

CHAPTER 2
HEADQUARTERS AND DIVISION LEVEL
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MEDIA RELATIONS</u>	2-3
General.....	2-3
Commander.....	2-3
Director of Communications	2-3
Information Officers	2-4
<u>MEDIA RELATIONS DUTIES</u>	2-4
Media Advisories and News Releases	2-4
Day Ahead Report	2-4
Contact Lists.....	2-4
Press Inquiries.....	2-4
Media Involvement	2-5
Talking Points.....	2-5
Articles.....	2-5
Television and Radio Spots.....	2-5
Film and Videos.....	2-5
Wearing of the Uniform – Program of Entertainment.....	2-5
Internet	2-5
Daily News Clips Database	2-5
Statistical Data	2-6
External Publications	2-6
<u>PRESS IDENTIFICATION</u>	2-6
General.....	2-6
Forms of Identification	2-6
<u>DIVISION COMMANDERS</u>	2-7
Responsibility	2-7
Evaluation.....	2-7
Accountability	2-7
Notifications.....	2-7
Threshold Incidents	2-7
<u>DIVISION PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER COORDINATORS</u>	2-8
Staffing	2-8
Reporting.....	2-8
Guidance	2-8
Functional Direction.....	2-8
Notification to Headquarters	2-8
Media Relations.....	2-9

Speaking Engagements 2-9
Materials 2-9
Photographs 2-9
Media Contact List..... 2-9
Area Public Information Officer List 2-9
Community Outreach..... 2-9
Exclusions 2-9
MEDIA INFORMATION OFFICERS – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CENTERS 2-10

CHAPTER 2

HEADQUARTERS AND DIVISION LEVEL

1. OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MEDIA RELATIONS.

a. General. The Office of Community Outreach and Media Relations (COMR) may be utilized by all employees as a resource for enhancing the Department's media relations activities. Requests for assistance shall be routed through appropriate channels. Due to the fluid and dynamic nature of community outreach/media relations, the listed duties cannot possibly detail the entire range of potential work tasks or responsibilities. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities listed identify only the major tasks of each employee or unit and should be used simply as a guide when addressing media relations issues. (Refer to Highway Patrol Manual [HPM] 22.8, Community Outreach Manual, for Division/Area community outreach duties and guidance.)

b. Commander. The commander of COMR reports to the Deputy Commissioner and is directly accountable for all headquarters' media relations activities. The commander of COMR is responsible for:

- (1) Implementing and coordinating the Department's community outreach and media relations programs.
- (2) Planning specific programs to assist the Department in goal attainment.

c. Director of Communications. The Director of Communications acts as the Press Secretary for the Commissioners and provides support to Division and Area commanders in media relations activities. The Director of Communications is responsible for:

- (1) Coordinating departmental responses with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA).
- (2) Maintaining media relationships statewide.
- (3) Facilitating press conferences for headquarters.
- (4) Writing statements, media speeches, and media Talking Points for the Office of the Commissioner.
- (5) Advising and strategizing on complex and controversial issues facing the Department.

d. Information Officers. Information officers within COMR are directly accountable to the Director of Communications. They are responsible for:

(1) Performance of professional production functions such as writing, video production, radio spot taping, and preparation of other distributional materials.

(2) Representing the Department to media statewide on issues of Department-wide consequence and policy.

(3) Representing the Department to the general public through correspondence, telephonic contact, speeches, meeting attendance, etc.

2. MEDIA RELATIONS DUTIES. The following is a listing of the general activities and assistance provided by COMR:

a. Media Advisories and News Releases. The COMR provides the news media with information for the development of news stories and feature articles highlighting the Department and its activities.

(1) Media Advisories. Media advisories are invitations for the media to attend an event. They include the focus of the event, time, place, who will be present, and what visuals will be available. The purpose of the media advisory is to create media interest for event coverage. See Chapter 5 of this manual, Interaction with the Media, for further details and examples.

(2) News Releases. News releases are summaries of an event or subject for which the Department believes there is media interest and the public needs to be informed. They typically include an explanation of the event or subject, data, and quotes from participants. The COMR sends out news releases to media throughout the state and to the Division Public Information Officer Coordinators (PIOC). The PIOC should send the news release to the Area Public Information Officers (PIO) who should then share with the local media.

b. Day Ahead Report. The COMR gathers information from Divisions and other resources, preparing a late afternoon report for Executive Management, CalSTA, which is ultimately forwarded to the Governor's Office. This report contains high-profile incidents or popular stories that may appear in the next day's media.

c. Contact Lists. The COMR maintains a statewide media contact list.

d. Press Inquiries. The COMR responds to press inquiries and provides information requested by representatives of the news media and magazines for

their use in developing news stories and feature articles concerning the Department and its activities.

e. Media Involvement. The COMR solicits suggestions and feedback from the media regarding the Department's media relations policy. The COMR analyzes the information provided for clarification of current procedures or inclusion into current policy.

f. Talking Points. The COMR provides Talking Points on various subjects for personnel to use when speaking on behalf of the Department at major incidents, community engagements, media events, or during press interviews. Talking Points are available on the Department's Intranet. They are not intended for release to the public or media.

g. Articles. The COMR reviews special articles for publication in professional, trade, and other specialized magazines. The COMR attempts to have the articles published in appropriate magazines.

h. Television and Radio Spots. The COMR prepares and distributes television and radio spots, commonly referred to as Public Service Announcements (PSA).

i. Film and Videos. The COMR is responsible for evaluation of public relations-related videos and handout literature.

(1) The COMR shall maintain a contract for outside video/film/radio production and duplication services.

(2) The COMR is responsible for reviewing any paid media campaigns.

(3) In conjunction with the Academy, COMR produces videos for distribution through the Academy Television Unit.

j. Wearing of the Uniform – Program of Entertainment. The Commissioner has the authority to grant approval to reputable firms, corporations, groups, or individuals presenting written requests for the wearing of a uniform substantially similar to the official California Highway Patrol (CHP) uniform. All requests are to be submitted directly to, or forwarded to, the COMR. (Refer to HPM 73.5, Uniform/Grooming and Equipment Standards.)

k. Internet. The COMR controls the Department's official social media program (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) and is responsible for managing the content on the Department's Internet and Intranet Web pages.

l. Daily News Clips Database. The COMR compiles and releases a daily compilation of news articles that deal with Department functions throughout the state, as well as other related stories. The Daily News Clips database is located on the Department's Intranet. The COMR relies on news articles and other feature articles/stories as one method by which public opinion can be measured.

m. Statistical Data. The COMR coordinates with Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) in obtaining and compiling data/statistics for the media and public.

n. External Publications. The COMR reviews articles and other written documents prepared by departmental personnel for external publication, if requested by a commander. Such review is intended to determine compliance with HPM 10.3, Personnel Transactions Manual, Chapter 14, Inconsistent and Incompatible Activities, as well as the consistent representation of departmental policies and procedures.

3. PRESS IDENTIFICATION.

a. General.

(1) When requested, members of the press and news media personnel shall provide photo identification when coming in contact with California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers who have jurisdiction over an emergency incident.

(2) The news organization's personnel normally consist of the following job categories: reporters, field producers, videographers, photographers, and live/satellite truck operators.

(3) Independent journalists or photographers should be credentialed through a recognized news organization. In the absence of credentials, independent members of the press shall present acceptable photo identification and proof of their association with a media outlet source.

b. Forms of Identification.

(1) The Department no longer issues press identification cards. Any CHP press credentials still in circulation are no longer valid. California Highway Patrol press credentials shall not be recognized by CHP or law enforcement personnel.

(2) An acceptable form of identification will be a company identification card or other forms of press identification issued by a news organization.

(3) Press credentials issued by any other law enforcement agency shall be acceptable forms of press identification for any member of the press.

(4) Reporters who regularly cover the Governor can apply for a media credential authorized by the Governor's Press Office. Once an application has been approved, the applicant's photo is taken and the credentials are processed by the CHP Capitol Protection Section. All questions regarding the Capitol Press Corps Media Credentials should be directed to the Governor's Press Office at (916) 445-4571.

4. DIVISION COMMANDERS.

a. Responsibility.

(1) The Division commander is responsible for an effective media relations program at the Division level.

(2) This responsibility includes ensuring media relations activities throughout the Division are directed toward accomplishing the goals and objectives of the Department.

b. Evaluation. Each Division commander is responsible for continually evaluating the effectiveness of the media relations activities within the Division.

c. Accountability. Each Division commander is accountable to the appropriate Assistant Commissioner for the conduct and effectiveness of media relations activities within the Division.

d. Notifications. Division commanders shall make immediate notification of all significant incidents and newsworthy events involving the Department, occurring in their Divisions, to the appropriate Assistant Commissioner (including, but not limited to, the incidents listed in General Order [GO] 100.80, Notification and Report of Emergencies and Unusual Occurrences). This is especially critical when an incident may generate a story that will be picked up by a media outlet.

e. Threshold Incidents.

(1) Threshold incidents are defined as incidents which have a high probability of resulting in the Department or the State of California being a defendant in a civil lawsuit. (Refer to GO 100.86, Risk Management Response Protocol.)

(2) Risk Management Administrators (RMA) shall review preliminary news releases including the CHP 288, Report of Collision – News Release, for use

by the Division/Area Public Information Officers, as well as any Communications Network messages prior to their statewide release.

(3) Media relations specific to the threshold incident should be coordinated through the RMA. The RMA may designate a spokesperson to manage media relations. The RMA shall ensure that any information released to the public concerning the incident is done in a manner consistent with departmental policy.

5. DIVISION PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER COORDINATORS. The Division Public Information Officer Coordinator (PIOC) is directly responsible to the Division commander for coordinating media relations activities within the Division.

f. Staffing.

(1) Each field Division office staff should include a minimum of one full-time PIOC.

(a) This position should be a sergeant or civilian PIO. A backup should also be designated.

(b) The PIOC should have previous experience as an Area PIO and should meet or exceed the PIO selection criteria listed in Chapter 4, Area Public Information Officer, of this manual.

(c) An officer may fill this position at the discretion of the Division commander.

(2) Headquarters' Divisions may include a part-time PIOC if the Division activities require that capability.

g. Reporting. The Division PIOC should report directly to the Division commander.

h. Guidance. The Division PIOC provides guidance, assistance, and training to Area PIOs within the Division on topics related to media relations.

i. Functional Direction. The Division PIOC provides functional direction to Area PIOs to ensure their activities and statements to the news media are reflective of departmental goals and objectives.

j. Notification to Headquarters. It is the responsibility of the Division PIOC to inform COMR of media interviews, media events, press conferences, significant

incidents, major contacts, and newsworthy events within their Division (including, but not limited to, the incidents listed in GO 100.80). This is especially critical when a story may be carried by a media outlet. This information will need to be included on the Daily Activity Report.

k. Media Relations. The Division PIOC is responsible for press, radio, television, Internet, and social media relations within the Division when media activities involve more than one Area within the Division or when directed by the Division commander.

l. Speaking Engagements. The Division PIOC is responsible for arranging the public speaking schedule of the Division commander and for providing resource materials. The PIOC is also responsible for scheduling speaking engagements for other Division officers as well as providing assistance to headquarters' personnel who are scheduled to speak within the Division.

m. Materials. The Division PIOC should maintain materials for exhibits and displays and assist the Areas in using the materials, when necessary.

n. Photographs. The Division PIOC is responsible for ensuring that a Division library of photographs and videos is properly maintained and operated. This can be physical storage or electronic storage.

o. Media Contact List.

(1) The Division PIOC should maintain a current and comprehensive contact list of all Division-wide media contacts for reference at the office or in the field.

(2) Area PIOs should forward any changes or updates to the Area contact list to the PIOC.

(3) The list should include organization name, contact name, title, business number and cellular telephone number (if available).

p. Area Public Information Officer List.

(1) The Division PIOC should maintain a current contact list of all Area PIOs in the Division, including a 24-hour contact telephone number for each.

(2) The Division PIOC should make immediate notification to COMR of any changes to the PIO list. This will ensure the new PIO is added to electronic mail messages and telephone contact lists.

q. Community Outreach. (Refer to HPM 22.8, Community Outreach Manual.)

r. Exclusions. The Division PIOC should not perform duties that are the assigned responsibilities of the Area PIO; however, the Division PIOC should assist as circumstances dictate.

6. MEDIA INFORMATION OFFICERS. Traffic Management Centers are staffed by CHP officers, referred to as Media Information Officers (MIO).

s. The MIOs have daily contact with the news media while providing real time traffic and incident information, as well as road closure information, through television interviews, radio interviews or social media.

(1) Traffic Bulletins. Traffic Bulletins fall into two categories:

(a) Sigalert. These are restricted to unplanned actual or impending events or circumstances which may cause a delay of 30 minutes or more to a large number of motorists. When any of these conditions exists, a Sigalert should be issued. Examples of a Sigalert include:

- 1 Traffic collision.
- 2 Spilled load.
- 3 Flooding.
- 4 Unexpected traffic congestion resulting from unplanned events.
- 5 When a Sigalert has been issued, field units shall provide the Communications Center with real-time updates as lanes are re-opened.

(b) Traffic Advisory. These are pre-planned events or situations of a continuing nature that may impact traffic for extended periods of times. When any of these conditions exist, a traffic advisory message should be issued. Examples of a traffic advisory message include:

- 1 High winds.
- 2 Construction.
- 3 Traffic congestion resulting from special events.

(c) Media Notification Procedure.

- 1 Areas issuing Sigalerts or traffic advisories shall include:

- a Exact location, direction, and lanes affected.
- b Approximate duration.
- c Cause of condition.

2 Commanders shall ensure there are local standard operating procedures in place for making necessary media notifications.

t. The MIOs coordinate with Division and Area PIOs to release information during major incidents and high visibility events.

u. The MIOs may provide information regarding collisions and incidents as a backup to the Area PIO or when directed by the Division PIOC.

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