



Tallahassee Police Department Media Guidelines

On-Call Number

The PIO for the Tallahassee Police Department is on call 24/7 to the **agency**. As it relates to requests for interviews, public records, requests for updates and information regarding an incident that is not an incident alert; media partners will only be addressed during **regular business hours, excluding holidays and weekends**. (Please see incident alert guideline further in the document for more details.)

The only number a media outlet or reporter should use to contact the PIO is **850-891-4085**. Please distribute this number to ALL news personnel who will, at any point, need to get in contact with the PIO. These requests include: all incident inquiries, incident reports, or interviews. Not using this number for your request **will result** in a delayed response. This number does **not** accept text messages, always **call first** and allow the on-call person the opportunity (**a minimum of 1 hour to exclude holidays and weekends**) to answer/respond to your request. If the on-call person is unable to immediately answer your call, do not call another person on the team. Calling someone else slows down the timeline to get the desired information. Allow the person on-call to have the opportunity to return your call and assist with your request. If you would like to submit a request for information or an interview via email, please do so using the tpdinfo@talgov.com email address.

TOPS

While monitoring TOPS can give insight into what our officers are responding to, those monitoring the site must remember it does not always accurately reflect the nature of the call. TOPS shows all 911 calls and statistics for our area. As an investigation unfolds this information changes. For example, a person might think they heard shots fired and that's what the call is initially input as. However, officers may arrive on scene and determine the person heard fireworks. Additionally, please ensure you're always contacting the primary agency on a case. TPD will never be the primary agency for a fire (TFD), a crash handled by Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), or a case worked by the Sheriff's Office (LCSO).

Social First

As a department, we are migrating to a social-first format. This is where all information lives in real-time. When a critical incident happens, **always check social media** (Facebook and Twitter) first for the initial information as well as any additional follow-ups. The incident alerts will always include the information that can be released to the public at the time, without impeding the efforts of the detectives. If the information is not included in the incident alert, **it is likely not available for public release yet or protected under Florida Statute 119**. Unless requesting an interview, there is rarely a need to call for additional information immediately after an incident alert is released.



Incident Alert Guidelines

When will Incident Alerts be released?

- When an incident involves **life-threatening or multiple** injuries.

What is identified as an Incident Alert?

- Shooting/Stabbing with life-threatening injuries, or multiple victims involved.
- Traffic crash with life threatening injuries or fatality.
- Barricaded subject.
- Any incident not listed above involving significant or multiple victims with injuries.
- Major road closures.

What information will go into an Incident Alert?

- What the incident is being investigated as. (i.e., shooting, suspicious death investigation, stabbing)
- Where the incident occurred.
 - Business – exact address
 - Residence – block of address
 - Apartment complex – the name of the complex
- When the incident occurred. (date and time)
- Victim description; male or female, adult or juvenile (teenager or child)
- Extent of injuries. (life-threatening or deceased)
- Where the road is closed and a reminder for motorists to avoid the area.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Shootings or incidents with injuries that are **non-life threatening** and do not meet the criteria for an incident alert will be **emailed simultaneously to media partners the following day** with an outline of what happened.

The email will read:

TPD is investigating a shooting/incident that occurred on ___ at ___ in the ___ block of ___.



One person, (victim description) sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

This is an open and active investigation. No further information is available at this time regarding this case. To request a public record regarding this incident please email tpdpublicrecords@talgov.com and reference case number _____.

After Hours/Follow-up Calls

When significant incidents occur, the on-call PIO will be notified by the department. The information is then placed on social media. If you are monitoring TOPS and a call is more than 2 hours old, it likely did not rise to the level of an incident alert. When this happens, please wait until **normal business hours (excluding holidays and weekends)** to inquire about it.

Commonly Used Terms

- Agency Assist: TPD is not the primary agency on the scene/case and will not provide any details regarding the incident.
- Ages
 - Adult: 18 and above
 - Teen: 13-17
 - Child: 2-12
 - Infant: 0-1
- Autopsy: If a cause of death is not immediately able to be determined results can take 2-4 weeks or more for the Medical Examiner to determine an official cause of death.
- Death investigation: A person has been found deceased and an investigation has been launched to determine more regarding the circumstances.
- Homicide: Preliminary findings determined the death was caused by another person or it was the result of a criminal act.
- No foul play suspected: Preliminary findings determined the deceased person/victim does not appear to have been attacked by another person or the incident itself was not the result of a criminal act.