

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

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Policy:

It is the Board of Supervisors' policy that open, productive and responsible media relations serve the best interests of the county and its residents. Delivering complete, timely, accurate and balanced information regarding the policies and actions of the county government is vital to promoting informed public participation in representative government.

The Board further believes that senior officials charged with providing services to the people of Riverside County are the best representatives of the county's programs and services. Department heads and other senior officials so designated by department heads are active participants in the county's public information program. As such, they must be prepared to discuss departmental activities in a concise, factual and balanced fashion with members of the press.

To provide the most complete information regarding special-interest issues, or issues that affect more than a single department, coordination should take place between the county's public information officer (PIO) and department heads. This coordination must not impede the flow of information to the public; rather, it will allow the county to provide complete information from a centralized perspective.

The county's media-relations policy will not attempt to "censor" information released about county operations, nor will it serve to hinder public officials, elected or appointed, in performing their prescribed duties or communicating with residents of the county.

To maximize opportunities for countywide public information support, departments will appoint an individual (or individuals) to serve as public information liaisons. These individuals will support departmental public-information efforts by lending specific technical expertise to public information initiatives carried out in conjunction with the **PIO**.

PROCEDURES:

- 1. Media Queries - PIO** and department heads will exchange information regarding significant events or media queries that might result in follow-up questions to the Executive Office or to other departments. For purposes of this media policy, "significant" is defined as potentially controversial and/or having impact beyond one

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individual county department. In the event of an emergency or other situation likely to generate media attention, department/agency heads should immediately notify the PIO.

News Releases - Significant (see definition above) department-generated news releases should be coordinated with the **PIO** prior to release. Upon receipt, the **PIO** will review the release for consistency with established county policy (and circulate for senior staff review, as appropriate). The **PIO** will accomplish such coordination on a same-day basis, whenever possible. News releases of a recurring nature (i.e. service schedules, immunization clinics, etc.) need not be coordinated in this manner.

- 3. Implementation** - All county departments/agencies will be responsible for adopting and implementing the county media-relations policy as soon as possible, but not later than **May 15, 1991**. Departments/agencies may also choose to adopt a policy consistent with the county's overall media policy, but which reflects unique departmental public-information requirements.

Reference:

Minute Order 3.24 of 03/26/1991

Minute Order 3.7 of 11/07/2006