



Public Information & Media Relations Guidelines

Information for the Press

EFD's Public Information Goal: to maintain a positive working relationship with the news media and to keep the public informed of Fire Department activities and operations and of procedures that can save lives and property through the media.

EFD's Public Information Objectives:

1. Establish an effective public information sector under the incident command system at emergency scenes, in accordance with the National Incident Management System;
2. Provide effective fire prevention and fire survival information to the public while the news media's attention is focused on an incident;
3. Provide fire safety information on a routine basis in support of public fire education;
4. Respond effectively to special inquiries about the Fire Department;
5. Maintain a positive image of the Fire Department and City government; and
6. Effectively manage damage/image control when an issue may reflect negatively upon the Fire Department or the City.

EFD's Media Rules

Ephrata Fire Department operations profoundly affect the public and therefore arouse substantial public interest. Likewise, public interest and public cooperation bear significantly on the successful accomplishment of our mission.

The Ephrata Fire Department will make every reasonable effort to serve the needs of the media in informing the public about fire and life safety issues, and other safety hazards. This will be done with an attitude of openness and frankness whenever possible.

The media will be told all that can be told *except*:

1. identities of juveniles involved in an incident,
2. identities of medical emergency patients or their protected healthcare information (RCW 71.05.390), or
3. information related to a criminal investigation (RCW 42.56.240).

Information will be given which will not impinge on these three areas. If asked to divulge this information, we will simply state that nothing more can be said.

In all other matters in our relationship with the media in dealing with current news, we will make every reasonable effort in providing the media representatives with full and accurate material.

We appreciate your assistance in broadcasting the activities of the Ephrata Fire Department and assisting us in preventing fires and injuries.