SUBJECT: COMMUNICATION OF OFFICIAL INFORMATIONS TO THE MEDIA.

The Chandigarh Administration, Department of Personnel vide letter No. 147(GOI)-III-(7)-99/4168, dated 4.3.99 has issued certain guidelines for contact with the media regarding official matters as well as instructions issued by Government of India from time to time regarding interaction of government employees with the press/media. The Inspector General of Police, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Senior Superintendent of Police/UT/Chandigarh, Commandant IRB, Senior Superintendent of Police/Security & Traffic, Senior Superintendent of Police/Headquarters and Senior Superintendent of Police/Operations have been authorized to brief the press/media about matters pertaining to Law & Order, Crime & Investigation, Intelligence, Security, Traffic and Police Measures, etc. Whenever any major breakthrough or any achievement is made by a particular unit of Chandigarh Police, a press release is issued by the GO concerned. It has been seen that while issuing such press releases the GOs concerned or I/C Unit mention their names prominently in the press release, which is a wrong practice. It shall also be ensured that only relevant information regarding achievement and the unit concerned is mentioned in the press release and all references shall be issued under the title of Chandigarh Police after prior approval of concerned SSP/SP only. No unauthorized officer shall speak to the media
in any circumstances. Any deviation by the police officer/official concerned from these instructions should be viewed seriously and action should be taken against such police officer/official.

2. The relationship of the police with the press/media has also been touched upon in Punjab Police Rules. According to PPR 14.44, it is desirable that services of newspaper should be used for seeking publicity in regard to police regulation and order affecting the public, and for disseminating information through which public assistance may be enlisted in the detection of crime and the arrest of criminals or public anxiety may be allayed. The authority and discretion to communicate official information with these objects is, however, confined solely to the Superintendents of Police.

3. PPR 11.63 lays down the guidelines regarding supply of copy of police records. According to it no document or record belonging to, or in the custody of the police, and no copy or extract from such document, shall be furnished to any private individual or to any government servant for his private use save under the authority of an express provision of the law, or by order of a Court acting within its legal powers, or of a general or special order issued by a competent authority in respect of classes of documents.

4. PPR 21.23 lays down that the newspaper press shall be used as a medium both for advertising police regulations affecting the public, traffic regulations and directions for festivals & official functions, for enlisting the assistance of the public in the investigation of crime and descriptions
of wanted offenders or lost property, especially when a reward is offered.

5. The Punjab Police Rules (PPR), though framed in 1934 and unrevised since then have laid special emphasis on dissemination of information to the press. During the 80 years since Punjab Police Rules (PPR) were framed, there has been an information explosion with large number of newspapers being published and the electronic media has also come of age with several TV channels. Police working has to be transparent, fair and responsive. For this police needs to share information with media promptly and there may be occasions where certain information needs to be withheld for purpose of investigation or in public interest. However, there is a need for having transparent relationship with the print and electronic media.

6. At the same time, it is desirable for any law enforcement agency to maintain a good working relationship with media specially to help focusing on the positive work done by the organization and build public confidence. In doing so, care has to be taken by the concerned authorities to share with media only those developments which while showcasing the basic facts in respect of an important action, do not provide leads to any impending action at all, and do not jeopardize the interest of the ongoing investigation/actions. Factual information relating to milestones/stages in the progress of a case that can potentially create a positive perception of the Police organization may however be shared with the media.
7. The following guidelines may be scrupulously adhered to while dealing with media:

i) Only designated officers should disseminate information to the media on major crime and law and order incidents, security arrangements, important detections, recoveries, other notable achievements of the police, etc. Police Officers should confine their briefings to the essential facts and not rush to the press with half-baked, speculative or unconfirmed information about ongoing investigations. Jumping the gun must be avoided for obvious reasons.

ii) Media should be used extensively to spread traffic road safety awareness amongst the general public.

iii) The briefing should normally be done only at the following stages of a case:

   a). Registration
   b). Arrest of accused persons
   c). Charge-sheeting of the case
   d). Final outcome of case such as conviction/acquittal etc.

iv) In a case that attracts the interest of the media, a specific time may be fixed everyday when the designated officer would make an appropriate statement on the investigation.

v) In the first 48 hours there should be no unnecessary release of information except about the facts of the incident and that the investigation has been taken up.
vi) The general tendency to give piecemeal information/clues, on a daily/regular basis, with regard to the progress/numerous lines of investigation, should be strongly discouraged so that the investigations are not compromised and the criminals/suspects do not take undue advantage of information shared by the Police authorities about the likely course of the investigation.

vii) Meticulous compliance with the legal provisions and Court guidelines regarding protection of the identity of juveniles, rape victims, etc. should be ensured, and under no circumstances should the identity of juveniles and victims in rape cases be disclosed to the media.

viii) Due care should be taken to ensure that there is no violation of the legal statements, privacy and human rights of the accused/victims.

a. Arrested persons should not be paraded before the media. Further, any direct communication between the accused and the media is strictly avoidable.

b. Faces of arrested persons whose Test Identification Parade is required to be conducted should not be exposed to the media.

ix) No opinionated and judgmental statements should be made by the police while briefing the media.
x) As far as possible no interview of the accused/victims by the media should be permitted till the statements are recorded by the police.

xi) The professional tradecraft of policing and technical means used for the detection of criminal cases should not be disclosed as it alerts potential criminals to take appropriate precautions while planning their next crime.

xii) In cases where national security is at stake, no information should be shared with the media till the whole operation is over or until all the accused persons have been apprehended.

xiii) The tactics and logics of carrying out the operation should not be made public. Only the particulars of apprehended persons and details of recovery should be revealed to the media on completion of the operations.

xiv) There should not be any violation of court directions and other guidelines issued by the authorities from time to time on this matter. It should also be ensured that mandatory provisions of Criminal Procedure Code, the Evidence Act and the Hon’ble courts’ orders are meticulously complied with by the investigating officers in cases where media is to be briefed. However, the investigation should not be hampered in the process.
xv) As and when instances of misreporting or incorrect reporting of facts/details pertaining to an incident or to the department comes to notice, a suitable rejoinder/clarification/contradiction should immediately be issued (except when such a rejoinder/clarification/contradiction leads to disclosure of such information which has been prohibited in this standing order) and, (in more serious cases, the matter should be taken up at the appropriate levels for remedial action).

xvi) If any news items/media reports appear in press which gives a distorted version & mischievously and falsely tries to show a bad image of Chandigarh Police, immediate corrective action should be taken by issuing rejoinder/clarification/contradiction. If such rejoinder is not published by the newspaper concerned in time, the matter should be brought to the notice of Press Council of India in the form of complaint under Press Council Rules. The complaints will be filed & pursued by Inspector Press. He may take assistance of Legal Division in this regard. This is in addition to other legal remedies available to the department.

xvii) An Inspector rank officer in the police headquarter has been designated as Inspector/Press for supplying information to the media on behalf of the Inspector General of Police. Every morning a press release is issued giving brief facts of cases registered during the
last 24 hours. It should be ensured by all SDPOs/ASPs/DSPs/SHOs, incharge of EOW, W&CSU and Operation Cell, Crime Branch and I/C Control Room that all relevant information of a routine nature is immediately provided to Inspector/Press for including in the daily press release.

xviii) It shall be the responsibility of duty officer at Police Control Room to keep Inspector/Press apprised of important developments so that the press could be briefed accordingly.

xix) While holding such press briefing/press conferences, it should be ensured that criminal investigation is not affected in any manner and any information relevant to the ongoing investigation shall be withheld on valid grounds. In the past there has been instances when police officer have rushed to the media in undue haste and advance publicity has sometimes adversely affected the investigation leading to the acquittal of the accused. It should be ensured that there is no undue haste in rushing to the media in sensitive cases. Utmost care should be taken to avoid any premature leakage of information which would jeopardize the investigations of the criminal cases.

xx) Information of a routine nature should be provided promptly to the press by the Supervisory GOs(i.e SDPOs/ASPs/DSPs)and unit Inspectors (i.e. SHOs, traffic inspectors, etc. with the prior
approval of their supervisory officers), who shall in turn take prior clearance from the SSP/SP concerned. The process of providing information to the media should be transparent and fair. When some information is shared with media, care should be taken that there is no discrimination/favoritism while disseminating information to the various media organizations.

8. The officers authorized to interact with the media can also make use of other press agencies of the Government in giving media publicity as and when required.

9. The charges for the publication of Government advertisements in newspapers shall be met from police contingencies. With regard to the printing of posters and leaflets the instruction contained in rule 11.57(3) should be followed.

10. Under no circumstances, media publicity is to be given for:-
   i) Cases which involve national security;
   ii) Details of investigation, testimony of witnesses/accused, recording/collection of evidence as the same can compromise the integrity of investigation.

11. Under no circumstance, any police official shall make complaints/statements, etc. in the media regarding his personal grievance/complaint, etc. w.r.t the department or its officials. Strict disciplinary action shall be taken for violating this instruction.
12. At last, it is reiterated that a transparent and responsive relationship should be maintained with the media and it should be ensured that the requisite information is promptly shared with the media, while at the same time sensitive information is not disclosed in a premature manner.

13. All concerned to note for meticulous compliance.


(Rajender Pal Upadhyaya, IPS)
Inspector General of Police,
Union Territory, Chandigarh.

3873-3910
No. /UT/E-6 dated Chandigarh, the:- 22-1-15-

Copies to:-

1) DIG, Chandigarh
2) All SSPs
3) All ASPs/DSPs
4) All Inspectors
5) Ad.O.
6) PA to W/IGP and Reader to W/IGP
7) I/C Control Room
8) Inspector/Press.
9) J/C Computer Cell.