

Media Relations Guidelines for Civil Air Patrol

Air Force Assigned and Corporate Missions

News Releases

- Approval for typical AFAMs (SAR, DR, intercept, etc.) comes from 1st Air Force (AF), 11th AF, PACAF C-NAF or CAP-USAF. Wings will make requests to the NOC to obtain approvals from 1st AF, 11th AF, PACAF C-NAF or CAP-USAF. The NOC will coordinate with NHQ/PA as appropriate.
- Prior to a request for approval from NHQ/PA, wings will secure approval from federal, state and local customers for release of information and imagery and will note those approvals in all requests.
- For high-profile missions, NHQ/PA will edit content as appropriate and forward all requests for dissemination of news releases and photos to the 1st AF Public Affairs office, 11th AF and PACAF C-NAF as appropriate for approval.
- For news releases and photos/videos that are not high-profile, the IC approves or coordinates with the customer and/or the approving authority as appropriate. NHQ will note desired turnaround time on requests for approval to 1st AF Public Affairs, 11th AF and PACAF C-NAF and will call to alert staff when a release for a high-profile mission is being developed.
- Operational missions are executed at the wing level with support from subordinate units. The responsibility for use of social media for current mission activities rests with the incident commander and will be overseen by the incident PIO or a member designated by the incident commander under the direction of the incident PIO. The incident PIO will ensure that CAP social media operations will be conducted in accordance with existing CAP regulations and will not violate Operational Security (OPSEC) requirements. These activities will be accomplished in consultation with or directly by or through the wing PAO and commander to ensure a consistent public presence and positive impression is maintained between day-to-day activities and mission operations.

Media flights

- All flights carrying media personnel will be coordinated through the NOC – no exceptions. For AFAMs, the NOC will coordinate Air Force approval following the non-CAP passenger approval process.

- Early notification of media ride-along requests to the NOC and NHQ/PA is critical – the sooner the better. Early requests increase the probability of ride-along approval. Don't wait until you know the specific names of media to ride along. The names can be provided later.

Corporate Missions

News Releases

- Corporate ("C") mission news releases are approved at the wing level by the commander or the commander's designees, but assistance is always available from the NOC and NHQ/PA.
- PAOs will work with the NOC and NHQ/PA for approval of local releases for high-profile events or activities on corporate missions.

Media flights

- All flights carrying media personnel will be coordinated through the NOC – no exceptions. The NOC will coordinate NHQ/DO approval on corporate missions.

Tips for All Missions

- Appropriate lead time is essential for securing approvals. Do not expect a same-day turnaround when submitting approval requests after 1 p.m. Central Time. PAO/PIOs should alert the NOC and NHQ/PA when a release is under development or has been forwarded for approval using the phone numbers and email addresses below. Timeliness is critical; deadlines may need to be adjusted to take advantage of media opportunities. PAO/PIOs must alert NHQ/PA to current and changing timetables as well as changing IC and PIO responsibilities. Please understand that though the staff will work to meet short suspenses, the NOC and NHQ/PA are not the approval authorities and cannot guarantee approval.
- If you have any questions, call and ask for help. The NOC duty officer is available 24/7/365 at 888-211-1812, ext. 300. NHQ/PA is available during duty hours at 877-227-9142, ext. 251 and after hours via the NOC email or at scox@capnhq.gov.

Imagery

- Videos and photos posted by customers online may be used for publicity purposes.
- All other videos and photos must be coordinated with the customer prior to release. Photos and video approvals should be obtained at the same time news releases are approved. Following customer approval, send to NHQ/PA for coordination with 1st Air Force/PA for approval.
- Non-CAP members must give approval to CAP to use their photo or video for publicity purposes. Email approval is acceptable.
- If the background of the photo is sensitive, it will require approval by the NOC and/or NHQ/PA (and possibly the AF) prior to release. For example, photos inside another agency's facilities or with another agency's personnel in the background will require coordination with that agency. The member who desires to use this photo for publicity purposes should get written approval locally beforehand to expedite this process.
- Photos must be accompanied by a photo caption and photo credit. Since most viewers do not listen to the audio, videos must include suggested captions that complement the footage with significant data and mission/activity details.
- A good photo may not be usable if we cannot get approval to use it because nobody documented who was in it.

Natural Disaster Coverage

- When you see preparedness messages, alerts and warnings on TV for large areas, especially multiple states, consider the mission to be high-profile. Although local news releases generated from "C" missions are approved by the wing commander, PAOs will coordinate with NHQ/PA for all news releases and photos related to high-profile natural disasters.
- Most high-profile natural disaster missions will be AFAMs, meaning that any related news releases and photos will require higher-level approval. Send requests to NHQ/PA for coordination with 1st AF Public Affairs, 11th AF or PACAF C-NAF as appropriate for approval. NHQ/PA coordinates the release of photos, videos and information with other NHQ offices, if necessary, and edits the releases prior to going to the Air Force.

Crisis Communications

In consultation with their commanders, PAOs at the wing and region levels will develop a crisis public affairs plan to ensure a rapid and effective response during an emergency that may damage the organization's reputation if mishandled. Crisis public affairs plans will reflect guidance outlined in "How to Write Crisis Communications Plan" posted online in the PAO Toolkit.

All crisis communications plans will be approved by the wing commander or designated representative. Crisis plans will be submitted to wing PAOs for review and input on the template in eServices.