

Blaine County Sheriff's Office

Community Relations Office

Standard Operating Procedures



Integrity, Excellence, Fairness, & Respect

~Est 2020~



Community Relations Office Standard Operating Procedures



Mission Statement

The mission of the Community Relations Office is to create workable relationships by creating a positive environment for our workforce and residents of Blaine County. We want to focus on what matters to our community, achieving justice, providing factual and reliable advice, and keeping you updated.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Relations Office (CRO) is to establish and maintain guidelines for the presentation of information to the community. This ensures that all information is factual, reliable, and effectively disseminated.

1.2.0 Core Values

- **Integrity**
We hold ourselves accountable to the highest level of ethical and moral standards. We are role models acting with courage and building trust within our community to provide the best law enforcement services & protection for Blaine County.
- **Excellence**
We at the BCSO strive to exceed our resident's expectations consistently. Our deputies strive for continuous improvement in self and service to propel the BCSO further to achieve greater accomplishment and performance for themselves and their community.
- **Fairness**
We are committed to consistently treating our residents equally and impartially regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other protected or unique factor. Our deputies are socially open-minded and unbiased in their conduct and actions.
- **Respect**
Respect is at the core of every interaction with our residents. We value empathy and professionalism and will consistently demonstrate these values to our residents.

Section 2: Hiring Process

2.1.0 Application Requirements

The following items must be met before applying to the Community Relations Office, otherwise, your application may be denied or placed on hold until all requirements are met.

- MUST hold or surpass the rank of Deputy II
- MUST have no disciplinary action within the last 30 days
- MUST be active within BCSO
- MUST be in good standing with BCSO CoC

Applicants may be denied for reasons not specified.

2.2.0 Application Process

Applications to join the Community Relations Office will be open from the 1st through the 10th of each month. Applicants who wish to be a part of the Community Relations Office must apply using [this form](#), which can also be found on the Community Relations Office Portal. Once the application is submitted, a lieutenant or above will review it. If accepted, the applicant will be informed and move forward with the interview process if deemed necessary. After receiving a message of application approval, you have 14 days to arrange an interview with a Lieutenant or above if required.



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2.3.0 Interview Process

An interview may be utilized to further vet an applicant. This interview shall be recorded for quality assurance and documentation purposes.

Failure to schedule an interview, if requested, within 14 days may result in your application being denied. Being denied comes with a 14-day application hold for the Community Relations Office. After the 14-day application waiting period, you may reapply.

2.4.0 Retention Bonus

The Community Relations Office offers a **\$5,000.00** retention bonus for deputies who complete the application and interview process (if applicable) outlined in sections 2.2.0 and 2.3.0 (if applicable). To receive the retention bonus, deputies must remain under an active status per section 7.2.0 for their first three months as a Community Relations Deputy.

Section 3: Division Structure

3.1.0 Position Structure

The Community Relations Office's position structure can be found below.

Lead Community Relations Deputy

The Lead Community Relations Deputy holds the highest position within the CRO. This position is responsible for overseeing the office's overall operations, including distributing and approving information intended for the public. The Lead Community Relations Deputy manages the office workflow, ensuring all tasks and projects are completed to the highest standards. This role involves close coordination with BCSO Command Staff to align the CRO's activities with the broader goals of the Sheriff's Office.

Senior Community Relations Deputy

Senior Community Relations Deputies act as team leaders within the CRO, providing guidance and supervision to Community Relations Deputies. They are responsible for initiating and overseeing projects the Lead Community Relations Deputy assigns. This position marks the beginning of the Community Relations Chain of Command, ensuring that all team activities are well-coordinated and efficiently executed.

Community Relations Deputy

Community Relations Deputies are the backbone of the CRO and are responsible for executing tasks and projects as assigned by the Senior Community Relations Deputies. They work on the ground to gather information, prepare releases, and engage with the community.



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Section 4: Responsibilities

4.1.0 General Responsibilities

Above all, it is the responsibility of the Community Relations Office to release factual information in a timely and efficient manner.

Community Relations Deputies are all responsible for:

- Ensuring the BCSO Newsletter is completed and released promptly.
- Ensuring information is disseminated correctly to the media.
- Ensuring relevant information is gained from scenes for future releases.
- Preparing various releases related to police incidents and department events.
- Coordinating and authorizing the release of information related to confidential and ongoing investigations.
- Coordinating with various branches of the Blaine County Sheriff's Office and other relevant departments.
- Serving death notices (Agency only, if a Supervisor is unavailable).
- Other duties as assigned.

4.2.0 Position Specific Responsibilities

The Community Relations Office has specific responsibilities depending on one's position. Below are the additional duties for Graphic Designers, Video Editors, Subdivision Representatives, and Floaters.

4.2.1 Graphic Designers

In addition to the General Responsibilities listed in 4.1.0, the Community Relations Office Graphic Designers are responsible for:

- Developing graphics to be used by the Community Relations Office for events, banners, recruitment posters, etc.
- Editing current graphics for a more modern design.
- Assisting Subdivision Representatives in the development of an event banner to be posted in the MidwestRP® Official Discord Server.
- Developing a meeting banner to be posted in the "#meeting-announcements" and "#bcso-announcements" channels in the MidwestRP® Official Discord Server as needed.

4.2.2 Video Editors

In addition to the General Responsibilities listed in 4.1.0, the Community Relations Office Video Editors are responsible for:

- Developing and editing videos to be used by the Community Relations Office for events, recruitment videos, showcases, etc.
- Assisting Subdivision Representatives in the development of subdivision-related videos for showcases, recruitment, etc.



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4.2.3 Subdivision Representatives

In addition to the General Responsibilities listed in 4.1.0, the Community Relations Office Subdivision Representatives are responsible for:

- Ensuring proper information regarding the respective subdivision is gathered for the newsletter.
- Act as a liaison between the Community Relations Office and the respective subdivision.
- Assist the respective subdivision in planning, organizing, and executing events.
- Attend subdivision-related events as a Community Relations Deputy.

4.2.4 Floaters

In addition to the General Responsibilities listed in 4.1.0, the Community Relations Office Floaters are responsible for:

- Assisting Graphic Designers, Video Editors, or Subdivision Representatives in their responsibilities outlined in 4.2.1 through 4.2.3.

4.3.0 Community Relations Office Specialized Teams

Within the Community Relations Office, three specialized teams focus on specific duties, these teams are outlined in the sections below.

4.3.1 Events Team

The Community Relations Office Events Team is responsible for:

- Developing, coordinating, and conducting events for the Blaine County Sheriff's Office on a regular or as-directed basis.
- Assist Subdivision Representatives in developing, coordinating, and conducting of events for subdivision-related events.

4.3.2 Recruitment and Promotion Team

The Community Relations Office Recruitment and Promotion Team is responsible for:

- In partnership with the events team, conducting recruitment events for the Blaine County Sheriff's Office such as a career fair, showcase, etc.
- Promote the Blaine County Sheriff's Office at events where a law enforcement presence is requested or required.

4.3.3 Public Relations Team

The Community Relations Office Public Relations Team is responsible for:

- Developing and releasing public releases to be released in the "#pio-releases" channel in the MidwestRP® Official Discord Server.
- Conducting press conferences for San Andreas media outlets for ongoing or past events that involve the Blaine County Sheriff's Office.
- Being the media's point of contact for any statement requests.
 - Statements shall not be made before conferring with a member of the Blaine County Sheriff's Office Chain of Command Team.



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Section 5: Releases

5.1.0 Press Releases

Press releases may be completed on any incident that may have a significant interest or impact on members of the public. Press releases must meet the following criteria before being published:

- All press releases shall be approved by a Senior or Lead Community Relations Deputy.
- All press releases shall be correctly formatted to provide all information in a professional, easy-to-read way.
- All press releases shall redact personal details such as, but not limited to, exact addresses, names, relationships, etc. unless permission is given from those to be named.
 - Exact addresses may be used for anything other than private residences.
 - Addresses may be given in the form of "Blocks".
 - For example, if an incident occurred at 624 Route 68, the release would read "...the 620 block of Route 68..."
- All press releases shall be disseminated in a written, video, picture, or a combination thereof.

5.1.1 Most Common Press Releases

Some of the most common types of press releases are outlined below:

- Officer Involved Shootings
- Law Enforcement-Related Injuries
- Use of Force related incidents
- Successful Operations
- Public Safety and Missing Person Notices
- City, County, or Statewide Manhunts

5.2.0 Newsletter

The BCSO Newsletter is a monthly release. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep the Sheriff's Office, other Public Agencies, and the Blaine County community informed of any department changes or promotions. The newsletter must meet the following criteria before being published:

- The newsletter shall be approved by a Lieutenant, Captain, or a member of BCSO Command.
- The newsletter shall be correctly formatted to provide all information in a professional, easy-to-read way.
- The newsletter shall be disseminated in written form but may include pictures or videos within the newsletter.



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Section 6: Events

6.1.0 Public Events

Public Events are defined as events that are open to members of the public and other public agencies (SAHP, LSPD, SAFR, SACD, etc) and do not have an entry requirement.

6.2.0 Private Events

Private Events are defined as events that are not open to members of the public and have some kind of entry requirement, such as, but are not limited to, being a member of a public agency.

6.3.0 Subdivision Events

Subdivision Events are defined as events that are hosted in partnership with the Traffic Safety Division, Safe Streets Bureau, or San Andreas Parks and Wildlife. These events can also be classified as Public or Private Events, depending on entry requirements.

6.4.0 Division Events

Division Events are defined as events that are hosted in partnership with the Field Training Office, Department of Corrections, or Internal Affairs Division. These events can also be classified as Public or Private Events, depending on entry requirements.



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Section 7: Policies

7.1.0 Important Disclosure Policy

This Standard Operating Procedure reflects most but not all policies and procedures in the Community Relations Office. Action may be taken on infractions not listed within the SOP if deemed the infraction, though not explicitly written in this document, is unreasonable, disrespectful, or demonstrates poor judgment.

7.2.0 Activity Policy

The Community Relations Office activity is based on a monthly, point-based cycle. Community Relations Deputies are required to attain 5 points per cycle. The following are the point systems:

Task	Point(s) Gained
Completing two sections on the BCSO Monthly Newsletter	One
Complete one event (hosted in or out of game)	Five
Complete one Recruitment and Promotion Event	Five
Develop and release a public relations release in #pio-releases	Two

The Community Relations Office operates on a “three strikes, you’re out” policy for inactivity. Below is the relationship of inactive cycles to action taken.

- Failure to attain 5 points within a 1-month span will result in an inactivity strike being issued and documented.
- Failure to attain 10 points within a 2-month span will result in a second inactivity strike being issued and documented.
 - Deputies issued a second strike may be subject to removal from the “Monetary Bonus Policy” and “Vehicle Bonus Policy” from this section until requirements are met to become active.
- Failure to attain 15 points within a 3-month span may result in a third inactivity strike being issued and documented.
 - After receiving a third strike, a deputy may be subject to removal from the Community Relations Office.

Strikes may be removed after completing two cycles under an active status.

7.2.1 Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

If a deputy takes a Leave Of Absence (LOA), they must notify the Community Relations Office Leadership Team before leave begins. For every active cycle, one inactivity strike is removed.



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7.3.0 Monetary Bonus Policy

At the discretion of a Lead Community Relations Deputy, members of the Community Relations Office may be awarded a monetary bonus. This bonus is outside of the \$5,000.00 Retention Bonus outlined in 2.4.0 and must be approved by a Lieutenant or above before payout.

7.4.0 Vehicle Bonus Policy

During events, a Relations Deputy is authorized to use the BCSO Challenger, which is distinctly marked and equipped with a light bar. While operating the challenger, the Relations Deputy is restricted from responding to emergency calls or conducting traffic stops. The Relations Deputy must return the challenger promptly after the event.

7.4.1 Non-Community Relations Deputy Vehicle Bonus Policy

At the discretion of a Lieutenant or above, members of the Community Relations Office may be awarded a one to two-vehicle structure boost to be used during normal (non-Community Relations Deputy) patrol. For example, if a Deputy III is a member of the Community Relations Office and receives this bonus, the deputy may use the Senior Deputy or Master Deputy vehicle structure as directed by the Lieutenant or above, awarding the bonus.

7.5.0 Social Media Usage Policy

The Community Relations Office has access to the BCSO Official Twitter account. This account should be used for professional and official business only. Official business could include posting about ongoing situations, current or planned events, or recruitment and promotion of the department. Contact a Senior Community Relations Deputy for the username and password associated with this account.

7.6.0 Attachment Policy

Community Relations Deputies have the authority to respond to major incidents occurring within the BCSO's jurisdiction that require immediate attention or involve interactions with the public, including news teams.

A CRO should only attach to a call for service once the primary reason for the call has been resolved. For instance, in the case of a bank robbery, a CRO should only attach to the incident after the perpetrator has been detained. At that point, the CRO can self-attach to gather statements, photos, and any other pertinent information.

When a CRO Deputy arrives at the scene, their role is solely to complete a press release and carry out CRO duties specific to that scene. They should focus on providing relevant information to the press and addressing any community concerns.

It is important for CROs to understand that their involvement in such incidents should be limited to their designated responsibilities and should not interfere with the primary operations of law enforcement personnel.



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7.7.0 Background Check Policy

The Blaine County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) Community Relations Office (CRO) is authorized to conduct background checks on employees of established MidwestRP businesses under the following conditions:

1. Written Permission Requirement

- Requirement: Background checks may only be conducted if the employee has provided written permission.
- Documentation: Written permission must be documented either in the form of a signed employment contract or a separate permission form explicitly authorizing the background check.

2. Scope of Information Released

- Authorization: The CRO is authorized to release only basic information regarding an employee's criminal record.
- Permissible Information:
 - The number of misdemeanors on the employee's record.
 - The number of felonies on the employee's record.
- Prohibited Information: Specific details such as the nature of the charges, circumstances of the offenses, and any other particulars are strictly prohibited from being disclosed to civilian requests.

3. Procedure

- Request Submission: Businesses requesting a background check must submit a formal request to the CRO.
- Accompanying Documentation: The request must be accompanied by the employee's written permission.
- Processing: The CRO shall process the request and provide the authorized information within a reasonable timeframe.

4. Confidentiality and Recordkeeping

- Confidentiality: All background check requests and responses must be treated as confidential.
- Record Maintenance: The CRO must maintain records of all background check requests and the corresponding responses.

