UPDATING THE MEDIA

1 **Determine whether a press conference will be held**
- ☐ Assign a coordinator

2 **Determine whether a press statement or press release will be issued**
- ☐ Assign writer
- ☐ Obtain sign-offs from all agencies

3 **Ensure victim coordinators know what is being released to the press**

4 **Maintain a log and document media contact for post-incident needs, including court**

PRE-PRESS CONFERENCE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify speaker(s) where they will stand and speaking order
- ☐ Identify media person to manage conference *(open, advise media of two-minute warning, spell names of speakers and attendees, end)*
- ☐ Coordinate talking points (TPs) with Unified Command
    - ▶ *TPs must answer questions about who, what, when, where, how, agencies involved, victims, volatility of situation, where involved family members should go for information, and when next press briefing will occur*
    - ▶ *Ensure TPs convey and recognize gravity of event, sensitivity to victims*
    - ▶ *Ensure TPs answer what you cannot provide at this time and why*
    - ▶ *Prepare the speaker to respond to rumors and social media reports*
- ☐ Ensure DA, SA or US Atty is involved, as needed
- ☐ Ensure speakers have unobstructed access into and out of press conference area

SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT PRESS CONFERENCE

- ☐ Brief speakers on information currently being reported
- ☐ Focus TPs on new information available
- ☐ Provide timely information
- ☐ Clarify facts where errors and rumors persist in media reporting or in social media
- ☐ Identify when the next press briefing will occur

TEN TIPS TO PERFECT YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

1 **Do no harm. Words have consequences. Use the right words.**

2 **Don't babble. Know what to say. Say it, repeat it.**

3 **If you don't know the answer, stop talking.**

4 **Focus on informing the audience. Use common language.**

5 **Expect everything you say to appear in print and the electronic media.**

6 **Never lie.**

7 **Don't make promises you can't keep.**

8 **Avoid using "No comment," explain why you can't.**

9 **Don't argue or lose your cool. The media always wins.**

10 **Don't speculate, guess or accept assumptions.**

For questions or additional assistance contact:

Your local FBI Office:

FBI Headquarters
National Press Office: (202) 324-3691

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Checklists for chiefs, sheriffs, command staff and public information officers

CRISIS COMMUNICATION
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Individuals who handle crisis communications in response to an active shooter, mass casualty, or other law enforcement incident can establish the tone of future media coverage and the public's perception through their initial actions. More comprehensive guides are available; however, this quick guide can be a valuable resource in the initial, hectic moments. Facts and circumstances of each incident dictate the appropriate crisis communication response.

In today's electronic world you must be prepared for attention from national media, coverage by social media, families, and even the subject, watching your every move.

PRE-EVENT

1 **Maintain updated contact lists for all area Public Information Officers (PIOs)**
- ☐ Police, Fire, EMS, FBI
- ☐ City officials, schools, public venues, hospitals, morgue, etc.
- ☐ Names, titles, all phone and email information

2 **Pre-identify methods available for joint communications**
- ☐ Email lists, conference call capabilities at each agency
- ☐ Develop MOUs with surrounding LE to assist with media response
- ☐ Obtain proper names and titles for all agency chiefs
- ☐ Obtain digital seals for each department for press releases

3 **Obtain local media contact information, including means to deliver press releases**

ONSET OF INCIDENT

1 **Request additional media assistance**
- ☐ Staff will answer phones, manage press conferences, maintain a media log, coordinate with Incident/Unified Command, navigate social media, and write press releases and talking points

2 **Determine the information can be released in the first minutes by dispatchers in response to calls from other first responders, media, and the public**

3 **Coordination among PIOs**
- ☐ Identify and contact PIOs from all entities affected
- ☐ Agree to preferred method for joint communications and whether email chain, bridge line, conference calls
- ☐ Agree to limit investigative information release to agencies on a need-to-know basis
- ☐ Identify **single** agency and phone numbers to which all media calls will be referred for official information
  (This can change later, but pick one for now)
- ☐ Identify agreed upon re-contact time
- ☐ Agree with information, if any, that may be released while initial coordination efforts are underway

may... | Release staging area for media trucks
| Identify agency assets responding to scene **to include types:** *SWAT, bomb squad, etc.*
| Identify lead agency for media calls

may or may not... | Confirm shots fired or other incident details

may not... | Answer questions regarding other agency responders
| Indicate **numbers** of either shots fired or victims; dead or injured

4 **Coordinate with Incident/Unified Command**
- ☐ Identify PIO who will maintain contact with Incident/Unified Command
- ☐ Identify Incident spokesperson
- ☐ Determine what information can be released immediately to assist investigation and allay public concern to include:
  - ▸ *Type of incident occurring*
  - ▸ *Agencies responding*
  - ▸ *Location of incident*
  - ▸ *Number of suspect(s)*
  - ▸ *Whether suspect(s) are still at large*
  - ▸ *Cautions and directions to the public*
  - ▸ *Closing or lock-downs of schools or other facilities*
  - ▸ *Road closures, alternative routes*
  - ▸ *Airspace restrictions for media*
  - ▸ *Family reunification location*
  - ▸ *Other details*

- ☐ Brief Incident/Unified Command on current information in the media
- ☐ Identify initial staging area for media trucks and camera
- ☐ Determine whether media helicopters will be allowed in airspace
- ☐ Identify traffic limitation/directions for press trucks
- ☐ Identify potential press conference location
- ☐ Request perimeter security to media staging area, if available
- ☐ Identify what information, if any, police/sheriff department dispatchers and personnel can confirm
- ☐ Relay all information to group PIOs