# Police given new news guidelines

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the media, said Lt. Jerry Carlin, commander of the Rochester Hills contingent of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

They have a function [illegible] Lieutenant Carlin [illegible] they can help [illegible] where they present [illegible] to whether a suspect [illegible]

[illegible] Lieutenant Carlin said [illegible] officers. Lt. William [illegible] [illegible] and reports.

He said suspect [illegible] police were generally [illegible] [illegible] Lieutenant Carlin [illegible] [illegible]

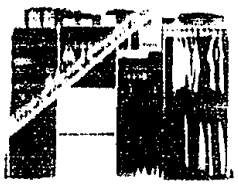
In West Bloomfield Township, Lt. Michael Mulligan has similar responsibilities in addition to routine police assignments.

We try to be helpful, he said. But we certainly won't give any information that will mess up a case.

Donald F. Zimmerman, chief of the Bloomfield Township police, said his department is fortunate to have a people-oriented traffic [illegible] particularly fatalities. [illegible] simply don't release the names of people until all the relatives are notified. "Sometimes [illegible] that we generally release the information [illegible]

## Agency needs medical audits

[illegible]

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# News issue surfaces belatedly

Continued from Page 10

lice logs reporters say, prevents them from knowing a report even exists.

Called reports make reporters second-class citizens, if unedited originals are issued to attorneys or insurance investigators. Two other groups whose members routinely view police records, said veteran reporter Tim Richard, Richard is news service director for Suburban Communications Corp., the parent company of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and the company's expert on Freedom of Information law.

While all states have a Freedom of Information requests on the spot, Richard said, there is no guarantee the requests will force police to release the information.

Dangerous said the same situation [illegible] more than a generation [illegible]

[illegible] Richard said. There is no guarantee the requests will force police to release the information.

Dangerous said the same situation [illegible] more than a generation [illegible]

[illegible] Information requests on the spot, Richard said. There is no guarantee the requests will force police to release the information.

***Police departments and newspapers have been equally jittery over publication of crime suspect names.***

demanded police alert the media that a convicted child molester had been detained by police after loitering near a local elementary school.

Police, however, say they are bound by the Freedom of Information Act and protecting public interest in withholding selected details.

Police departments and newspapers have been equally jittery over publication of crime suspect names in the wake of a recent lawsuit in which a Battle Creek man sue[illegible] police said after he was arrested, [illegible] charged on a rape case. [illegible] the man said the news [illegible]

[illegible] the Freedom of Information Act has been hailed as a man[illegible] citizens an absolute right to police information.

POLICE CAN withhold crime information if it:

- Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.
- Interferes with law enforcement proceedings.
- Deprives a person of the right to a fair trial or impartial adjudication.
- Discloses the identity of a confidential source or, in the case of a criminal investigation, disclosing confidential information furnished only by a confidential source.
- Discloses investigative techniques or procedures.
- Endangers the life or physical safety of law enforcement personnel.

The first provision — dealing with privacy rights — is the key, said veteran Detroit news investigative reporter Fred Girard, who like Richard is a member of Michigan FOI Committee.

"The key is that word unwarranted," Girard said. "There hasn't been a court challenge yet, and there should be."

In an earlier court ruling, called a key one by Girard, police lost the right to restrict information on the grounds their investigation wasn't complete. The case, Evening News Association vs. the City of Troy, involved the shooting death of an alleged crime suspect by police in the Oakland County community.

What that ruling did was take away their crutch that information couldn't be released just because there was an ongoing investigation, Girard said.

What remains to be seen, whether a new challenge of a [illegible] ruling will make it easier or more difficult to obtain police records.


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