



ADVISORY COMMISSION ON POLICING

August 14, 2025

Chief Marc R. Yamada
Montgomery County Police Department
J. Thomas Manger Public Safety Headquarters
100 Edison Park Drive Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Re: Recommendations for Revising FC-1411, Police/Public Media Relations

Dear Chief Yamada:

The Advisory Commission on Policing (ACP) welcomes your initiative to revise outdated department policies and applauds your willingness to incorporate public input. In that spirit, we offer the following comments regarding FC-1411, Police/Public Media Relations.ⁱ

Members of the community conveyed to us their perception that the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) releases to the public photos of persons who have been arrested or charged more often when they are people of color than when they are white. We looked at 51 press releases this year regarding persons charged or arrested (not including those pertaining to minors or those in which MCPD seeks to identify or locate a suspect), and by our count, 24 of these included photos of the subjects who appeared to be: Black in 11; Hispanic in eight; and White in two. One press release included a photo each of a White and a Black suspect, and two releases included photos or videos of persons whose race or ethnicity was not readily apparent. None of the photos appeared to be official booking “mugshots.”

MCPD policy FC-1141 was last revised in 2013, before the Montgomery County sought to align local policing with the County’s aspirations for racial equity and social justice, and we see no law enforcement purpose served by these photos.ⁱⁱ As currently written, the policy provides very wide discretion to department officials as to whether or not to include photos of the subject(s) in MCPD press release regarding persons arrested or charged.ⁱⁱⁱ

SPECIFIC COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

To avoid misperceptions, we strongly urge that the revised guidance prohibit the inclusion in MCPD press releases of photos of persons arrested or charged, except when MCPD is:

1. Seeking the help of the public in identifying or finding the suspect of a crime, or

2. Seeking the help of the public in identifying additional victims of other possible crimes related to the suspect.

This prohibition should apply only to MCPD press releases. Official booking “mugshots” should be released upon the request of a media organization.

We hope you find our input useful and look forward to seeing the revised policy.

Sincerely,
Rev. Brian Bellamy Chair,
Advisory Commission on Policing

CC: County Council

ⁱ See: FC 131 Policy on Response to Resistance and Use of Force (FC-1141), https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/Resources/Files/PDF/Directives/1100/FC1141_PolicePublic%20Media%20Relations.pdf.

ⁱⁱ See Report of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, February 2021, at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rps/Resources/Files/reports/rps-task-force-recommendations-report.pdf>, as well as Effective Law Enforcement for All (ELE4A), Montgomery County Police Department Audit report, November 2022, at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rps/Resources/Files/reports/ELEFA-MCPD-FullReport-v7.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ FC-114, IV, E, 4, c states that “Mugshots maybe released, as they are public records. A mugshot of anyone under the age of 18 years of age will not be released.” While paragraph IV, E, 5, Suspect Information, states that: “After apprehension and prior to being charged, a description of the suspect may be released without name or race (e.g., a 40 year old Silver Spring man is in custody.”