



HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MEDIA GUIDE



826 Fourth St. Eureka, CA 95501
humboldtsheriff.org



Overview

As a major source of news in Humboldt County, the purpose of this guide is educate members of the media about resources available through the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office champions transparency and public information. As such, part of our service to the citizens of this community is by collecting and sharing important information. We believe a more informed community is one part to creating a safer community.

The Sheriff's Office is dedicated to responding to media inquiries as quickly, completely, and accurately as possible. The release of information to the media follows the Sheriff's Office's media policy and California law. This booklet is a reference guide only and is not intended to cover every possible situation.

This guide will help you know:

- What information is available from the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office
- How to best access information
- How to access information from the Sheriff's Office during breaking news or critical incidents
- When and why information may not be available
- How to obtain supporting or background information

Accessing Information

Social Media

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office utilizes social media to disseminate important public safety messaging, alert the public to breaking news, and cultivate community relationships through digital interaction. The Sheriff's Office will often post information to social media that may not go out in an official press release. We recommend following all of our social media channels to stay up to date on everything our office is doing in the community.

Sheriff's Office social media accounts are equipped to receive and respond to messages from the public. These message boxes are checked as regularly as possible. Please do not use social media as your primary means of requesting information from the Sheriff's Office as it may be some time before your message is read and responded to.

Occasionally, the Sheriff's Office may share to our social media a news article or video from one or more local media agencies. We do not play favorites, nor do we share this information to promote your agency. We share information that we deem to be relevant and adds to the public safety conversation. Please do not take offense if we chose to share another agency's articles over your own. There are many news agencies in Humboldt County and the Sheriff's Office regularly shares posts from all of the agencies.

The Sheriff's Office will never share posts that are inappropriate, factually incorrect, or provide coverage of local courts. As part of our policy, we do not comment on local court cases or proposed legislation.

Follow the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office on:



X: x.com/HumCoSO



Facebook: facebook.com/HumboldtSheriff



Instagram: instagram.com/humboldtsheriff



YouTube: youtube.com/c/HumboldtSheriff

Breaking News

Breaking News is often posted FIRST on X at @HumCoSO.

X (formerly known as Twitter) updates on breaking news may be the only indication and confirmation of a breaking news incident. X posts may be followed up on later by an official press release if warranted.

In the event of breaking news, depending on the scale of the incident, the Public Information Office may not be able to immediately respond to your request for information. The office will follow up on all inquiries in the order they were received with as much information as possible. Often, you may only get a confirmation of the incident occurring from the Public Information Office until more details have been collected and confirmed.

Press Releases

Humboldt County Sheriff's Office press releases are posted at humboldt.gov/sheriffnews and, at the same time they are published, are distributed via an automated email alert system. Links to the press release are then posted to the Sheriff's Office Facebook and Twitter accounts. Anyone may sign up to receive Humboldt County Sheriff's Office press releases by visiting humboldtsheriff.org/subscribe or on our Sheriff News Page at: humboldt.gov/sheriffnews and click "[Subscribe to News Alerts](#)" at the bottom of the screen.

Press release alerts via email from the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office will come from the address: listserv@civicplus.com and will have the following in the subject line: [HCSO PRESS RELEASE]. Occasionally, you may receive an alert that says: "Modified News Flash," this means that the press release has been edited for accuracy and re-sent to subscribers. Please always check these alerts as you will find important information for accuracy purposes.

To receive email alerts in your inbox, please ensure that listserv@civicplus.com is set as a safe email recipient. If you have signed up for alerts but do not receive a press release, please first check your spam folder and then ensure that you are signed up to receive Sheriff's Office alerts prior to contacting the Public Information Office. Often email alerts that are not received are an error with your email system and not the distribution system.

Nights / Weekends / Holidays: Press releases may occasionally be sent out by Watch Sergeants or Lieutenants when the Public Information Officer is not on duty. In cases such as these, press releases will be emailed out in PDF or Word format. This email list is generated from the website subscription list. If you normally receive press release notifications via our web distribution list, you should continue to receive them on the weekends, just in a different format.

Members of the media will receive media advisories of events and press conferences not open to the public via email.

Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Website

Humboldtsheriff.org

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office website contains information regarding the essential functions of the Sheriff's Office, detailed information about each division of the Sheriff's Office, online crime reporting and crime tip reporting, daily calls for service logs, Humboldt County Correctional Facility booking and release reports, recent news, and more. This information is not duplicated in this media guide. Other helpful information tools found on our website include:

Citizen RIMS: hcsocrimis.com

Citizen RIMS is a real-time crime information portal which offers the following information from the Sheriff's Office: Calls for Service Log (Media Bulletin), Crime Mapping, Missing Persons, Stolen Vehicles, Latest Arrests and Booking Photos, and Security Camera Registration.

Jail Booking and Release Reports: humboldt.gov/331/Jail-Reports

Jail reports are automatically published to this page. Reports are labeled by date published, not by date referenced. For example, a report published on March 17 would reflect information from the prior day, March 16.

Active Warrants List: humboldt.gov/2215/Warrants

The Active Warrants List provides information on all wanted persons with misdemeanor and felony warrants. This list is updated regularly.

Unsolved Cases Database: humboldt.gov/2772/Unsolved-Cases

The Unsolved Cases Database lists unsolved homicide and/or missing persons cases held by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. This list does not include all homicides and missing persons for Humboldt County. Cases being investigated by other local law enforcement entities will not be on this list.

Transparency Portal: humboldtsheriff.org/transparency

The Sheriff's Office Transparency Portal is a dedicated page on our website listing our department policies and procedures, the formal complaint process, and how to make a California Public Records Act request. On this page you can also find all records released under California SB 1421 and AB 748.

Who to Contact for Information

Contacting the Public Information Officer (PIO)

The Sheriff's Public Information Officer manages media inquiries, public education, and community relations for the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office and its divisions, including the Humboldt County Coroner's Office and the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services. The Public Information Officer is authorized to act as a department spokesperson.

Public Information Officer Line: (707) 476-2448, Cell: 707-496-3741

hcsomedia@co.humboldt.ca.us or hso@co.humboldt.ca.us

The Public Information Officer Line is answered as quickly as possible during normal business hours. If daily demands mean the phone is not answered, please leave a message and it will be returned as soon as possible. Please note, an email may be responded to more quickly than a phone call.

Weekends, Nights, Holidays: The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office does not staff a PIO during the evening or weekends. The Public Information Officer may be called in during off hours by department sergeants or lieutenants for large-scale incidents. Information about ongoing investigations is released as the investigation allows and at the direction of the investigating officers. Press releases regarding incidents occurring over the weekend or holidays will be published on the PIO's next regularly scheduled workday or when information is available.

Please note: Calling our substations, divisions (including Coroner's Office and Office of Emergency Services), or staff directly for information will likely lead to a referral to talk to the Public Information Officer. This is to ensure that accurate information is disseminated to all members of the media fairly. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office does not play favorites or offer "exclusive tips" to members of the media.

Who to Contact During Breaking News

Contact the Public Information Officer for information relating to breaking news. Please know, if you call the Public Information Office immediately after a report goes out over the police radio, we may have no more information than you do. It may be at least 30 minutes, sometimes longer, until details are available for public release. Requests for further information will be followed up on in the order they are received.

For **breaking news only** on weekends, nights, and holidays, the Watch Sergeant* may be able to provide information. To contact the Watch Sergeant please call our non-emergency dispatch at (707) 445-7251. If a major incident is occurring, our dispatchers may be tied up on our emergency lines and may be unable to answer your call. Please wait and try again later.

***A note about what the Watch Sergeant can give you:** The Watch Sergeant may be able to provide basic information about breaking crime incidents. However, due to staffing levels, the

Watch Sergeant is often not in the office—but out responding to calls. You may not be able to immediately contact the Sergeant but will likely be asked to leave a message for call back.

Watch Sergeants are in the patrol division and are *not* briefed on cases that involve detectives or ongoing investigations (different divisions – different jobs). If you'd like a weekend, evening, or holiday follow up on an ongoing investigation, please plan ahead and get the information from the Public Information Officer during normal business hours.

Who to Contact During Natural Disasters

During natural disasters or other emergencies requiring a large, coordinated response, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services may activate its Emergency Operations Center (EOC). One function of the EOC is Public Information. During an EOC activation in which the Joint Information Center (JIC) has not been activated, your primary Public Information Contact will be the Sheriff's Public Information Office. Please contact the Public Information Officer via email or cell phone for information in the event of an EOC activation.

During an EOC activation, a Public Information Line may be established to help answer community questions. Members of the media may also call this line for information. Your call will likely be routed to the Public Information Officer. The following tools are used by the County of Humboldt for emergency alerting and information purposes:

Humboldt ALERT: humboldt.gov/alerts

Humboldt ALERT is the County's public alert and warning system. This is an opt-in system, meaning you must sign up to receive the alert. Humboldt ALERT allows the Office of Emergency Services to contact thousands of residents in minutes, so you can find out about an emergency right away using methods that you choose, such as email, phone, text message, or the Everbridge app. Because you may not be near a television or radio when something happens, a local text or email alert can be an extremely useful source for critical information. Sign up for Humboldt Alert at: humboldt.gov/alerts.

Genasys (formerly known as Zonehaven): protect.genasys.com

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES), in collaboration with local governments and public safety partners, has established over 300 emergency zones throughout Humboldt County utilizing Genasys (formally known as Zonehaven), an evacuation management platform. Residents are encouraged to "Know Your Zone" before the next emergency occurs by visiting the new interactive map on Genasys Protect. During an emergency, first responders will alert you to the threat through Humboldt ALERT, the County's emergency alert system and may also post updates on social media. Evacuation zone names, as designated in Genasys, will be used in county emergency alert notifications. In the event of an emergency, first responders and emergency service officials will use Genasys to determine necessary evacuations.

From there, officials communicate evacuation orders and zone statuses to the public through Humboldt Alert and the Zonehaven Community site. The map will be updated real-time to reflect current evacuation orders and warnings for impacted zones. Local cities utilizing other emergency alert systems such as Nixle or Code Red will also issue alerts to their respective zones should an emergency occur in that area.

OES Current Emergencies Page: humboldt.gov/2383/Current-Emergencies

The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services' Current Emergencies webpage is a central source of all information related to an ongoing emergency. This page is updated regularly with current OES emergency information, maps, road closures, and resources.

Activation of the Joint Information Center (JIC)

In the event of a natural disaster or large-scale incident involving several local governments and agencies, the Sheriff's Office may initiate a county-wide coordinated response. To ensure that our community is receiving the most accurate information regarding public safety during a disaster or other large-scale critical incident, the county may choose to activate its Joint Information Center (JIC).

What is a Joint Information Center (JIC)?

A JIC is a group of representatives from the involved departments and agencies of an incident designated to handle public information needs. It serves as the 'hub' for the release of timely, accurate, consistent, and useful disaster related information to the public and to the media. Coordinated information means less confusion, inaccuracies, and duplication of effort.

Where is the Joint Information Center (JIC) Located?

The JIC is typically located at the Humboldt County Courthouse and is available to the public and media via telephone.

How do I contact the Joint Information Center (JIC) for information?

Notification of the activation of the JIC and contact information for the JIC will be distributed via an official county press release, available at <https://humboldt.gov/Civicalerts.aspx>. Sign up to receive press releases from the County of Humboldt at <https://humboldt.gov/list.aspx?ListID=251>.

How will I receive information from the Joint Information Center (JIC)?

Once the JIC has been activated, all incident information will come from the JIC via the County's news distribution channels. Information may be released via press releases, news conferences, county website, and county social media channels. Information will also be available in the form of telephone inquiries and live interviews, as coordinated through the JIC. Visit <https://humboldt.gov/395/Public-Information> to learn more about the County of Humboldt's public information functions.

Requesting Records

Records Request

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office has an established process for requesting copies of cases and other information gathered during a law enforcement investigation entitled to specific individuals as defined in California Government Code § 6254(f): the victims of an incident, or an authorized representative thereof, an insurance carrier against which a claim has been or might be made, and any person suffering bodily injury or property damage or loss as a result of the below listed crimes. Additionally, autopsy and toxicology reports may be requested by any member of the public utilizing this records request process.

If you meet the above criteria, please use our [online Records Request Form](#) or [download the PDF version of this form](#) from our website at humboldt.gov/2641/Records-Unit and return to the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Main Station or via email at sheriffrecords@co.humboldt.ca.us. Following completion of this form, your request will be processed by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Records Division within 7 to 10 business days. You will be notified when records are available for pick up.

Please be advised that there may be a fee associated with the production of records. Fees must be paid upon receipt of records, in person or via mail, cash or check only. All fees are due at the time of pick up.

California Public Records Act (CPRA)

The CPRA entitles persons and business entities as members of the public to inspect public records in the possession of government agencies. Persons who have filed claims or litigation against the government, or who are investigating the possibility of so doing, generally retain their identity as members of the public. Representatives of the news media have no greater rights than members of the public.

The CPRA covers a variety of documents and information. This media guide does not cover the scale of information available by these requests. Requests for records should be as specific as possible so as to clearly define or identify the exact records to which access is sought. In most cases, the county will provide electronic copies or photocopies of the requested records to the requesting party. In some cases, depending on the volume or nature of the records, arrangements will be made for supervised access to the requested records.

A Public Records Act Request can be made in person at any Sheriff's Office station, over the phone, via email, or using our online Next Request tracking portal at humboldt.gov.nextrequest.com. All CPRA requests are entered into Next Request to ensure proper response and we highly encourage using this portal to file your request, if able. Documents released to the public are also searchable at this website.

Information Available for Release

Crimes and Arrests

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office follows California Government Code 6254 and the Sheriff's Office Media Policy when releasing information to the public.

What information is typically available:

- Type or nature of an event of crime
- General location, date, time, damages, general description of incident
- Name, sex, date of birth, physical description, city of residency of person arrested
- Time, place* of arrest
- Place of suspect's detention, charges booked on including warrants, bail amount, booking photo**, time and date of booking, time, date, and manner of release
- Names of officers involved in critical incidents will be released as soon as the information is available based on the needs of the resulting investigation

* If the location of arrest/crime identifies victims, this information will not be available. To protect victims of crime, the Sheriff's Office will typically only give the block range and street name of a location, rather than providing an exact address.

**Under California AB 1475, police departments and sheriff's offices are prohibited from sharing booking photos of non-violent criminal arrestees on social media unless the following specific circumstances exist:

- A police department or sheriff's office has determined that the suspect is a fugitive or an imminent threat to an individual or to public safety and releasing or disseminating the suspect's image will assist in locating or apprehending the suspect or reducing or eliminating the threat.
- A judge orders the release or dissemination of the suspect's image based on a finding that the release or dissemination is in furtherance of a legitimate law enforcement interest.
- There is an exigent circumstance that necessitates the dissemination of the suspect's image in furtherance of an urgent and legitimate law enforcement interest.

Per a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in September 2024, booking photos will only be released to the public under circumstances where the release may help alleviate a public safety threat.

What information may be available:

- Specific cause of death, if officially determined by the coroner. Cause of death may be withheld from release for specific criminal death investigations to protect the integrity of the investigation.
- Identity of deceased victims, if officially confirmed and release does not jeopardize the investigation
- Very general description of injuries sustained as viewed by the deputies; typically described a life threatening, non-life threatening, serious, moderate, or minor (as opposed to specific medical conditions)
- Updated status of victim: i.e. critical condition, stable condition

What information is not available:

The following information **is protected** by law under California Government Code 6254

- Identity or address of victims
- Identity or address of witnesses
- Identity of juvenile suspects
- Medical Conditions (HIPAA)
- Results of any investigative procedure, such as line ups, polygraphs tests, ballistics tests, etc.
- Information which, if prematurely released, may interfere with an investigation or apprehension of a suspect, such as the nature of leads, details of the crime known only to the perpetrator or law enforcement, information that may cause the suspect to flee or avoid arrest
- Evidence that may adversely affect a court proceeding
- Status of persons turned over to the custody of Health & Welfare, such as mental holds or child custody situations
- Photos of the deceased post-mortem or human remains*
- DMV photos

* A photo of the deceased taken pre-mortem may be released by the department if all of the following criteria apply: the person is a missing person, the photo has been released prior to the discovery of the individual's deceased status, the Sheriff's Office is requesting the public's help in locating that person. Once the person has been discovered deceased, additional photos will no longer be released. The Sheriff's Office **will not** confirm photos taken from social media accounts of any victim.

Mental Health Holds and Child Custody

Sheriff's deputies routinely deal with people who have diagnosed or suspected mental illness. Medical conditions are protected under state and federal law. If a law enforcement action results in the hospitalization of an individual for treatment of mental illness, it's the policy of the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office to publicly state that the individual is in the custody of the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services. Additional information will likely not be available

Child protection actions and child custody are also protected by law. Children taken into protective custody for whatever reason are provided protection of their identities and status under state and federal statutes. It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to publicly state only that children have been placed in "safe" custody without further specifying their location, the agency or family member involved.

SB 978 & 1421 Compliance

2017 Senate Bill No. 978 requires that law enforcement agencies conspicuously post on their websites all current standards, policies, practices, operating procedures, and education and training materials that would be available to the public upon request under the California Public Records Act. This information can be accessed via our Transparency Portal, located at: humboldt.gov/2786/Transparency.

2018 Senate Bill No. 1421 requires certain peace officer personnel records and records relating to specified incidents, complaints, and investigations involving peace officers to be made available for public inspection pursuant to the California Public Records Act. A record of a frivolous complaint, investigations, finding, or dispositions of that complaint shall not be released if the complaint is unfounded. The Sheriff's Office has been diligently working to comply with the amendments to the California Public Record Act arising from the passing of SB 1421. As a result of the passing of this law, we are actively engaged in the meticulous review and redaction of thousands of pages of documents, in order to comply with strict privacy, and other laws governing the release of information to the public. This process continues to result in significant demands upon Sheriff's Office staff. Responsive documents are being released on a rolling basis as they are reviewed and redacted to our Transparency Portal, located at: humboldt.gov/2786/Transparency.

Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Video

Sheriff's Office Corrections and Patrol deputies are now utilizing body worn cameras. Members of the public may request body worn camera video via Public Records Act request, however, some video may be restricted for release under Government Code § 6254(f) due to the investigative status of the case.

Critical Incident Video

2018 Assembly Bill No. 748 requires the release of video and audio recordings related to critical incidents in accordance with the California Public Records Act. Video and audio recordings related to critical incidents will be released upon a proper public record request and subject to delayed release, redaction, and other release restrictions as provided by law. A video or audio recording relates to a critical incident if it depicts an incident involving the discharge of a firearm at a person by a deputy or depicts an incident in which the use of force by a deputy against a person resulted in death or in great bodily injury (as defined by Penal Code § 243(f)(4)) (Government Code § 6254(f)(4)).

Disclosure of critical incident recordings during active criminal or administrative investigations may be delayed as follows if disclosure would substantially interfere with the investigation, such as by endangering the safety of a witness or a confidential source:

- Disclosure may be delayed up to 45 days from the date the Office knew or reasonably should have known about the incident.
- Delay of disclosure may continue after the initial 45 days and up to one year if the Office demonstrates that disclosure would substantially interfere with the investigation.
- Any delay of disclosure longer than one year must be supported by clear and convincing evidence that disclosure would substantially interfere with the investigation (Government Code § 6254(f)(4)).

The Sheriff's Office has been diligently working to comply with the amendments to the California Public Record Act arising from the passing of AB 748. As a result of the passing of this law, we are actively engaged in the meticulous review and redaction of video and audio related to these cases to comply with strict privacy, and other laws governing the release of information to the public. Responsive media is being released on a rolling basis as they are reviewed and redacted to our Transparency Portal, located at: humboldt.gov/2786/Transparency.

AB 459 Compliance

2017 Assembly Bill No. 459 specifies that the Public Records Act does not require disclosure of a video or audio recording that was created during the commission or investigation of the crime of rape, incest, sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse that depicts the face, intimate body part or voice of a victim of the incident depicted in the recording. In the interest of victim privacy, these types of body worn camera video will not be released to the public.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office comment on incidents where the Sheriff's Office is assisting another agency?

In cases where the Sheriff's Office is not the primary agency, you will be referred to the agency leading the investigation for incident details and public information releases. The Sheriff's Office may be able to provide you with some information confirming our assisting status, time we were contacted to assist, and the nature of our assistance. The Sheriff's Office has many mutual aid agreements and will respond to assist other agencies when requested. Although the Sheriff's Office may be assisting, so as not to jeopardize an ongoing investigation, we must refer any inquiries to the lead investigating agency.

2. Will the Sheriff's Office comment on issues affecting other local agencies?

Typically, no. The Sheriff's Office can only speak to issues that involve or directly impact our agency. Speculation about what's happening in other agencies would be inappropriate for our department. **The Sheriff's Office will not comment on a court case or any judicial process currently occurring within the Humboldt County Superior Court.**

3. Will the Sheriff's Office comment on new laws and proposed legislation?

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office typically does not comment on or take a stance for or against proposed legislation or new laws. However, as an elected official, the Sheriff is at liberty to speak on these issues and may issue a comment based on perceived need. Inquiries for the Sheriff can be routed through the Public Information Office. Please note, the Sheriff may not be familiar with legislation that has just been proposed and may need time to review the legislation prior to making any sort of statement.

4. Why don't deputies always talk publicly about the cases they're working on?

Remember, deputies are also witnesses who may play an important role in courtroom testimony. The investigation and arrest are just part of an ongoing justice process. It

may jeopardize the prosecution efforts for deputies to comment publicly about ongoing cases even after arrests. That's where the Public Information Officer can help you or you may need to call the District Attorney's Office for more information.

5. Will there be a special perimeter set up for media at crime scenes?

Generally, no. If an area is safe for the media, it must also be safe for the public. The Sheriff's Office asks for media cooperation in working with deputies at a crime scene before the perimeter is set so as to ensure safety and not conflict with law enforcement operations. There may be times when the Public Information Officer will be able to escort media to areas prior to the area being opened to the public. That depends on safety and the operational needs of the investigation. The Public Information Officer for the incident will let you know if this opportunity is available.

Please note, members of the media are not allowed on private property without a property owner's consent. Refusing or failing to leave a property not open to the general public upon being requested to leave by a peace officer or owner is a violation of PC 602(o).

Additionally, media and members of the public will not be allowed inside a crime scene, even if it's public property, until the initial processing and investigation of the scene has concluded.

6. Who do I talk to at an incident for more information?

Depending on the severity of the incident and media interest, the Public Information Officer may be on scene to brief media and assist with requests. In this case, you will be contacted by the Public Information Officer on scene.

If the Public Information Officer is not on scene, a sergeant on scene may be able to assist you by providing basic information. You will often be referred to contact the Public Information Officer for additional details. Please note, the priority during any incident is life safety and completion of the investigation. You may have to wait until a sergeant is available and the investigation allows, in order to speak with a representative at the scene of an incident. Our staff is not being rude or ignoring you, they are doing their jobs.

Sheriff's deputies are not authorized to speak with members of the media. You will be referred to the Public Information Officer if you contact a Sheriff's deputy for information.

7. What is the difference between “detained” and “arrested / in custody”?

A person who is being detained on scene is someone that is involved in an incident and is being briefly held for questioning. This person is not at liberty to leave but is not under arrest. Detained persons may be taken into custody if probable cause is established to do so. Persons may also be briefly detained for officer safety purposes, for example, during the service of a search warrant or investigation of a crime scene involving many persons.

A person who is arrested, or in custody, is someone who has been placed under arrest for charges after a deputy develops probable cause.

8. Why are some suspects cited and others arrested?

The decision to book a suspect into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility or to issue a citation on a misdemeanor charge varies on a case by case basis. A citation for a misdemeanor crime is considered an arrest, but without the booking process. Most misdemeanor cases are eligible for a citation, with the exception of certain offenses outlined in the California Penal Code. Misdemeanor warrants may also specify whether the suspect must be booked into a correctional facility or can be cited. When issued a citation, the suspect is required to appear in court for their arraignment on the date and time noted on the citation. Failure to appear may result in the issuing of a bench warrant that may not be citable.

Due to the impacts of AB 109, the Prison Realignment Act of 2011, the Humboldt County Correctional Facility is commonly at or near capacity nearly every day. When a suspect is booked into the facility, they undergo a risk assessment that determines their risk for re-offending. Depending on their score for this assessment, among other qualifiers, the suspect may be booked and then released with a Promise to Appear in court.

Suspects of felonies and major crimes are almost always booked into the Correctional Facility.

9. Why can't the Sheriff's Office release medical conditions?

Several reasons. HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 provides people with privacy regarding their medical conditions. Victim or family approval is necessary for the public release of medical information which is often unattainable during the time law enforcement is involved in an incident.

Also, medical conditions and regular updates on people's medical conditions may not be part of a deputy's investigation. In other words, if the office doesn't have that information as part of an investigation, we don't have it to release.

Again, the Sheriff's Office releases what we know and what is within the professional scope of a law enforcement investigation. That means you will often receive a very general description of injuries sustained at a crime or accident scene, or those injuries may simply be described as "non-life threatening" or "life threatening".

Most of the time, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office will be unable to provide you with medical conditions or updates. This also includes if someone's injuries required surgery, if they have been released from the hospital, if they have been transported out of the area for additional care, or other specifics regarding medical treatment.

Additionally, for victim privacy, it is our policy to not give out the name of the hospital in which the victim was transported. Instead, we will refer to it as "a local hospital".

10. When does the Sheriff's Office request the public's help with a Missing Person case?

When deputies have evidence that a person is in danger. That means there is evidence of foul play, health or medical issues, etc. The Sheriff's Office typically does not issue press releases for runaway juveniles or voluntary missing persons. Media assistance when requested to locate a missing person is greatly appreciated.

Humboldt County (including all law enforcement agencies) averages over 900 missing persons reports each year. About 60% of those reported missing are children. Over 90% of those children are located or return home because the majority of them exhibit incorrigible runaway type behavior; many of whom commit this type of behavior numerous times with a new report being generated each time. This can skew the data. About 80% of missing adults are either located, return home, or are voluntarily missing. Approximately 1.5-2% are found deceased for various reasons which become part of our investigation.

All missing persons are entered by the Sheriff's Office into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and into the Missing and Unidentified Persons System (MUPS). NCIC allows any officer in the country to find out immediately if they find someone who has been reported missing.

11. Why isn't an AMBER Alert sent out for every missing child?

Issuing an AMBER Alert requires very specific criteria that does not apply to many missing juvenile situations in Humboldt County. An AMBER alert will be utilized if all of the below are true:

- A child is known or suspected by law enforcement officials to have been abducted.
- The child is 17 years of age or younger.
- Law enforcement must believe the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- There must be enough descriptive information to believe that an AMBER Alert will assist in the recovery of the child.

12. What if I get a tip about an ongoing investigation?

This will happen! Sometimes the tips have good information, sometimes, not so good. If you ask about something deputies are currently investigating and the Sheriff's Office has not made a formal press release on the information, chances are we will not be in a position to comment, confirm or even deny the tip. However, it never hurts to ask, and we will try to accommodate you as best as we can if we are able to release the information.

Please note, releasing news about an ongoing investigation prematurely, piecemeal, or without context could jeopardize the investigation, deputy, public safety, or the possibility of a successful prosecution. Although the Sheriff's Office works hard to assist local media, working toward justice for victims and their families and the needs of the criminal investigation must be the Office's priority. It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to only release information regarding ongoing investigations as it is in the best interest of that investigation.

Sometimes reporters may receive a crime tip that has not been reported to law enforcement. Please follow the proper channels to report this information by either calling our main line at (707) 445-7251, our Crime Tip Hotline at (707) 268-2539, or reporting it online at humboldt.gov/1380/Online-Reporting.

13. Can the Sheriff's Office help me set up an interview with a crime victim?

No. The Sheriff's Office typically will not assist in setting up interviews with crime victims, nor will we pass along your information to them. It is our policy to protect victim information. Certainly, victims' or witness' accounts add compelling content to

news stories, but providing that is simply not something the department can do. In addition to legal protections, the department has a professional and ethical interest in preserving a victim's dignity and privacy.

In special circumstances, such as a successful search and rescue operation receiving an abundance of national and international media attention, to protect the family of involved parties from harassment and overwhelming phone calls we may compile a list of media requests and provide them to the family. The family will then have the opportunity to decide who they want to speak with and will arrange those interviews themselves. This is determined on a case by case basis.

14. Can a deputy invite a reporter onto private property to view a crime scene or witness a search warrant?

No. Courts have ruled that a law enforcement officer must have the permission of the property owner to allow media onto private property. We receive several requests each year for members of the media to accompany Sheriff's deputies on search warrants- particularly cannabis related warrants. We are unable to accommodate these requests due to their status of private property. The Sheriff's Office may be able to accommodate you if the search warrant takes place on public property. Media and the public will not be allowed inside a crime scene, even if it's public property, until the initial processing and investigation of the scene has concluded.

15. How do I find out information about a case that's gone to court?

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office deals with the investigative phase of a case. After a suspect has been arraigned, inquiries must go to the courts or prosecutors. The Sheriff's Office cannot provide arraignment dates, court dates, or other court updates. The Sheriff's Office also will not comment on ongoing court cases or litigation. To obtain information regarding a court case, contact the Humboldt County Superior Court, Court Clerk's Office at 421 I St., Eureka, CA or call (707) 445-7256. If you are the victim of the case in which you are inquiring, contact the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office at 825 5th Street, 4th Floor, Eureka, CA or call (707) 445-7411.

16. What if I have a question about an incident that occurred a long time ago?

Please provide as much specific information as possible about the incident to the Sheriff's Public Information Office. Please provide information like times, places, or

names, and we will try to track the incident down and provide you the information. If you are looking for information about a particular suspect or arrest, it is helpful if you can also provide their birth date. You may have to file a CPRA request if we do not have those files readily available.

17. Why don't deputies make reports on everything they respond to?

Sheriff's deputies are charged with addressing criminal matters. Civil situations like neighbor disputes over property lines, water disputes, landlord-tenant disputes, and Fire or EMS assists often do not result in police reports. Some incidents like construction accidents, falls, etc. may be medical calls and deputies respond to assist or direct traffic, but if no criminal activity is apparent, deputies may not write out a report.

18. When is a spokesperson from the Sheriff's Office available to grant interviews?

The Sheriff's Office receives many requests for media interviews. We try to accommodate them as best we can. Typically, detectives working the case are not available for media interviews for reasons that go directly to the needs of the investigation. The Public Information Officer or another designated spokesperson may be available for media interviews. While the Public Information Officer handles the majority of media interviews, our office will work to align you with a subject matter expert for stories regarding policy, procedure, or other operation specifics. Interviews with the Sheriff are available upon request and will be granted depending on scheduling and subject matter.

There are some times when a spokesperson from the Sheriff's Office may NOT be available:

- If a suspect has already been arraigned in court, the Sheriff's Office must refer you to the District Attorney's Office. We work closely with prosecutors toward successful prosecution of criminal suspects and once a case is in court, public information must come from the court process.
- The Sheriff's Office cannot comment on a case that is under investigation by another agency.
- The Sheriff's Office may not be able to comment on topics that do not affect or directly impact the office. Our mission is to responsibly educate citizens on public safety issues. To continue to be a trusted, accurate source of information, questions that require speculation will not be answered.

19. What if I have a security question involving a school?

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office works closely with our local school systems. School security, however, is at the direction of the school district and we must refer you to them for your school security questions.

Regarding lockdowns: It is at the school's discretion to go into lockdown during a developing situation. The Sheriff's Office may not be able to confirm if a school is on lockdown. Please contact the school directly for lockdown information and procedures.

Regarding disciplinary actions at schools: Often, a school district may choose to take disciplinary action for student matters rather than pursuing criminal action. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office cannot comment on disciplinary action taken by schools, even if we were called to assist.

Please note, we can release very little about crimes involving juveniles. We will not be able to confirm if a juvenile is the captain of a local school's sports team, what their scholastic and behavioral history is like, or even their status as a student at the school.

20. What about a security question regarding Cal Poly Humboldt?

Cal Poly Humboldt is served by its own police department, Cal Poly Humboldt University Police. All criminal incidents occurring on the Cal Poly Humboldt campus will be referred to the university's Police Department. Additionally, the Arcata Police Department serves the areas surrounding Cal Poly Humboldt within the City of Arcata limits. The Sheriff's Office may respond to incidents within the City of Arcata or Cal Poly Humboldt only in an agency assist capacity. We will not be able to release information about those incidents. For campus security policies and general procedures, contact University Police.

21. What if I have a question about airport security at the Arcata-Eureka Airport?

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services to the Arcata-Eureka Airport. If a criminal action is taken, information will be released by the department. Airport Security is under the direction of Airport Administration and the Federal Transportation Security Administration.

22. How can I get a copy of a written police report?

When a reporter calls the Sheriff's Public Information Office and asks about a particular incident, the Public Information Officer releases information from the actual police report. Some details may not be immediately available due to the ongoing investigation. The Public Information Officer will provide you with all the information that is publicly releasable on the case.

Only specific individuals are entitled to copies of cases/reports and other information gathered during a law enforcement criminal investigation as defined in California Government Code § 6254(f): the victims of an incident, or an authorized representative thereof, an insurance carrier against which a claim has been or might be made, and any person suffering bodily injury or property damage or loss as a result of the below listed crimes.

If you meet the above criteria, please use our online Records Request Form or download the PDF version from our website at humboldt.gov/2641/Records-Unit and return to the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Main Station or via email at sheriffrecords@co.humboldt.ca.us. Following completion of this form, your request will be processed by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Records Division within 7 to 10 business days. You will be notified when records are available for pick up.

Please be advised that there may be a fee associated with the production of records. Fees must be paid upon receipt of records, in person or via mail, cash or check only. All fees are due at the time of pick up.

Where We're Located

Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Main Station / Correctional Facility

826 Fourth Street
Eureka, CA 95501
Phone: (707) 445-7251

Animal Control / Animal Shelter

980 Lycoming
McKinleyville, CA 95519
Phone: (707) 840-9132

Coroner's Office

3012 I St.
Eureka, CA 95501
Phone: (707) 445-7242

Garberville Station

715 Cedar Street, Suite B
Garberville, CA 95542
Phone: (707) 923-2761

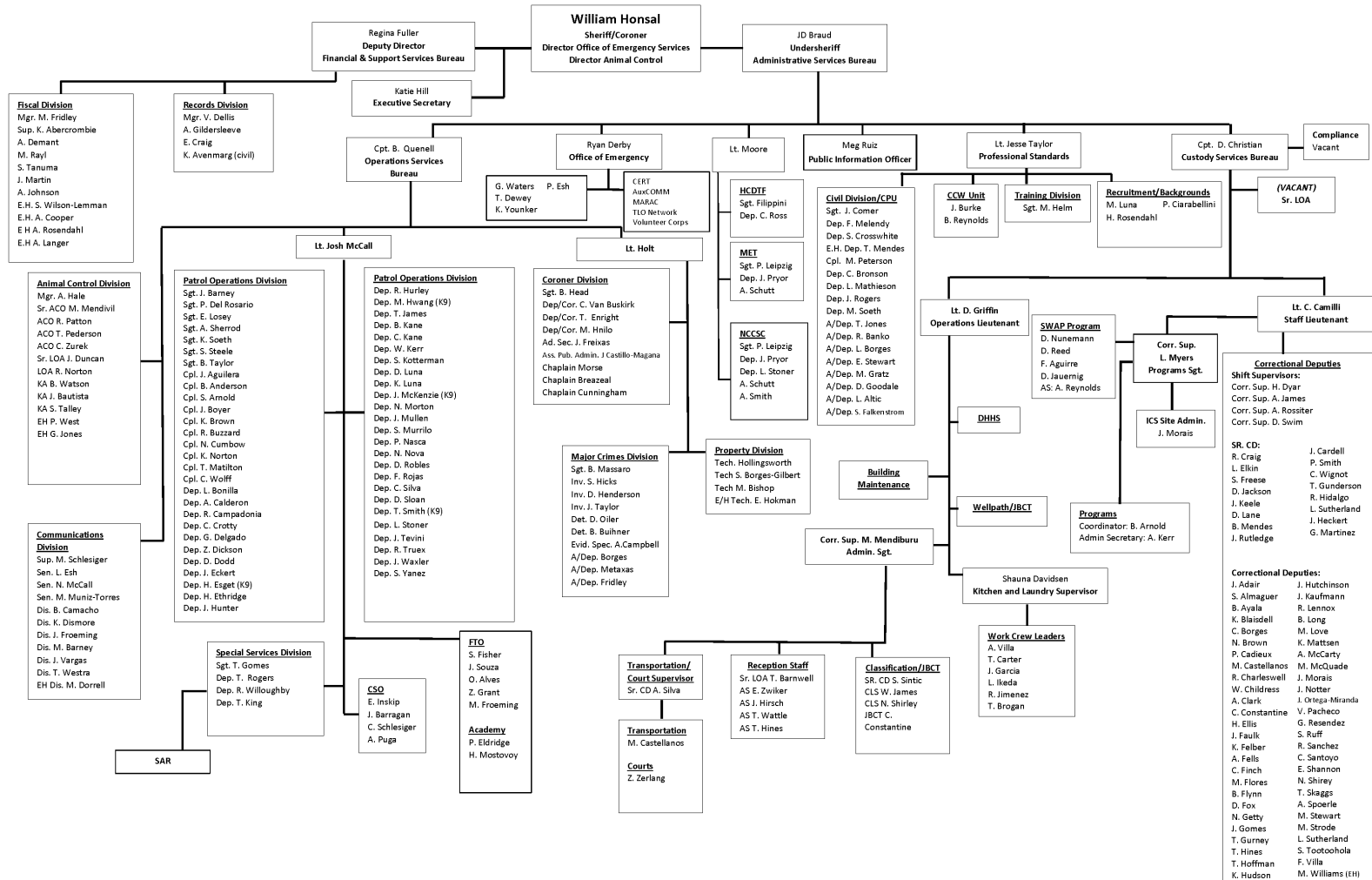
McKinleyville Station

1608 Pickett Road
McKinleyville, CA 95519
Phone: (707) 839-6600

Willow Creek Station

80 Country Club Drive
Willow Creek, CA 95573
Phone: (530) 629-1025

Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Organizational Command Structure



NOTE: Command structure current as of February 2025. Changes in staffing may cause this structure to become out of date. Please confirm with our agency on proper staff titles when citing sources.

Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

Frequently Used Signals for Radio Communication

CODE 1	Normal response, or at your convenience.
CODE 2	Immediate response, and in such a manner as will enable the unit to safely arrive at the scene as soon as possible, while observing all traffic laws and without the use of emergency lights and sirens.
CODE 3	Immediate and in such a manner as will enable the responding officers to safely arrive at the scene as quickly as possible, allowing the use of red lights and siren for obtaining right-of-way.
CODE 4	No further assistance needed.
CODE 5	Stakeout / observation.
CODE 6-IDA	Infraction warrant
CODE 6-MARY	Misdemeanor Warrant
CODE 6-FRANK	Felony Warrant
CODE 7	Meal break
CODE 14	Dangerous / combative / violent subject
CODE 30	This code will be used only when a Deputy has been injured or is likely to be injured, or otherwise needs emergency assistance.

CODE 33	Restrict radio traffic.
CODE 87	A request to speak to another mobile unit on the main frequency.
10-6	Busy.
10-14	Provide transportation
10-15	Subject in custody ("X" will be used to denote female subjects; "J" denotes juvenile).
10-19	Return to the office
10-21	Telephone request
10-27	Driver's license check.
10-28	Registration check.
10-29	Check for wants / warrants on a subject, vehicle, or property. "Local" denotes a local wants and probation check only.
11-44	A reported death, or dead body.
87 Unit	A request to meet with another unit in the field.

Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

Frequently Used Acronyms

ABC	ALCOHOL BEVERAGE CONTROL
APD	ARCATA POLICE DEPARTMENT
ATL	ATTEMPT TO LOCATE
BAC	BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT
CAD	COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH
C.I.D.	CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION
CCW	CARRYING CONCEALED WEAPON
CLEMAR	CAL L/E MUTAL AID RADIO
CPRA	CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RECORDS ACT
CPS	CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
CSO	COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICER
CWP	CONCEALED WEAPONS PERMIT
CWS	CHILD WELFARE SERVICES
DL	DRIVER'S LICENSE
DOB	DATE OF BIRTH
DV	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
EOD	EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TEAM (BOMB SQUAD)
EPD	EUREKA POLICE DEPARTMENT
ETA	ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL
F&W OR F&G	CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE / FISH AND GAME
FOPD	FORTUNA POLICE DEPARTMENT
FU	FOLLOW UP
HBD	HAS BEEN DRINKING
HCCF	HUMBOLDT COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
HCSO	HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
IA	INTERNAL AFFAIRS
IFO	IN FRONT OF
IP	INVOLVED PARTY
ITA	IN THE AREA
JEO	JUST EAST OF
JNO	JUST NORTH OF
JSO	JUST SOUTH OF
JWO	JUST WEST OF
K9	CANINE UNIT
MDT	MOBILE DATA TERMINAL
NAC	NORTH AREA COMMAND / MCKINLEYVILLE SUBSTATION STATION
NAWAS	NATIONAL AUTO WEATHER ALERT SYSTEM

OES	OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
PC	PATROL CHECK
PIO	PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
RAP	RECORD OF ARREST AND PROSECUTION
RDPD	RIO DELL POLICE DEPARTMENT
RP	REPORTING PARTY
SRO	SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER
UPD	UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
UTL	UNABLE TO LOCATE

Penal Code Reference:

187	HOMICIDE
207	KIDNAPPING
211	ROBBERY
240	ASSAULT
242	BATTERY
245	ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON
261	RAPE
288	LEWD CONDUCT
647(F)	DRUNK IN PUBLIC