

Issue Date: 1/24/2003

# **PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE AND DESIGNATED SPOKESPEOPLE**

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## **I. Purpose**

This directive establishes the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Designated Spokespeople and provides guidelines relating to the disclosure of official DHS information to accredited new organizations and mass media.

## **II. Scope**

This directive applies to all DHS Headquarters elements.

## **III. Authorities**

This directive is governed by numerous Executive Orders, Public Laws, and national policy, such as:

- A. Public Law 93-502 (Freedom of Information Act, as amended);
- B. Public Law 93-579 (Privacy Act of 1974);
- C. 6 C.F.R. Part 5

## **IV. Definitions**

Not applicable.

## **V. Responsibilities**

The Assistance Secretary for Public Affairs, Under Secretaries, and Designated DHS Senior Officials shall be responsible for ensuring that all DHS employees comply with the policies and procedures listed below.

## VI. Policy & Procedures

### A. Designated Spokespeople:

1. Unless otherwise delegated, official spokespeople for DHS are:
  - a. The Secretary,
  - b. Deputy secretary,
  - c. Under secretaries,
  - d. Assistant Secretaries, and
  - e. Designated spokespeople within Office of Public Affairs (OPA).
2. All principles should coordinate all media responses with the designated OPA point of contact for that issue area.

### B. General Public Affairs Guidance:

1. It is the policy of DHS to maintain the public trust by proactively providing timely and accurate information to the general public, the Congress and the news media about DHS efforts to protect the homeland.
2. Through authorized spokespersons, OPA should respond in a professional and timely manner to all incoming media requests for information, interviews, and roll footage.
3. Authorized individuals who release information shall exercise due care to preserve privileged information, protect the rights of individuals, and comply with applicable policy, regulations and laws, including the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act.
4. Additionally, responses to the media should be tempered by considerations for the potential impact on public safety, on-going criminal/civil investigations, sensitive foreign activities, pre-decisional matters, operational factors, the exchange of intelligence, matters in litigations and time involved to obtain the information in question.
5. OPA shall function as the news media's principal point of contact. All media inquiries should be directed to the OPA.
6. The issuance of all press statements, news releases and interviews shall be coordinated in advance through OPA.

C. The procedures set forth in this directive are for DHS internal use only and create no private rights, benefits or privileges for any private person.

D. **Questions or Concerns Regarding the Process:** Any questions or concerns regarding this directive should be addressed to the Office of Public