



CENTRAL JOINT FIRE DISTRICT

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Public Information Officer

SOP Number: 131A
Effective Date: 11/13/01
Revised Date:
Approved:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this standard is to define the qualifications and duties of the Public Information Officer (PIO) within the Chain of Command of the Central Joint Fire District.

SCOPE: This standard applies to the position designated as "Public Information Officer".

APPLICATION:

Authority: The Public Information officer is a designated position (currently officer without portfolio = no rank) who reports to the Chief/Assistant Chief or Incident Commander (IC) or Officer-in-Charge (OIC) as the situation dictates. This is a non-line officer position.

Response to scenes: The PIO is expected to respond to scenes in order to perform the tasks as designated in the PIO position. Response to scenes may be by POV as deemed necessary. The PIO may carry his/her turnout gear in their car. For this department response scene duties may include, but may not be limited to:

- 1) taking photos of the scene
- 2) taking video of the scene
- 3) assisting in the comfort of victims' relatives until professional help can be secured
- 4) making phone calls/radio contact at the request of the Chief, Incident Commander or OIC
- 5) starting the 1520 report form
- 6) assisting with crowd control as needed or directed
- 7) working with representatives of the press on-scene during an event.

Qualifications: The individual for this position shall:

- 1) be an active member of the Fire Department in good standing
- 2) demonstrate excellent writing skills
- 3) demonstrate oral proficiency, including extemporaneous speaking
- 4) be knowledgeable of various media formats and dissemination outlets
- 5) demonstrate competence in computer skills, graphics manipulations

Responsibilities:

Public Information - dissemination of information during all emergency incidents and other significant events and issues relating to the District. Such information may include, but not be limited to: fire loss, fire injuries, EMS operations, construction of new facilities, & staffing, etc.

Public Relations - development of positive public perceptions of the department, its personnel and operations with the public. This may include, but not be limited to dissemination of information about programs, services, achievements, and fundraisers. Inherent in this task is the establishment of linkages with media outlets (print, TV, and Radio)

Public Education - emphasis of fire and life safety information to the public at every opportunity. This aspect should be coordinated with the Department's Safety Educator or Fire Prevention Officer whenever possible.

Internal Responsibilities - tell the story of the men and women of the department. Give credit where credit is due. Focus on the personnel of the department with the thought of enhancing the department image.

Photos, scrapbook, media library, and print library - It is the responsibility of the PIO to maintain the working status of the photo albums (digital and/or hard copy), department scrapbook, and department print library. Recommending the purchase of book and other appropriate educational materials to the Chief is also within the realm of responsibility. Lastly, during truck checks and as needed, the PIO shall be responsible for purchasing and maintaining film and video supplies, camera and video readiness.

Internet - Oversee information publicized via web page. Maintain the information available to public on department web page. Oversee updates, making sure these occur in timely fashion.

Other - Should the PIO Officer not be involved in any position-related duties, he/she may be utilized by the Chief, Assistant Chief, IC, or OIC as deemed necessary in accordance with his/her level of training.

Source: Charlesworth, M. (1999). Public information officer. Oklahoma State University, OK: International Fire Service Training Association. NFPA Std. 1035.