


Commission on Animal Care & Control	General Order: #050
Subject: Media Relations Policy	Date Issued: 04-01-14 Manager's Approval 

Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to outline acceptable press guidelines for all staff at Chicago Animal Care and Control (ACC).

Policy

It is the policy of ACC to provide information on new items of public concern and maintain good relations with the news media. Verified factual information should be readily provided to members of the media, to the extent that providing such information does not jeopardize active or pending investigations, infringe upon a resident's privacy rights, prejudice the accused's right to a fair trial, or violate the law.

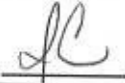
It is ACC's policy to treat all news reporters with professionalism, fairness, courtesy and respect. It is ACC's expectation that reporters will give all ACC personnel the same consideration. With that in mind, the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics is made a part of this media policy in its entirety at Appendix A.

At all times CACC will maintain at least one Public Information Officer (PIO). The PIO will serve as a liaison between the media, ACC, and the Mayor's Press Office.

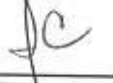
Procedures

A. Media Requests

1. All ACC employees will maintain a cooperative professional relationship with representatives of the news media.
2. When any ACC employee is contacted by the media, that employee must obtain, the reporter's name, affiliation, telephone number, and email address. The ACC employee should also inquire as to what information the reporter is seeking. This information should be written on Media Call Sheet (see Appendix B). The employee should not provide any response to the reporter other than stating that the request will be responded to as soon as practicable.
3. The ACC employee receiving the request should notify the Public Information Officer immediately, in person. The PIO should be provided a copy of the completed Media Call Sheet. If the request is received outside of the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, the information should be emailed to the PIO with the Executive Director being Carbon Copied on the email.
4. Upon the PIO becoming aware of a media request, research should be conducted to determine the most appropriate response to the media inquiry. The PIO will obtain information by notifying the appropriate person to supply the information, be it the Executive Director, the Investigator in charge of an investigation, or a Supervisor.

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5. Prior to providing official response to the media, a statement or talking points must be approved by the Mayor's Press Office. The PIO of other departments reasonably related to the matter at hand should also be contacted through the Mayor's Press Office. Public information shall be released as promptly as circumstances allow in an impartial, courteous and objective manner.
 6. All requests for audio recorded, video recorded or on-air live interviews of any CACC employee must be approved by the Mayor's Press Office and the Executive Director.
 7. Media responses concerning incidents involving ACC policy, the official interpretation of ACC policy or investigations of an internal nature will be released by the Public Information Officer, upon approval from the Executive Director of ACC. Depending on the nature of the inquiry, the City of Chicago Department of Law, Department of Human Resources, the Mayor's Office and the Mayor's Press Office should be consulted, where practicable.
 8. ACO and ACA Supervisor's or other knowledgeable persons involved shall prepare and forward summaries of newsworthy events to the PIO in a timely fashion. Newsworthy events, include but are not limited to:
 - a. Rescue of animals from imminent harm including fires, frozen ice, and floods.
 - b. Serious injury to resident caused by an animal.
 - c. Any field response where media is observed on the scene.
- B. On-Scene Interviews
1. If a member of the media is observed at the scene of any field response, the ACO supervisor should be notified immediately.
 2. At the scene of any event of public interest, representatives of the news media will be permitted to take photographs, and otherwise perform their assigned tasks, provided their activity is not in violation of the guidelines established in this SOP and provided such activity does not interfere with ACC operations.
 3. In the event of the media requesting any information from a CACC employee on-scene, the employee must obtain approval from the Operation's Manager prior to participating in the interview. Upon approval, only the following information should be provided:
 - a. Description of animal(s) (breed, size, sex, color, age, etc.)
 - b. Description of how the animal was apprehended

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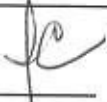
c. Reason ACC was called to the scene

C. Media at CACC Facility

1. When members of the media are at ACC's facility, the security guard and front desk staff must ensure that the reporter waits in the front lobby. The PIO or Executive Director should be alerted immediately, if on premises. If both the PIO and the Executive Director are off-site, the security guard or front desk staff should instruct the media that there is no one available to speak at this time. The security guard or front desk staff should take the media's contact information and relay it to the PIO by accepted means.
2. At no time will members of the media be allowed into ACC's facility unescorted by the PIO, the Executive Director, or their designee.
3. CACC will not authorize media to photograph or videotape at CACC without approval from the Executive Director and the Mayor's Press Office.

D. Press Conferences

1. Press conferences will be conducted only with the approval of the Executive Director and the Mayor's Press Office. In most cases, the Executive Director and a representative from the Mayor's Press Office will be present to provide information.
2. ACC representatives should be appropriately attired and respond to inquiries courteously.
3. The Public Information Officer or representative from the Mayor's Press Office should respond to improper questions or adversarial situations.
4. Where appropriate, media representatives may be supplied with appropriate press packets. Packets may include, but are not confined to:
 - a. A general press release detailing the event or incident
 - b. Applicable statistics
 - c. News clippings and other visual objects that will meet the special needs of the media
5. Media representatives will remain in one central location at ACC until the press conference is scheduled to begin. At the conclusion of the press conference, reporters will be escorted from the room to the front door.

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E. Photographing and Filming

1. No photographing or filming shall take place at CACC, by the media or citizens, without approval of the Public Information Officer or the Executive Director.
2. No photographing by the media of any animals at ACC that are not the property of ACC.
3. In the field, nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the news media from taking whatever candid photographs they choose to take of individuals, or events, without interfering with ACC operations.

F. Crisis Situations within ACC

1. Upon the Executive Director declaring a crisis situations involving ACC, the PIO will channel official information via confidential email, interoffice memo or other means of internal communication, and/or disseminate to the general public through the news media. Crisis situations may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Natural disasters
 - b. Major communication, computer, and/or electrical systems failure for extended periods.
 - c. Destruction of, or significant damage to ACC's facility
 - d. Threats against ACC
 - e. Death of personnel
 - f. Disease outbreak



Code of Ethics

PREAMBLE

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility. Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society's principles and standards of practice.

SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT

Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.
- ▶ Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.
- ▶ Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.
- ▶ Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.
- ▶ Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.
- ▶ Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.
- ▶ Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.
- ▶ Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story.
- ▶ Never plagiarize.
- ▶ Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.
- ▶ Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.
- ▶ Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.
- ▶ Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- ▶ Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.
- ▶ Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- ▶ Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.
- ▶ Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

The SPJ Code of Ethics is voluntarily embraced by thousands of journalists, regardless of place or platform, and is widely used in newsrooms and classrooms as a guide for ethical behavior. The code is intended not as a set of "rules" but as a resource for ethical decision-making. It is not — nor can it be under the First Amendment — legally enforceable.

The present version of the code was adopted by the 1996 SPJ National Convention, after months of study and debate among the Society's members. Sigma Delta Chi's first Code of Ethics was borrowed from the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1926. In 1973, Sigma Delta Chi wrote its own code, which was revised in 1984, 1987 and 1996.

MINIMIZE HARM

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- ▶ Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- ▶ Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.
- ▶ Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.
- ▶ Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.
- ▶ Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- ▶ Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.
- ▶ Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

ACT INDEPENDENTLY

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- ▶ Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- ▶ Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.
- ▶ Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- ▶ Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.
- ▶ Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- ▶ Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

BE ACCOUNTABLE

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.
- ▶ Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.
- ▶ Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.
- ▶ Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.
- ▶ Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.



MEDIA CALL SHEET

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

NAME OF REPORTER: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

ORGANIZATION (Tribune, Mayor's Press Office, FOX News, Etc.):

NATURE OF CALL – **BE SPECIFIC! Get as much information as possible.**

TIME THEY NEED A REPLY BY: _____

CACC Employee Name: _____