



# CHARLOTTESVILLE - ALBEMARLE RESCUE SQUAD



## STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

<b>TOPIC: Media Interface</b>	<b>S.O.P. # 1.12</b>
Approved by: Lair D. Haugh, Chief	Revised: 2/9/2003 Approved:

### I. PURPOSE

- a. To provide a guideline for day-to-day relations with members of the news media that balances the public's right to know against the need to conduct operations unimpeded.

### II. POLICY

- a. On scene
  - i. In accordance with General Order No. 31 of the Virginia State Police:

*"Accredited news media representatives who are actively covering an incident should be given closer access to the scene than that which may be granted the general public. News media vehicles and equipment may be located at points nearer the scene than permitted by normal traffic control, but such locations shall not be permitted to interfere with police or rescue operations."*

1. Rescue personnel will take no action to either encourage or discourage the media in photographing or televising anything within their view at an accident or other incidents. Media camerapersons will not be permitted any closer than any other media representatives.
    2. No member shall knowingly and unnecessarily obstruct news media representatives in the performance of their duties; however, media representatives are neither implicitly nor expressly exempt from any state or federal or city or county ordinance.
    3. The agency is not an arbiter of good taste. Restrictions on the news media should not be based on a member's view of what constitutes an acceptable standard of journalism or news photography.
  - ii. At extended or unusual incidents a public information officer (PIO) should be established to assist news media representatives in covering the incident.
    1. All news media inquiries shall be referred to the incident commander or PIO only.
  - iii. If a member of the press interferes with the rescue operation, report the same to the incident commander or safety officer and let them handle it.
  - iv. If you have a complaint about the performance or behavior of a member of the media, write down the details of the situation while they are still fresh, and report the same to the duty officer.
- b. Inquires other than on scene.
  - i. ALL media inquiries shall be referred to the Duty Officer. If the Duty Officer is not available within a reasonable amount of time, the on-duty Crew Captain shall have the authority to answer the inquiry so long as they follow the guidelines described in this SOG.
  - ii. The following information may be released:
    1. Number of victims
    2. Number of vehicles involved
    3. Whether or not we performed an extrication or other specialized rescue

4. Number of squad members involved
  5. Number and type of squad vehicles involved
  6. General location (no specific addresses!)
- iii. The following information may **NOT** be released:
1. Names or addresses of victims or others involved in a call
  2. Opinions on calls; i.e., cause of accident, intoxication of driver, extent of injuries
  3. Anything regarding squad policies or procedures.
    - a. Any questions of this nature should be referred to the Duty Officer.