The Department is committed to continuing its policy of transparency with the media and the public and releasing information that is legally permissible.

2. PURPOSE. The purpose of media relations is to inform the general public of information concerning the activities of the Department and its employees. Understanding the role the media plays in both providing public safety information and helping the public understand the Department's policies and procedures, COMR strives to establish a positive, professional, and responsible relationship with the media based on honesty, understanding, and trust.

3. OBJECTIVE. The objective of media relations is to generate a positive image of the Department and improve traffic safety and awareness through information dissemination to the news media.

4. RESPONSIBILITY.

a. The Department shall pursue a professional, creative, proactive, and coordinated media relations program as a means of attaining its goals and objectives.

b. Every employee is responsible for upholding the professional image of the Department when in contact with the news media and the public.

c. All members of the Department are encouraged to cooperate fully with authorized news media in providing information to the public in which the public has a legitimate interest.

5. RESTRICTIONS.

a. Written or oral material prepared as part of media relations activities shall be confined to subjects pertaining to departmental activities, activities of employees, and goal attainment. Such material shall comply with departmental policy.

b. All materials prepared for dissemination to the news media, except local news releases related to daily or routine operations, shall be cleared through COMR prior to dissemination. All headquarters releases are to be approved by the Office of the Commissioner and disseminated by COMR.

c. Personnel shall not divulge confidential information or render personal opinions on matters of policy.

d. Personnel shall not discuss, with the news media, matters of a politically sensitive nature without approval from COMR. Only the rank of commander or above shall discuss personnel issues other than critical incidents such as shootings, collisions, etc. When in doubt about any public dissemination, coordinate with your commander for discussion or guidance.