

Media Guidelines

Media Policy

North Central Health District (NCHD) has the policy to report any newsworthy event and to cooperate with all media representatives to make clear and accurate information regarding public health, environmental health, emergency response and any other activities that fall under our purview.

Media Inquiries

All inquiries are to be directed to the district's Public Information Officer (PIO):

Michael Hokanson
201 Second Street
Macon, GA 31201
Office: 478-751-6626
Cell: 478-972-6062
Fax: 478-751-4575
Email: Michael.Hokanson@dph.ga.gov
[Via NCHD's website](#)

Office hours are from 8 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, except on state holidays. In order find an appropriate subject matter expert, all inquiries should include questions the reporter is looking to have answered. Media inquiries after regular office hours can be sent to Michael.Hokanson@dph.ga.gov. Your message will be returned as quickly as possible.

Filming/Photography

A majority of NCHD's services include patient care and NCHD reserves the right to limit filming and photography for both patient confidentiality purposes and safety purposes. This restriction also prevents the dissemination of operational information to parties with unlawful intentions, particularly in the event of a mass clinic.

Prior to recording any footage or taking pictures on any NCHD district, county health department or other NCHD property where NCHD has established services, photographers, videographers and other media representatives must obtain approval from the district through the PIO. Upon arriving at the video/photo location, media representatives may be assigned an escort.

Parking

District Office

Media representatives meeting with NCHD personnel at the district office, located at 201 Second Street in Macon, may use street side parking or use the BB&T parking deck. Enter and exit the deck from Walnut Street. Parking fees are \$.50 per half hour or \$5 for all day. We cannot validate parking.

County Health Departments

Media representatives meeting with NCHD personnel at one of the 13 county health departments are permitted to use the health department's parking lot unless otherwise stated.

Emergency Situations – Incident Sites and Media Briefings

During an emergency response event, media parking details will be part of the information regarding the media staging area location included with media invitations and alerts.

NCHD, County Health Departments and Usable Property Access Guidelines

- Media requests are to be direct to the PIO. Media will **not** be denied access to any area where the general public is permitted, though filming and photography may be restricted to protect client confidentiality.
- Media will be denied access to loaned property and restricted areas. Media will be granted access to these areas only when approved by the PIO. Media will always be escorted by authorized personnel when given access to these restricted areas. Access to loaned property or restricted areas will be denied if security requirements, safety requirements or patient confidentiality are compromised.
- In some instances, such as mass clinics, the PIO may ask that media officials refrain from interviewing staff actively involved in the public health response. This is simply to allow public health staff members to do their jobs without strain on the quality of patient care. It is also the policy of NCHD to allow only pre-identified spokespersons to officially speak on behalf of the organization.
- When photography or videography is permitted, strobes and other high-intensity lighting may be restricted when said lighting might affect emergency response to an event, incident, investigation or operation.

- In some cases, such as state-wide emergency events, the PIO may refer any media inquiries to a designee at the state level the Department of Public Health.
- Inquiries regarding non-legal activity that may occur on NCHD property should be directed to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

In the Event of a Public Health Emergency

- All legal organs, radio stations, and television stations with base stations or offices within NCHD's 13 county area will be notified by fax, email and/or phone as soon as the situation has been verified.
- Initially, all media will report to a designated press area, which will be included in media invitations or alerts. Media ID will be required for access to an incident site or a designated press area. In certain instances, access to an incident site may require additional credentials from NCHD. Details on access requirements will be included in any invitations or alerts sent to media.
- Telephone, Internet and fax machine access cannot be provided by NCHD at any designated media site.
- The PIO or a designee will be at the scene of the emergency to manage media access and the dissemination of information. The PIO or designee will be briefed by the senior official on duty with basic facts concerning the incident.
- Press briefings will be scheduled periodically or as new information is obtained. The PIO will alert media to any upcoming briefings or changes to previously scheduled briefings.
- The PIO will secure approval for media access to the site. Every attempt will be made to provide a suitable incident observation area for media representatives.
- Media requests for access to work areas (clinics, incident sites, triage areas, etc.) will be granted only after appropriate Public Health and Public Safety officials give clearance. Media must be escorted by authorized personnel at all times. Persons gaining unauthorized access to a site are subject to arrest and prosecution.
- Notwithstanding media interest, NCHD's first responsibility is to the affected individuals and their right to privacy. While media will not be arbitrarily denied access to these individuals, NCHD will support and enforce the decision of the affected individual who chooses not to be interviewed and/or photographed. Access to affected individuals may require approval by law enforcement.
- At no time will the NCHD PIO or designated spokesperson act as spokesperson for another agency.