

MEDIA RELEASE OF INFORMATION POLICY

August 12, 2021



We often get questions about why we post information, including press releases and booking photos, on incidents that take place in Mountain View. Public records laws are comprehensive and can be confusing, and it is important to us to comply with the law, to balance the privacy interests of involved parties of reported incidents, and to be transparent and provide information to the public. To that end, we hope this guide helps explain our procedures when it comes to the release of information from the Mountain View Police Department.

We frequently receive requests for information related to:

- Felony crimes that occur in public
- Select felony crimes that happen in private homes (i.e. homicide)
- Fatal traffic collisions
- Sex crimes that occur in public
- Sex- or child-related suspicious circumstances cases
- Significant crime trends and/or associated arrests

On July 23, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law [AB 1475](#), which precludes law enforcement agencies from posting booking photos of arrestees that have committed non-violent offenses on their social media channels. AB 1475 **does not** preclude journalists from requesting through the [California Public Records Act](#) booking photos for anyone arrested of a crime. AB 1475 states that law enforcement agencies **can** post booking photos in instances of [felony violence](#).

When we do or don't identify a suspect:

- If the suspect is an adult who is at least 18 years old and who is booked into jail, we will release their name, age, city of residence and based on the parameters of AB 1475, potentially their booking photo.
- If the suspect is an adult who is arrested but not booked into jail (i.e., issued citation), we can only release their name, age and city of residence through our official channels.
- If the suspect is a juvenile who is under 18 years old, we will **not** identify them by name nor release their booking photo. Their age and city of residence may be released on a case-by-case basis. An exception to this would be for serious cases where releasing identifying information is for the public's safety.

Where we release this information:

- On our city website: www.mvdpd.gov
- On our social media pages:
 - Facebook: Mountain View Police Department

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- Twitter: @MountainViewPD
- Nextdoor: Mountain View Police Department

Why we release this information:

- We believe in transparency and being forthcoming with our community about crimes and events that occur in Mountain View.
- Releasing information in a timely manner gives our community an accurate account of events. It also provides them with a way to not only be aware of what is going on in their city, but allows them to take necessary precautions, if they so choose, so they too are not victimized.

All release of information is done in accordance with California state law.

Traffic Collision Information:

Traffic collision reports are confidential under California Vehicle Code sections 20012, but disclosure to authorized parties is allowed. Those parties include:

- The driver or drivers involved
- The guardian or parent of a minor driver
- Any named person injured
- Any named person who owns the vehicle involved
- Any law enforcement agency
- An insurance company

We can provide the following about collisions: time, date and location of an accident, along with confirmation of whether there were any injuries. A factual synopsis of a collision can be provided as it becomes available. If someone is arrested, we will release that information as well. If the collision results in a fatality, we will also confirm that information. Identities of the deceased must be obtained through the Santa Clara County Coroner.

We do not release details of injuries or identities of those involved. Also, initially we cannot release who may have been at fault, as that is determined by our officers during their investigation.

If someone was not initially arrested in connection with the collision but was subsequently detained as a result of our findings, we will release that information once the investigation is complete.

Please note, the purpose of the California Vehicle Code is to protect the privacy of those involved in a collision.