

# **REDCOM**

## **Public Information Policy**

(Version 4 – Adopted, 01/02/03)

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 In order to meet the organization's goals and contractual requirements, maintain a positive public image, and perform in a manner reflecting outstanding public service standards, REDCOM will implement a proactive and well coordinated public information program. In this regard, the purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines by which information may be disseminated to the new media.
- 1.2 Accurate and timely public information is critical to the success of the organization. Therefore, this policy must be implemented in a consistent and thorough manner. An effective public information policy fosters an environment of trust, openness and understanding, without compromising the rights of any individual, the public, or the criminal justice system.

### **2. Policy**

- 2.1 The REDCOM Board of Directors is responsible for the dissemination of accurate and timely public information to stakeholders and to the general public. The REDCOM Board of Directors may delegate the responsibility of disseminating public information to a board member, REDCOM Director of Communications, a REDCOM shift supervisor, or a designated member of the Dispatch Operations Advisory Group (DOAG), including but not limited to a DOAG Duty Officer, as indicated. REDCOM may establish a Public Information Officer (PIO), if desired.
- 2.2 REDCOM will cooperate fully with the news media to assure that information is released in a clear and timely manner.

- 2.3 In conjunction with the public's right to know, REDCOM shall protect the specific rights of any victims, patients, news media representatives, and any others who may be involved in any subject incidents.
- 2.4 Information shall be provided to the news media representatives in accordance with law.
- 2.5 When appropriate, REDCOM will promote inter-agency coordination through the establishment of joint public information programs. Joint information operations may involve any type of incident and must conform to Incident Command System (ICS) operating procedures.
- 2.6 Non-emergency written press releases shall be prepared on REDCOM letterhead and shall be approved by the Chair of the REDCOM Board of Directors, or in the Chair's absence the Vice Chair, in advance of distribution.
- 2.7 Emergency written or verbal press releases shall be approved by the REDCOM Director of Communications, or the DOAG Duty Officer, and coordinated with the Incident Commander (IC) or Public Information Officer (PIO) of the affected jurisdiction, if indicated. The REDCOM Director of Communications shall make every effort to communicate with the Chair of the REDCOM Board of Directors in a timely fashion regarding emergency written or verbal press releases.

### **3. Procedures**

- 3.1 The REDCOM Board Chair, REDCOM Director of Communications, or the REDCOM shift supervisor is responsible for the release of information to the news media.
- 3.2 REDCOM will issue press releases subject to the following guidelines:
  - 3.2.1 When the issue/incident directly involves the REDCOM JPA Authority.

- 3.2.2 When one or more REDCOM member jurisdiction requests a release of public information from REDCOM.

#### **4. Implementation Strategies**

- 4.1 Provide training to all REDCOM Board Directors, Dispatch Operations Advisory Group Members and Dispatch Center personnel in regard to public information, policies, and procedures.
- 4.2 Provide readily accessible public information checklists, procedures and templates to REDCOM staff, as indicated.

#### **5. Definitions**

Public Information: Public information shall be defined as any and all information considered important knowledge for decision-makers, stakeholders, or the general public.

Incident Command System (ICS): an integrated organizational structure for managing multiple incidents as defined in the California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 2, Office of Emergency Services, Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS)

Director of Communications: Chief Executive Manager of the Dispatch Center

Joint Powers Agreement (JPA): Document establishing REDCOM under the Joint Powers Act of California Law to provide for Fire and Emergency Medical Dispatch Services for member agencies and other emergency responders, at least initially, within Sonoma County.