



DEPARTMENT NOTICE

20-112
07/01/20

Department Media Relations and Social Media– Booking Photos and Arrestee Information

The presumption of innocence is fundamental to our democracy and justice system. Regulating the release of booking photos can help prevent bias in policing and the potentially negative outcome for justice-involved persons who are subsequently not charged or convicted of committing a crime under the law. The California State Attorney General's Opinion No. 03-205 (July 14, 2003) deems adult arrestee's booking photos and arrestee information as public records and may be subject to release under Cal. Government Code section 6254(f). Across the State of California, law enforcement agencies routinely release booking photos online through department's websites and social media accounts.

Moreover, with a thoughtful process for releasing booking photos, law enforcement agencies may help mitigate or avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes which can contribute to implicit and explicit bias in policing and by community members. As such, SFPD will limit the release of booking photos and arrestee information to specific circumstances, as detailed below:

SFPD Media Relations will manage the release of **all** booking photos and arrestee information on Department and Station websites, social media accounts, in conjunction with press releases and in response to media inquiries and news media records requests. This specifically excludes any release of booking photos and arrestee information in connection with a court process, administrative process, or law enforcement request.

In compliance with this policy, no member of the Department may post, disseminate, or otherwise distribute booking photos on Department or Station social media accounts or websites without SFPD Media Relations Unit's written approval. Prior to releasing booking photos covered by this notice, SFPD Media Relations will follow these guidelines:

Booking Photos, upon approval by SFPD Media Relations, may be released and posted to Department **social media accounts** when they:

1. Warn the public of imminent danger or;
2. Seek the public's assistance in locating an individual or an at-risk individual.

Arrestee information:

1. Members shall refer media requests for arrestee information to SFPD Media Relations.
2. With the exception of news releases issued by the Media Relations Unit, no member shall post, disseminate, or otherwise distribute arrestee information on their social media accounts.

Procedure:

- Station/Unit requestor shall complete “**Booking Photo – Member Request to Post Publicly**” SFPD Form 600, and send to sfmediarelations@sfgov.org.
- SFPD Media Relations OIC shall review this form/request and reply to the Station/Unit Requestor.
- If approved by Media Relations, the Station/Unit requestor may post booking photos and/or arrestee information on their Station/Unit social media page
- If not approved by Media Relations, the Station/Unit requestor may post alternative information on their social media page (evidence photos, general information about the arrestee such as age, gender, charges, stay away violation, whether they are known to SFPD or to a specific task force).
- Station/Unit requestor will file the completed form in the corresponding case file.
- **Stations may post SFPD Media Relations press releases on their social media accounts.**


WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief of Police

Per DB 20-081, both sworn and non-sworn members are required to electronically acknowledge receipt and review of this Department Bulletin in HRMS. Any questions regarding this policy should be made to sfpd.writtendirectives@sfgov.org who will provide additional guidance about the directive.



Booking Photo – Member Request to Post Publicly

Send request to: sfmediarelations@sfgov.org

First/Last Name _____

Rank & Star No. _____

Station/Unit _____

Contact Number _____

Commanding Officer _____

Date of Request _____

I am requesting to release booking photo(s) and arrestee information. The booking photo(s) meet the following criteria (check all that apply):

- Is not a juvenile
- Will warn public of imminent danger
- Requires public's assistance in locating an individual (at-risk or otherwise)

This section to be completed by SFPD Media Relations Unit

Approved?

Yes

No

OIC Name & Star No: _____

Date of Approval/Refusal: _____

If "No", Reason for Refusal: _____

Notified Requestor? Yes No