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RCIPS

ROYAL CAYMAN ISLANDS POLICE SERVICE

MEDIA POLICY 2021

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<p><i>Note: For compliance, this policy should be read in conjunction with the most recently amended versions of the:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cayman Islands Constitution Order• Information and Communications Technology Law• Police Law• The Penal Code• Data Protection Law• Freedom of Information Law• The Ombudsman Law	

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS) strives to provide clarity, structure and guidance on the interaction, and communication between RCIPS and local, regional, or international Media Organisations and Journalists.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is effective from 1st. January 2021 and is applicable to all local, regional, or international Media Organisations and Journalists.

3. SCOPE

This policy outlines rules of engagement and procedures for interaction and communication between RCIPS and Media Organisations and Journalists (here after referred to as “Media”).

4. KEY PRINCIPLES

Our key principles when engaging with the Media are to:

- 4.1. Develop a positive, pro-active, two-way relationship with the Media.
- 4.2. Respond to all Media enquiries quickly, efficiently and within a reasonable timeline.
- 4.3. Rebut false or inaccurate information in a timely manner.

5. POLICY STATEMENT & AIMS

- 5.1. This policy strives to minimise such risks arising from Media matters as well as to mitigate against potential security or legal concerns for RCIPS. Both RCIPS and the Media are expected to adhere to this policy’s guidelines and procedures.
- 5.2. This policy aims to provide transparency, clarity, structure and guidance on:
 - 5.2.1. The RCIPS criteria and classification for Media to receive RCIPS information for awareness and distribution;
 - 5.2.2. Guidelines for interaction, communication and relationship between RCIPS and the Media;
 - 5.2.3. Best practice guidelines required, and code of conduct expectations for media privileges to be granted;
 - 5.2.4. Outline clear consequences and remedies for not following guidelines;
 - 5.2.5. Transparency on RCIPS media interactions, including how interactions will be determined, treated and managed through RCIPS’ Media & Communications Unit; and,

5.2.6. Clarification and distinction between Media queries and public Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

6. CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION

Any reference, description and definition within this policy refers to the criteria and classification for Media to be granted media access from the RCIPS.

- 6.1. The term Media is used to describe any local, regional, international and specialist press, television, radio and new Media (such as the Internet) broadcast organisation or associated Journalist.
- 6.2. Media Organisation: A registered licensed entity engaged in dissemination of information to the general public through traditional or online media.
- 6.3. Journalist: A person on assignment for a Media Organisation, as well as camera operators, television producers and press photographers that broadcast and disseminate information for public attention.

7. RULES FOR ENGAGEMENT

The guidelines for interaction and communication are set out below.

- 7.1. ALL RCIPS interactions with the Media whether local, regional, or international must be:
 - 7.1.1. Ethical, professional, transparent, accountable, auditable, appropriate and justified in law at all times; and,
 - 7.1.2. Conducted within a legal framework to ensure that the disclosure of information to the Media is lawful. Numerous Parliamentary Acts further prescribe what information can lawfully be disclosed publicly, including but not limited to the Data Protection Law and Freedom of Information Law, as amended from time to time. RCIPS will, at all times, operate within this legal framework when interacting with Media.
- 7.2. ALL RCIPS interactions and communications with the Media are intended to:
 - 7.2.1. Provide the public with an honest and transparent picture of policing activity and demonstrate accountability;
 - 7.2.2. Enhance the public's understanding of, support for, and active participation in policing;
 - 7.2.3. Reduce and detect crime using the Media as a communications conduit;
 - 7.2.4. Inform the public through the Media about local strategic priorities; and,
 - 7.2.5. Gain Media coverage of the RCIPS' services, activities and events.

8. BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- 8.1. RCIPS’s interaction and relationship with the Media is constantly evolving. No written document could anticipate every possibility. Thus we expect all Media we engage with to be ethical, professional, transparent, accountable, auditable, and appropriate at all times. These best practices are also in keeping with international and regional Media best practices and professional standards (see Appendix A.).
- 8.2. This policy is not an exhaustive compilation of all situations that may give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest. It does not exclude situations or issues giving rise to such conflicts simply because they are not explicitly covered within this document.
- 8.3. As outlined in this policy, all interactions with the Media are done primarily to inform the public about local strategic priorities, provide the public with an honest and transparent picture of policing activity, demonstrate accountability, and promulgate positive stories about operational successes. Equally, the RCIPS will be transparent and honest about its failings, and adopt a proactive stance to these issues, unless there is an operational reason not to do so.
- 8.4. Media seeking to receive official responses to queries and or receive official press releases from the RCIPS must have successfully met the definitions & criteria (Section 7) and display consistently a positive reputation for code of conduct and media protocol (Section 9) as per this policy.

9. RCIPS MEDIA PROTOCOLS & EXPECTATION:

9.1. Code of conduct:

- 9.1.1. Truth & Accuracy
- 9.1.2. Fairness & Impartiality
- 9.1.3. Public Objectivity & Accountability

9.2. Integrity of Information:

In accordance with this policy, information received from the RCIPS to be released to the public by any Media must be accurate and reliable, with respect for the facts while clearly differentiated from opinion or suspicions. Reporting by the Media should also be guided by the below scenarios and course of action response.

- 9.2.1. Inaccuracies, Misrepresentation or Misused Information: Inaccuracies, misrepresentation, misused or misunderstood quotes of information and descriptions can damage community harmony, police relations with various

communities and hinder investigations, which often heavily depend on community support. However, coverage that is inaccurate, misrepresented, unethical or unbalanced should and will be challenged with the Media concerned, and where appropriate corrections sought. This will be done via official correspondence by either the Commissioner of Police (or his/her designee) or RCIPS' Media & Communications Unit and not by individual officers or staff. In addition, the final outcome and RCIPS statement will be distributed to all Media and public for clarification.

- 9.2.2. Serious Situation: On some occasions it may be necessary to delay the release of information to the Media to ensure that resources are in place to respond to public feedback. For example, an appeal for witnesses or information, where officers need to be available to respond to arrest named suspects, in the event of a serious incident e.g. For major accident/ fatalities, murder, death or wanted for arrest for serious crimes, it may be appropriate to ask the Media to temporarily refrain from reporting an incident, where, Media coverage may adversely affect an operation or investigation. This provides the opportunity for an official response, limit public panic and ensure accuracy of information to be disseminated in a timely manner.
- 9.2.3. Images: Over and above other considerations, no imagery will be released to the Media unless there is a genuine policing purpose to be achieved. The RCIPS does not release imagery to the Media unless this basic tenet for investigation is met and there is a genuine policing purpose to be achieved. If a Media house chooses to publish a photo that was received on their own accord, we ask that they ensure this is done so: ethically; with accuracy; or without premature judgment of fault or guilt affecting either the investigation, victim, offender, or families involved.
- 9.2.4. Offender or Victims of Crime: Under normal circumstances there will be no basis for disclosure of offender or victim personal information to be distributed to the Media, unless there is a threat to the public and all other investigative actions have been exhausted without a favourable outcome. Comments will not be made in response to Media enquiries on individual cases that may breach the individual's rights to confidentiality or the RCIPS ethical Code of Conduct even though the individual may already be named in the enquiry or reported by the Media.

- 9.2.5. Person Description: Words used to describe crime, victims, witnesses, suspects and offenders can be highly contentious, especially when they refer to ethnic, sexual orientation, gender or racial origin, and the Media is being asked to report with care and without prejudice in this respect.
- 9.2.6. Unethical reporting: RCIPS deems such practices as not clearly distinguishing factual information from commentary or criticism, and inaccurate representation of subjects can result in endangering the life or safety of a person, damaging the reputation of innocent people, damaging the reputation of the RCIPS or its employees, violating someone's right to privacy or a fair trial, jeopardising police investigations or operations, or jeopardising court proceedings.
- 9.2.7. Unauthorised Disclosure: RCIPS employees are not authorised to speak to the Media or respond to enquiries without the express authorisation of the Commissioner of Police or his/her authorised designee. RCIPS will fully investigate any unauthorised disclosure of information obtained illegally.
- 9.2.8. Consequences & Remedy: The Media is not an extension of the RCIPS' public relations activity. As an independent industry it has a vital role on behalf of the public to hold public bodies, including 'itself', to account. There will be times when the Media publishes or broadcasts information, articles and comments that may be critical of the RCIPS and its performance. Such coverage should not taint our corporate relationship with the Media nor influence our approach and principles, as set out in this policy.

10. RCIPS COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

10.1. Official Communications Mediums:

- 10.1.1. The RCIPS uses a range of different mechanisms for distribution of public information, including but not limited to: the RCIPS Website and Mobile App; social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram); traditional Media (Print, Radio & TV); face to face (in one to one or in person) broadcast/print interviews; and neighbourhood meetings (to which the Media will be invited).
- 10.1.2. Different information can be released at various points in the process from investigation to arrest, to charging and appearance in court. This policy sets out what information can be released at what stage of proceedings, and by whom.

10.2. Official Media Interaction and Correspondence:

The RCIPS will engage in formal interaction with the Media at a variety of levels including, but not restricted to:

- 10.2.1.1. Press Releases (i.e. official statement, information or announcement distributed to provide public information);
- 10.2.1.2. Press Conferences / Briefings (i.e. discussion/briefing event in which Media are invited to listen and engage in open forum discussion, questions and answers);
- 10.2.1.3. Interviews (i.e. discussion involving questions and answers with one or more Media);
- 10.2.1.4. Official Quotes / Response (i.e. answer or reply to Media queries or address matters of public concern); or,
- 10.2.1.5. Public Service Announcements (PSA) (i.e. advisory broadcast message for public attention and action).

10.2.2. The RCIPS will disseminate, either proactively or in response to queries or requests from the Media a range of information including but no limited to:

- 10.2.2.1. Strategic or tactical / operational activity (i.e. specific incidents and inquiries);
- 10.2.2.2. Thematic issues (i.e. surveys, crime statistics);
- 10.2.2.3. Organisational issues (i.e. restructuring of the service); or,
- 10.2.2.4. Accessibility issues (how the public can contact the RCIPS).

10.3. Media Management and Ways of Working:

- 10.3.1. All RCIPS Media interactions are managed by its Media and Communications Unit. The Media and Communications Unit is the first point of contact for all Media enquiries although the Commissioner of Police or his/her designee may lead on reactive Media enquiries.
- 10.3.2. All official Media press releases, news and alerts are shared to targeted Media, interested government agencies and colleagues from the official email address PR@rcips.ky with the corresponding website link from the RCIPS website for supporting information and release.
- 10.3.3. The RCIPS media information access distribution list is constantly growing and evolving. Requests from Media to be added must be sent via email to

PR@rcips.ky. Media organisations are responsible for requesting accreditation for journalists. The objective of the Media information access process is to register all Media in a fair and consistent way. Media organisations wishing to be added must meet the criteria in section 6 herein.

- 10.3.4. Press Releases are the primary tool used by the RCIPS for Media attention and distribution. Press releases are issued from the PR@rcips.ky email address by members of the RCIPS Media and Communications Unit to provide information on incidents, events, achievements, plans etc. All press releases are approved by the Commissioner of Police or his/her authorised designee. A record of all Press Releases issued is kept on file. Releases are also distributed in-house to the Senior Command Team (SCT) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and all RCIPS employees in order to keep them updated with events.
- 10.3.5. All press releases are updated and archived on our website www.rcips.ky for ALL public attention.

10.4. Media & Communications Unit (MCU) Overview & Duties

The MCU is open Monday – Friday from 8:00am – 5:00pm with on-call duties weekdays (after 5pm) on weekends (Saturday & Sunday) for emergency and time sensitive incidents of public concern. The MCU is staffed by both police officers and civilian communications specialists. The MCU provides the following services:

- 10.4.1. The MCU provides a Media advisory service to all RCIPS employees, ranging from over the-phone advice to attending major crime scenes and managing critical issues;
- 10.4.2. Research and provide feedback responses in consultation with appropriate members of staff;
- 10.4.3. Produce Media enquiry responses or press releases as and when required;
- 10.4.4. Advise and assist (in conjunction with Joint Communications Service (JCS) where necessary) in the preparation and organisation of a press conference/launch etc. Generally, press conferences are only held for major events, or when a press release will not suffice, e.g. launching a

major initiative, updating during a major incident, following the publication of the results of an inquiry, or explaining complex issues such as statistical reports e.g. crime stats;

- 10.4.5. In the event of national crisis and emergency, the MCU will work in conjunction with and take lead from Government Information Services (GIS), Joint Communications Service (JCS) and other Government Agencies including but not limited to Department of Environmental Health (DEH), Department of Agriculture (DOA), Department of Environment (DOE), Hazard Management Cayman Islands (HMCI), the Cayman Islands Health Services Authority (HSA) where required as part of a multiagency response and communication strategy and action plan. The RCIPS may be required to help in coordinating, supplying or agreeing content; and,
- 10.4.6. Situations or incidents of significant Media interest which may require careful investigatory management by the RCIPS e.g. murder, motor vehicle accident and or serious crimes against or affecting vulnerable members of the community. It is essential that if asked that the RCIPS responds as quickly as possible. As such the RCIPS and emergency services will generally provide the initial lead in handling the Media.

10.5. Media Access to Crime Scene

- 10.5.1. Members of the Media may record RCIPS Officers during the course of duty for purpose of Media publication for public attention, providing the Media remain out of the crime scene itself and obey all other laws. However, it is important to note that establishing a Crime Scene and Exclusion Rights pursuant to section 47 of the Police Law (2017 Revision), a Police Officer may establish a crime scene (at any location in the interest of public safety or for investigative purposes) on premises in any way that is reasonably appropriate in the circumstances.
- 10.5.2. Once a crime scene is created, a Police Officer must, if reasonably appropriate, give the public notice that the premises/location is a crime scene. Notice can be given by the use of crime scene tape or some other form of notice, such as Police Officers standing guard and verbally

warning the public of the presence of the crime scene, its location and boundaries.

- 10.5.3. The Media must assemble outside of the RCIPS cordon area in order to secure the integrity of the crime scene. If it is safe to do so the RCIPS officer will provide a line of sight to the incident.
- 10.5.4. If the Media are in a public place outside of the crime scene area they have a general right to film the crime scene and the persons within it. Media in a public location can only be requested to move on if there are legitimate safety or operational reasons that provide a legal power to do so.
- 10.5.5. As RCIPS employees are not authorised to respond to Media enquiries without the express authorisation of the Commissioner of Police or his/her authorised designee, all Media on location must send all enquiries relating to the crime scene to the RCIPS Media Unit.

11. MEDIA IMPARTIALITY / EXCLUSIVES

- 11.1. All Media will be treated in a fair and equal manner by the RCIPS. This means that information released by the RCIPS in the public domain will be available to all and upon request.
- 11.2. Where there is a great deal of press interest, it may be beneficial to take the press on operations. If this is done, it would be in a manner which avoids favoritism and will consider the public. The decision may be taken to form a RCIPS Media rota party with one camera, one reporter and one radio person. These will then have to be shared amongst all other Media. All Media attending RCIPS rota party must sign a disclaimer (see Appendix B.)

12. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The RCIPS is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law in the spirit of openness, transparency and service to the public interest.

The FOI Law provides the public with the right to information and records held by public authorities about their decisions, activities and services except an exempt record. The RCIPS responds to requests for information (FOI requests) through the RCIPS Information Manager. Public FOI requests may be submitted by email to the Information Manager at

foi.pol@gov.ky. The Ombudsman's Office has developed a list of Frequently Asked Questions to guide and advise those making FOI requests (visit our website www.rcips.ky for more details) Responses to certain FOI requests from Media Organisations are copied to the RCIPS Media & Communications Unit so that context around the information to be disclosed can also be provided to the Media Organisation concerned.

13. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be implemented, upon approval, by the RCIPS Senior Command Team and will be evaluated after six month of implementation and annually thereafter.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Sample Codes of Conduct

- International Federation of Journalists Global Charter of Ethics: <https://www.ifj.org/who/rules-and-policy/global-charter-of-ethics-for-journalists.html>
- National Union of Journalists Code of Conduct (United Kingdom): <https://www.nuj.org.uk/about/nuj-code/>
- Society of Professional Journalists (US): <https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation Principles and Standards: <http://www.mediawise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/EditorialPOL2011.pdf>
- National Press Photographers' Association Code of Ethics :<https://nppa.org/code-ethics>
- BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines>
- New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/editorial-standards/ethical-journalism.html#introductionAndPurpose>

Appendix B: FORM



ROYAL CAYMAN ISLANDS POLICE SERVICE
Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement

1. In consideration for being allowed to accompany RCIPS Officer(s) on a **RCIPS ROTA** for media coverage on or about the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (hereinafter referred to as "RCIPS"), I hereby release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue the RCIPS, the Cayman Islands Government, their officers, agents, servants, or employees (hereinafter referred to as "releases") from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any loss, damage, or injury, including death, that may be sustained by me, or any of the property belonging to me, if caused by my own negligence while in the course of performing such work.
2. I am fully aware of the risks involved and hazards connected with attending an **RCIPS ROTA** for media coverage with the RCIPS and I hereby elect to voluntarily participate in said activity with full knowledge that said activity may be hazardous, or may become hazardous or dangerous to me and my property. I voluntarily assume full responsibility for any risks of loss, property damage or personal injury, including death that may be sustained by me, or any loss or damage to property owned by me, as a result of being engaged as a **RCIPS ROTA ATTENDEE** with the RCIPS, if caused by my own negligence.
3. I further hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the releases from any loss, liability, damage or costs, including court costs and attorney fees that they may incur due to my participation as a **RCIPS ROTA ATTENDEE** with the RCIPS, if such loss, liability, damage or costs are caused by my own negligence.
4. I understand that the RCIPS does not maintain any insurance policy covering any circumstance arising from my participation as a **RCIPS ROTA ATTENDEE** or any activity associated with or facilitating that participation. As such, I am aware that I should review my personal insurance cover.
5. It is my express intent that this Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement shall bind the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my heirs, assigns and personal representative, if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a release, waiver, discharge and covenant not to sue the above named releases. I hereby further agree that this Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the Cayman Islands.
6. In signing this release, I acknowledge and represent that:
 - (a) I sign it voluntarily as my own free act and deed;
 - (b) No oral representations, statements, or inducements, apart from the foregoing written agreement, have been made;
 - (c) I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent **or** I am under eighteen (18) years of age and my parent/guardian has acknowledged and accepted the contents of this waiver.

I HAVE THOROUGHLY READ THE ABOVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND UNDERSTAND THEIR FULL MEANING AND LEGAL EFFECT, AND I AGREE TO BE BOUND BY SAME. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on this ___day of _____20___

Attendee Signature

Attendee Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (printed)

Witness Signature

Witness Name (printed)