

# LEHIGH ACRES

## FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT



# MEDIA GUIDE

2022 EDITION



**Public Relations Officer**

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The Lehigh Acres Fire Control & Rescue District Public Relations Officer (PRO) handles media relations and is the authorized spokesperson for the department.

When you call or email the PRO, please provide a specific topic and deadline information; every effort will be made to return your inquiry as soon as possible.



**Records Requests:**

**Online Submission Recommended**

<https://www.lehighfd.com/contact>



## **Breaking News Information**

**Breaking News** is first posted to Twitter. Updates on PRO response time and media staging for major events will be provided via Twitter: **@LehighAcresFD**

**Press Releases** will be posted to our website and distributed via email to local media partners as well as posted to social media. (If you would like to be added to the email distribution list, please email the PRO).

**Website:** [www.lehighfd.com/news](http://www.lehighfd.com/news)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/LehighAcresFD](http://www.facebook.com/LehighAcresFD)

**Twitter:** [@LehighAcresFD](https://twitter.com/LehighAcresFD)

**Instagram:** [@LehighAcresFD](https://www.instagram.com/LehighAcresFD)

To view an Interactive Wildfire and Burn Authorization Map click below:

<http://tlhforucs02.doacs.state.fl.us/fmis.dataviewer>

## Florida Records Law

The Florida Public records law, Chapter 119, F.S. requires that all state, county, and municipal records, except certain confidential or exempt records will be open for personal inspection by any citizen. Prior to viewing by the public, the agency must make sure that no confidential or exempt information is disclosed. Confidential or exempt information will be removed or redacted from the file.

The Public Relations Officer is typically able to provide the following information regarding cases:

- Type or nature of an event or incident.
- Date, time and general location / description of incident.

What information is NOT available:

- Protected Health Information under HIPAA. This includes names, dates related to the individual treated (birthdate, age), specific address and other personal information.
- Information, which, if prematurely released, may interfere with a law enforcement investigation. (Requestor will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency).
- Firefighters and paramedics routinely deal with people who have a diagnosed or suspected mental illness. Medical conditions are protected under the medical records provision of the public records act.





### **Critical Incidents & High Risk Operations**

During a significant fire incident, bomb investigation, SWAT operation, or other critical incident, we request the media cooperate with our PIO and the on-scene law enforcement entity to broadcast only those images that will not compromise personnel or impact safety to the public. This cooperation may include location of live trucks and live feeds as well as the reporter 's location on scene.

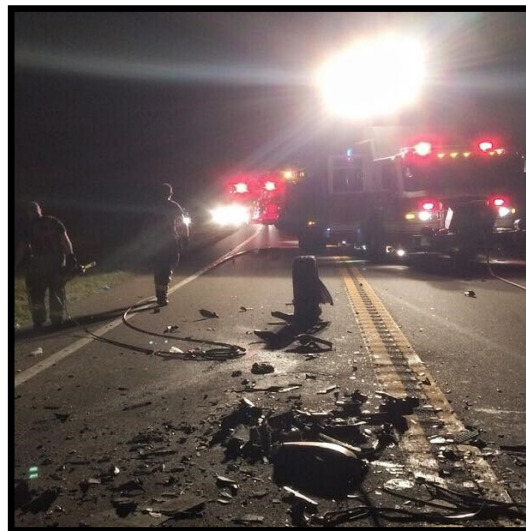
### **Open Records Requests**

The most efficient method for submitting a records request is through our online system :

<https://www.lehighfd.com/contact>

You will receive a response informing you of the receipt of your request.

It may cost money for public records. We follow costs outlined in the Florida Attorney General Public Information Handbook.



## FAQ's

### **Will there be a special perimeter set up for media at scenes?**

- Generally, no. If an area is safe for the media it must be safe for the public as well. In some cases, media may be allowed in a restricted area for better access.

### **Can our staff allow a reporter onto private property to view a scene?**

- No. Courts have ruled this as an invasion of privacy to invite media onto private property, without the property owners permission. We will provide the closest access for media that is safe, legal, and will not interfere with fire control or rescue efforts.

### **Can I get updates about a major incident on the weekend? What about statistics or other background information for a story?**

- Please plan ahead if you want to do a weekend story. The PRO may not provide a weekend update if new information is not available. Records personnel do not work on weekends, therefore plan to get that information during the week through a Records Request.

### **Why can't the department release medical conditions?**

- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) provides people with privacy regarding their medical conditions. We can release a general description of injuries sustained at a scene.

## FAQ's

### **Can you provide background statistics beyond what can be found on the website?**

- Yes, but a Records request must be filed. Due to work load it may take several days to track down specific information.

### **Can you help with questions regarding cases in other cities?**

- Generally, no. We cannot provide information where another agency is the primary responder or investigator. We do have mutual aid agreements and can provide information on how we assisted other agencies, but will have to refer you to the primary agency for incident details.



# Other Agencies in Lee County

## Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District

Phone: 239-368-0044    email@la-msid.com

- Drainage and Flood Control
- Conservation/Mitigation
- Navigational
- Roads/Bridges
- Parks
- Community Signage

## Lee County Fire Districts:

We work closely with our neighboring fire districts, but it is important to note we cannot release information on their behalf. Click [here](#) for a map to check the jurisdictional boundary for the event that you are covering.

## Lee County Sheriff's Office

Public Information Office 239-477-1340

