



**DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT
AND HOUSING**
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
DIRECTIVE

DIRECTIVE NUMBER
700
DISTRIBUTION DATE
April 16, 2004

1. **SUBJECT: MEDIA CONTACTS**
2. **PURPOSE:** To set forth the procedures for responding to information requests from the media.
3. **BACKGROUND:** The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) frequently receives requests for information from the media. It is imperative that such requests be handled properly. Information requests from media outlets including, but not limited to, newspapers, periodicals, magazines, radio or television stations should only be handled by staff who are authorized by the Director to release information to the media.
4. **PROCEDURES:**
 - A. All media inquiries received at Headquarters or at any DFEH district office are to be referred to the Department's Public Information Officer (PIO) or to Public Affairs Unit (PAU) staff at Headquarters. No other employees are authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the Department without prior approval from the Director or as authorized in this directive. All such requests are to be handled in conformance with the California Public Records Act and Directive 600, "Response to Public Records Act Requests."
 - B. The PIO and PAU staff will handle calls from the media in accordance with established unit procedures.
 - C. The PIO or designated executive staff will respond in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - 1) Requests for information on specific complaints:
 - a) All media requests for disclosure of information on specific cases must be submitted to the PAU in writing. The PAU will issue a written acknowledgement of receipt of the request by fax and by U.S. mail.

- b) The PIO will forward the request for disclosure to the Public Records Officer or other designated individual in the Legal Division who will determine what, if any, information is subject to disclosure. Release of documents will be in accordance with DFEH Directive 600, "Response to Public Records Act Requests."
 - c) The PIO or PAU staff will provide the requestor information that is subject to release or notify the requestor that the information is not subject to release. Challenges to DFEH's policy regarding the limits on the information to be released will be discussed with the Chief Counsel.
 - d) When the media requests to speak with a complainant regarding a DFEH-initiated press release, the PIO will request a valid Complaint Publicity Release Form (DFEH-600-34) from the Enforcement or Legal Division through the Chief Deputy Director authorizing contact with the complainant for media purposes. The PIO may then offer to contact the complainant and give him/her the opportunity to directly contact the media representative.
- 2) Requests for statistical data:
- a) Requests for statistical data about the Department, including but not limited to data on staffing levels, workload, budget, the volume of complaints filed, investigated or closed in DFEH district offices, etc., shall be referred to the PIO at Headquarters. (Refer to Directive 601, "Responding to External Requests for Computer-Based Information.")
 - b) The PIO or designee may release CMIS statistical data from printouts as approved by the Director. Documents specifically designated as "Draft" or "Confidential" may not be released without the express approval of the Director.
- 3) Information on Department policies:

- a) All inquiries regarding established policies, the rationale for a policy or for copies of Department policies, including but not limited to directives, case analysis or litigation manuals, shall be referred by the PIO or other executive staff designated to respond to media inquiries.
- b) It is permissible to cite established written policies. Interpretations beyond stated policy should not be provided. Information will not be given on draft policies or policies under consideration.

4) Information on Pending Legislation:

All inquiries regarding legislation shall be referred to the Legislative Unit at Headquarters.

5) Any inquiry that does not fall within the above guidelines shall be referred to the Department's PIO.

EXCEPTION: Executive staff and district administrators may respond to inquiries regarding their appearance at a community event or at a Department-sponsored event. In such instances, information provided should be limited to the extent the Department may have authority to intervene or accept complaints.

- a) The PIO shall be notified of the media contact at the first opportunity and provided a summary of the contact, including the reporter's name and media outlet.
- b) In making referrals, always assure the inquirer that the Department desires to cooperate.
- c) Information exchanged with the media will always be presented in a way that reflects the Department's role as a neutral law enforcement agency.

5. **APPROVAL:**

Jill C. Peterson, Interim Director

Date