

# Public Communications and Information Policy

## Overview:

These restrictions intended to make to protect the privacy of a victim, sensitive information, and to protect against civil action toward MAT-SAR or damage of it's reputation. Furthermore, this policy is in place to protect our members and affiliates from similar repercussions.

All members must adhere to these rules and have the responsibility to seek understanding. Failure to adhere to this document may result in the suspension or termination of a member from a mission or MAT-SAR.

## Purpose:

Members of a search and rescue team are often given and trusted with sensitive information by controlling agencies and leadership of the unit. The purpose of an acceptable use policy is to retain the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information disseminated to and from MAT-SAR. Furthermore, it protects the organization, members, and third-parties from damaging legal cost, loss of trust, irreparable public opinion.

## Scope:

This policy applies to any information disseminated by word-of-mouth, document, or through electronic communication regarding searches, internal operations, or training that has not been released publicly by the controlling agency or the MAT-SAR board.

## Confidentiality:

Any information acquired about a search, training, or other internal operation is considered confidential until the controlling agency or the MAT-SAR board says otherwise. Information may be talked about internally with other MAT-SAR members or the controlling agency unless a board member or team leader has stated otherwise. Information shall always be available to the board, Incident command, or team leaders .

## Social Media & Victim Privacy

1. As a MAT-SAR Representative and In order to protect the privacy of the lost party, the family/friends, or volunteers and to protect from civil liability, we ask you to follow these rules:
  - a. Refrain from posting or discussing information that has not been released by the police or releasing your own speculations of a case. Furthermore, do not provide exact locations of searches, number of operators, names of lost parties, ages, or other search details without permission from a board member
  - b. Refrain from giving news or other public media sources information of any sort without permission from a board member
  - c. Do not engage the family, friends, significant others, or emergent volunteers about the search unless asked to do so by a board member.
  - d. Any opinions you publicize should be disclaimed that they are not the views or opinion of MAT-SAR and are yours alone. As a representative of MAT-SAR please be attentive to the things you are saying; be a good advocate of the agency and lost parties.

## Persons authorized to release information or speak with the media:

In order to prevent tarnish of a search, loss of trust, or misinformation, the only persons allowed to release information or speak to the media re the President, Vice President, Head of Board, Communications Officer, or a person appointed by the former mentioned.

## Enforcement:

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in suspension from the current or subsequent search, mission, or trainings. As a result of a suspension a complaint shall be filed with the board and may result in a membership termination.