

Release of Information to the Media

Index Code: 2303

Effective Date: 05/01/05 (Revised 8/2/16)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide specific guidelines regarding the release of information to the media concerning criminal investigations and other matters involving the Sheriff's Office.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office to release information to the media concerning newsworthy events that are not legally privileged, will not prejudice the rights of a suspect, or interfere with an investigation. In addition, only the Sheriff or the **Undersheriff** may disclose confidential intelligence and personnel information.

III. Non-releasable Information

A. Arrest Information

1. The result of any investigative procedure (lineup, polygraph, fingerprinting, laboratory analysis, ballistics testing, etc.) instrumental in the arrest of a suspect, which if divulged may reveal a confidential investigative technique or create a prejudicial environment for prosecution. However, the fact that a test was performed may be acknowledged without further comment

2. Prior criminal records, character, or reputation of a defendant

3. The performance or result of any examination or test (i.e., Blood, DNA, etc.) or a defendant's refusal or failure to submit to such examination or test.

4. The identity of any juvenile defendant, and/or any information related to the offense, which is required by law to be referred to the Department of Juvenile Services.

5. Any opinion about the guilt or innocence of a defendant, or concerning the merits of a case or quality of evidence gathered.

6. Plea bargaining negotiations.

7. The identity of any victim, or any information about a victim that, if divulged, would identify the victim and such disclosure would place the victim in danger.

8. The identity of any victim of rape, felony sex offense, or child abuse, or any information about any victim of rape, felony sex offense, or child abuse that, if divulged, would identify the victim.

9. Any statement, prospective testimony, character, or credibility of any victim.

10. The identity, credibility, character, statement, or expected testimony of any witness or prospective witness.

11. Reports, transcripts, or summaries of proceedings from which the press and the public have been excluded by judicial order.

B. Investigative Information

1. The result of any investigative procedure (lineup, polygraph, fingerprinting, laboratory analysis, ballistics testing, etc.) which, if divulged, may reveal a confidential investigative technique. However, the fact that a test was performed may be acknowledged without further comment.

2. Information which, if prematurely disclosed, would interfere with an investigation or apprehension, particularly unchecked leads, unverified information, specifics of modus operandi, details known only to a suspect or the Sheriff's Office, or information that may cause a suspect to flee or avoid apprehension.