2-04/070.10 - Definitions

Credentials: Any physical or digital documentation issued by a recognized news-gathering organization or an independent professional body that identifies the holder as a person engaged in the gathering or reporting of news.

Duly Authorized Representative of the Media: Any member of a news service, online news service, newspaper, or radio or television station or network. A duly authorized representative of the media may be identified with the following:

- A valid media identification card (press pass) issued by any law enforcement agency, government agency, or fire department within the state;
- Employee identification card/badge for a news service;
- Press credentials or identification card issued by a press trade group (e.g., Los Angeles Press Club, National Press Photographers Association);
- Professional business card for a news service/news organization;
- Letter of assignment for freelancer on news organization letterhead; and
- Credentials for journalism majors and school news publications or websites at an accredited secondary school, community college, college, or university.

Note - Photo identification may be required to confirm the possessor is the person named on a credential.

Impacted Area: An area where a natural or man-made event (e.g., fire, flood, explosion, or earthquake) has occurred and where public access is restricted to protect life and safety, or to preserve the integrity of an investigation.

Interfere / Undue Interference: Any intentional physical action that prevents a Department member from performing their lawful duties. Recording or observing police activity from a safe distance, without obstructing movement or safety, does not constitute interference.

Journalist: Any person who is an employee, agent, or independent contractor of any newspaper, magazine or other periodical, book publisher, news agency, wire service, radio or television station or network, cable or satellite station or network, or audio or audiovisual production company, or any entity that is in the regular business of news gathering and disseminating news or information to the public by any means, including, but not limited to, print, broadcast, photographic, mechanical, internet, live streaming, or electronic distribution.

This definition of a “journalist” should be interpreted broadly because organizations involved in news and information gathering evolve over time with the expansion of online outlets and social media. Therefore, the definition should be viewed broadly to be inclusive of traditional and non-traditional media outlets and to include both credentialed press from established media outlets and non-credentialed individuals who are acting as reporters in their function and behavior. The Department does not distinguish among journalists based on their expressed or anticipated viewpoints.

Letter of Assignment: A formal document on company letterhead, signed by an editor or news director, stating that a specific individual is authorized to cover a particular event on behalf of that news organization.

Nonviolent Crime: A crime not identified in subdivision (c) of the California Penal Code section 667.5.

Press Conference: Typically, a pre-planned media event, called and/or staged by a Department member or group of Department members, designed to either bring awareness to a particular Department issue, program or community incident. The goal is to disseminate timely and accurate information to the media at the scene of or contemporaneous with a newsworthy event.

Social Media: An electronic service or account, or electronic content, including, but not limited to, videos or still photographs, blogs, video blogs, podcasts, instant and text messages, email, online services or accounts, or Internet Web site profiles or locations. (California Penal Code sections 632.01, 13665).

Valid Media Identification Card: A form of identification issued by a law enforcement agency (e.g., LASD/LAPD press pass), government agency, fire department, recognized media outlet, or professional journalistic association that includes a photograph of the bearer.