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

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. Regulating the release of booking photos can help prevent the potentially negative outcome for individuals who are presumed innocent and subsequently not charged or convicted of committing a crime under the law. 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, and in response to public records requests and media inquiries. 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 Notice, no members of the Department may post, disseminate, distribute, or otherwise post booking photos or arrestee information on Department or Station social media accounts or websites without SFPD Media Relations Unit’s approval. SFPD members shall coordinate with SFPD Media Relations Unit prior to engaging with the media about booking photos and arrestee information.

Prior to releasing booking photos covered by this notice, SFPD Media Relations will follow these guidelines:

Booking photos 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;
3. subject has been convicted (arrest subject to the booking photo)
Booking photos and arrestee information shall only be released through social media upon meeting the above criteria. Such release will be approved by SFPD Media Relations.

SFPD Media Relations shall ensure the above criteria is met before issuing a press release or prior to responding to a media request.

Procedure:

- Station/Unit Requestor shall complete SFPD Request Form XX and send to sfmediarelations@sfgov.org
- SFPD Media Relations OIC shall review SFPD Request Form XX and reply to the Station/Unit Requestor.
- If approved by Media Relations, the Station/Unit Requestor shall post booking photos and/or arrestee information on their Station/Unit social media page
- If not approved by Media Relations, the Station/Unit Requestor shall post alternative information on their social media page (evidence photos, general information about the arrestee like age, gender, charges, stay away violation, whether they are known to SFPD or a specific task force)
- Station/Unit Requestor will file completed form in the corresponding arrestee case file.

*Exigent circumstances, (i.e. connection with Amber Alerts or immediate public safety need) may mitigate need for form approval

WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief of Police

_Per DB 19-156, sworn members are required to electronically acknowledge receipt and review of this Department Bulletin in HRMS. Any questions or clarification regarding this policy should be made to sfpd.writtendirectives@sfgov.org who will provide additional guidance about the directive._
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)
- [ ] Suspect was convicted of the arrest/charges subject to booking photo

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