
Records Maintenance and Release

805.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance on the maintenance and release of department records. Protected information is separately covered in the Protected Information Policy.

805.2 POLICY

The Merced Police Department is committed to providing public access to records in a manner that is consistent with the California Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250 et seq.).

805.3 CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief of Police shall designate a Custodian of Records. The responsibilities of the Custodian of Records include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Managing the records management system for the Department, including the retention, archiving, release and destruction of department public records.
- (b) Maintaining and updating the department records retention schedule including:
 1. Identifying the minimum length of time the Department must keep records.
 2. Identifying the department division responsible for the original record.
- (c) Establishing rules regarding the inspection and copying of department public records as reasonably necessary for the protection of such records.
- (d) Identifying records or portions of records that are confidential under state or federal law and not open for inspection or copying.
- (e) Establishing rules regarding the processing of subpoenas for the production of records.
- (f) Ensuring a current schedule of fees for public records as allowed by law is available (Government Code § 6253).
- (g) Determining how the department's website may be used to post public records in accordance with Government Code § 6253.
- (h) Ensuring that public records posted on the Department website meet the requirements of Government Code § 6253.10 including, but not limited to, posting in an open format where a record may be retrieved, downloaded, indexed and searched by a commonly used Internet search application.
- (i) Ensuring that a list and description, when applicable, of enterprise systems (as defined by Government Code § 6270.5) is publicly available upon request and posted in a prominent location on the Department's website.

805.4 PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC RECORDS

Any department member who receives a request for any record shall route the request to the Custodian of Records or the authorized designee.

Merced Police Department

Merced PD Policy Manual

Records Maintenance and Release

805.4.1 REQUESTS FOR RECORDS

Any member of the public, including the media and elected officials, may access unrestricted records of this department, during regular business hours by submitting a written and signed request that reasonably describes each record sought and paying any associated fees (Government Code § 6253).

The processing of requests for any record is subject to the following (Government Code § 6253):

- (a) The Department is not required to create records that do not exist.
- (b) Victims of an incident or their authorized representative shall not be required to show proof of legal presence in the United States to obtain department records or information. If identification is required, a current driver's license or identification card issued by any state in the United States, a current passport issued by the United States or a foreign government with which the United States has a diplomatic relationship or current Matricula Consular card is acceptable (Government Code § 6254.30).
- (c) Either the requested record or the reason for non-disclosure will be provided promptly, but no later than 10 days from the date of request, unless unusual circumstances preclude doing so. If more time is needed, an extension of up to 14 additional days may be authorized by the Custodian of Records or the authorized designee. If an extension is authorized, the Department shall provide the requester written notice that includes the reason for the extension and the anticipated date of the response.
 - 1. When the request does not reasonably describe the records sought, the Custodian of Records shall assist the requester in making the request focused and effective in a way to identify the records or information that would be responsive to the request including providing assistance for overcoming any practical basis for denying access to the records or information. The Custodian of Records shall also assist in describing the information technology and physical location in which the record exists (Government Code § 6253.1).
 - 2. If the record requested is available on the department website, the requester may be directed to the location on the website where the record is posted. If the requester is unable to access or reproduce the record, a copy of the record shall be promptly provided.
- (d) Upon request, a record shall be provided in an electronic format utilized by the Department. Records shall not be provided only in electronic format unless specifically requested (Government Code § 6253.9).
- (e) When a record contains material with release restrictions and material that is not subject to release restrictions, the restricted material shall be redacted and the unrestricted material released.
 - 1. A copy of the redacted release should be maintained in the case file for proof of what was actually released and as a place to document the reasons for the redactions. If the record is audio or video, a copy of the redacted audio/video release should be maintained in the department-approved media storage system and a notation should be made in the case file to document the release and the reasons for the redacted portions.

Merced Police Department

Merced PD Policy Manual

Records Maintenance and Release

- (f) If a record request is denied in whole or part, the requester shall be provided a written response that includes the statutory exemption for withholding the record or facts that the public interest served by nondisclosure outweighs the interest served by disclosure (Government Code § 6255). The written response shall also include the names, titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial.

805.5 RELEASE RESTRICTIONS

Examples of release restrictions include:

- (a) Personal identifying information, including an individual's photograph; Social Security and driver identification numbers; name, address and telephone number; and medical or disability information that is contained in any driver license record, motor vehicle record or any department record, including traffic collision reports, are restricted except as authorized by the Department, and only when such use or disclosure is permitted or required by law to carry out a legitimate law enforcement purpose (18 USC § 2721; 18 USC § 2722).
- (b) Social Security numbers (Government Code § 6254.29).
- (c) Personnel records, medical records and similar records which would involve an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy (Government Code § 6254; Penal Code § 832.7; Penal Code § 832.8; Evidence Code § 1043 et seq.).
 - 1. Peace officer personnel records are deemed confidential and shall not be made public or otherwise released to unauthorized individuals or entities absent a valid court order.
 - 2. The identity of any officer subject to any criminal or administrative investigation shall not be released without the consent of the involved officer, prior approval of the Chief of Police or as required by law.
- (d) Victim information that may be protected by statutes, including victims of certain crimes who have requested that their identifying information be kept confidential, victims who are minors and victims of certain offenses (e.g., sex crimes or human trafficking, Penal Code § 293). Addresses and telephone numbers of a victim or a witness to any arrested person or to any person who may be a defendant in a criminal action shall not be disclosed, unless it is required by law (Government Code § 6254; Penal Code § 841.5).
 - 1. Victims of certain offenses (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, adult abuse) or their representative shall be provided, upon request and without charge, one copy of all incident report face sheets, one copy of all incident reports, or both, pursuant to the requirements and time frames of Family Code § 6228.
 - 2. Victims of sexual assault, upon written request, shall be provided a free copy of the initial crime report regardless of whether the report has been closed. Personal identifying information may be redacted (Penal Code § 680.2(b)).
- (e) Video or audio recordings created during the commission or investigation of the crime of rape, incest, sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse that depicts the

Merced Police Department

Merced PD Policy Manual

Records Maintenance and Release

face, intimate body part or voice of a victim of the incident except as provided by Government Code § 6254.4.5.

- (f) Information involving confidential informants, intelligence information, information that would endanger the safety of any person involved or information that would endanger the successful completion of the investigation or a related investigation. This includes analysis and conclusions of investigating officers (Evidence Code § 1041; Government Code § 6254).
 - 1. Absent a statutory exemption to the contrary or other lawful reason to deem information from reports confidential, information from unrestricted agency reports shall be made public as outlined in Government Code § 6254(f).
- (g) Local criminal history information including, but not limited to, arrest history and disposition, and fingerprints shall only be subject to release to those agencies and individuals set forth in Penal Code § 13300.
 - 1. All requests from criminal defendants and their authorized representatives (including attorneys) shall be referred to the District Attorney, City Attorney or the courts pursuant to Penal Code § 1054.5.
- (h) Certain types of reports involving, but not limited to, child abuse and molestation (Penal Code § 11167.5), elder and dependent abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15633) and juveniles (Welfare and Institutions Code § 827).
- (i) Sealed autopsy and private medical information concerning a murdered child with the exceptions that allow dissemination of those reports to law enforcement agents, prosecutors, defendants or civil litigants under state and federal discovery laws (Code of Civil Procedure §130).
- (j) Information contained in applications for licenses to carry firearms or other files that indicates when or where the applicant is vulnerable or which contains medical or psychological information (Government Code § 6254).
- (k) Traffic collision reports (and related supplemental reports) shall be considered confidential and subject to release only to the California Highway Patrol, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), other law enforcement agencies and those individuals and their authorized representatives set forth in Vehicle Code § 20012.
- (l) Any record created exclusively in anticipation of potential litigation involving this department (Government Code § 6254).
- (m) Any memorandum from legal counsel until the pending litigation has been adjudicated or otherwise settled (Government Code § 6254.25).
- (n) Records relating to the security of the department's electronic technology systems (Government Code § 6254.19).
- (o) Any other record not addressed in this policy shall not be subject to release where such record is exempt or prohibited from disclosure pursuant to state or federal law, including, but not limited to, provisions of the Evidence Code relating to privilege (Government Code § 6254).

Merced Police Department

Merced PD Policy Manual

Records Maintenance and Release

- (p) Information connected with juvenile court proceedings or the detention or custody of a juvenile. Federal officials may be required to obtain a court order to obtain certain juvenile information (Welfare and Institutions Code § 827.9; Welfare and Institutions Code § 831).

805.6 SUBPOENAS AND DISCOVERY REQUESTS

Any member who receives a subpoena duces tecum or discovery request for records should promptly contact a supervisor and the Custodian of Records for review and processing. While a subpoena duces tecum may ultimately be subject to compliance, it is not an order from the court that will automatically require the release of the requested information.

Generally, discovery requests and subpoenas from criminal defendants and their authorized representatives (including attorneys) should be referred to the District Attorney, City Attorney or the courts.

All questions regarding compliance with any subpoena duces tecum or discovery request should be promptly referred to legal counsel for the Department so that a timely response can be prepared.

805.7 RELEASED RECORDS TO BE MARKED

Each page of any written record released pursuant to this policy should be stamped in a colored ink or otherwise marked to indicate the department name and to whom the record was released.

Each audio/video recording released should include the department name and to whom the record was released.

805.8 SEALED RECORD ORDERS

Sealed record orders received by the Department shall be reviewed for appropriate action by the Custodian of Records. The Custodian of Records shall seal such records as ordered by the court. Records may include, but are not limited to, a record of arrest, investigation, detention or conviction. Once the record is sealed, members shall respond to any inquiry as though the record did not exist (Penal Code § 851.8; Welfare and Institutions Code § 781).

When an arrest record is sealed pursuant to Penal Code § 851.87, Penal Code § 851.90, Penal Code § 951.91, Penal Code § 1000.4 or Penal Code § 1001.9, the Records Supervisor shall ensure that the required notations on local summary criminal history information and police investigative reports are made. Sealed records may be disclosed or used as authorized by Penal Code § 851.92.

805.9 SECURITY BREACHES

The Records Supervisor shall ensure notice is given anytime there is a reasonable belief an unauthorized person has acquired either unencrypted personal identifying information or encrypted personal information along with the encryption key or security credential stored in any Department information system (Civil Code § 1798.29).

Merced Police Department

Merced PD Policy Manual

Records Maintenance and Release

Notice shall be given as soon as reasonably practicable to all individuals whose information may have been acquired. The notification may be delayed if the Department determines that notification will impede a criminal investigation or any measures necessary to determine the scope of the breach and restore the reasonable integrity of the data system.

For the purposes of this requirement, personal identifying information includes an individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following:

- Social Security number
- Driver license number or California identification card number
- Account number or credit or debit card number, in combination with any required security code, access code or password that would permit access to an individual's financial account
- Medical information
- Health insurance information
- A username or email address, in combination with a password or security question and answer that permits access to an online account
- Information or data collected by Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology

805.9.1 FORM OF NOTICE

- (a) The notice shall be written in plain language, be consistent with the format provided in Civil Code § 1798.29 and include, to the extent possible, the following:
 1. The date of the notice.
 2. Name and contact information for the Merced Police Department.
 3. A list of the types of personal information that were or are reasonably believed to have been acquired.
 4. The estimated date or date range within which the security breach occurred.
 5. Whether the notification was delayed as a result of a law enforcement investigation.
 6. A general description of the security breach.
 7. The toll-free telephone numbers and addresses of the major credit reporting agencies, if the breach exposed a Social Security number or a driver license or California identification card number.
- (b) The notice may also include information about what the Merced Police Department has done to protect individuals whose information has been breached and may include information on steps that the person whose information has been breached may take to protect him/herself (Civil Code § 1798.29).
- (c) When a breach involves an online account, and only a username or email address in combination with either a password or security question and answer that would permit

Merced Police Department

Merced PD Policy Manual

Records Maintenance and Release

access to an online account, and no other personal information has been breached (Civil Code § 1798.29):

1. Notification may be provided electronically or in another form directing the person to promptly change either his/her password or security question and answer, as applicable, or to take other appropriate steps to protect the online account with the Department in addition to any other online accounts for which the person uses the same username or email address and password or security question and answer.
2. When the breach involves an email address that was furnished by the Merced Police Department, notification of the breach should not be sent to that email address but should instead be made by another appropriate medium as prescribed by Civil Code § 1798.29.

805.9.2 MANNER OF NOTICE

- (a) Notice may be provided by one of the following methods (Civil Code § 1798.29):
 1. Written notice.
 2. Electronic notice if the notice provided is consistent with the provisions regarding electronic records and signatures set forth in 15 USC § 7001.
 3. Substitute notice if the cost of providing notice would exceed \$250,000, the number of individuals exceeds 500,000 or the Department does not have sufficient contact information. Substitute notice shall consist of all of the following:
 - (a) Email notice when the Department has an email address for the subject person.
 - (b) Conspicuous posting of the notice on the department's webpage for a minimum of 30 days.
 4. Notification to major statewide media and the California Information Security Office within the California Department of Technology.
- (b) If a single breach requires the Department to notify more than 500 California residents, the Department shall electronically submit a sample copy of the notification, excluding any personally identifiable information, to the Attorney General.