



MEMORANDUM

Subject: Brown County Sheriff's Office Press Release Policy

Date: November 4, 2022

Due to questions concerning the release of public information and the production of press releases by the Brown County Sheriff's Office, the following response is provided.

The Brown County Sheriff's Office is defined by the Ohio Revised Code as a "Public Office" and therefore, is required by law to follow all public information release requirements listed in Ohio Revised Code (O.R.C.) Chapter 149 (also known as the Ohio Public Records Act).

While O.R.C. 149.43 does provide specific exemptions to withhold certain information, the majority of the information developed by a law enforcement agency to include information contained in an initial offense report is required to be released upon request by a person or journalist/news organization within a reasonable time period. Public Offices that fail to produce releasable information in a reasonable time period can be sanctioned.

When the Brown County Sheriff's Office receives a request from a journalist/news organization or an investigation is initiated in which there is high probability that multiple requests for information related to the investigation will be received, a press release is generated. The information contained in a press release meets the information release requirements found in O.R.C. 149 and case law requirements issued by Ohio courts of jurisdiction.

The intent of the Ohio Public Records Act is to provide transparency by requiring government offices to provide timely information upon request that is defined by law as releasable information. The Brown County Sheriff's Office complies with statutory requirements through the use of press releases or other records in accordance with O.R.C. Chapter 149.

Sheriff Gordon Ellis