

Law Enforcement Tips for a Media Statement After Bias/Hate Crime or Incident

Hate crimes and bias incidents affect entire communities. They send messages of degradation, dehumanization, and danger, and send ripples of fear far and wide. What happens to one member of a protected class community is often felt by members of that same protected class community, and in the absence of information and verified facts, fear can grow. The entire community needs to hear publicly from law enforcement about what happened and what steps are being taken to respond, investigate, and ensure safety.

A statement or press release from law enforcement after a hate crime or bias incident can be an efficient and effective way to inform the community about the investigation and safety steps being taken. It's important for community members from protected classes to hear a resolute statement that builds trust, affirms the agency's values, and ensures LE services meet community needs.

A statement or press release should:

1. Firmly and resolutely condemn the hate.
2. State that law enforcement is taking the crime/incident seriously and investigating (if true).
 - a. Share if you've cross reported to the FBI.
 - b. Share if you've cross reported to Oregon DOJ's Civil Rights Unit.
 - c. Share if you've consulted with additional elected officials—city council, county counsel, mayor, etc.
3. Express your law enforcement agency's and the community around you's beliefs around belonging, anti-bias, and safety in the community.
4. Express solidarity with/support for the specific community targeted. Share any outreach done to the community's leadership, when appropriate.
5. Refer impacted community members to the statewide [Bias Response Hotline](#) for support, safety planning, resources, counseling, and financial assistance.

Bias Response Hotline (non-emergency hotline)

1-844-924-BIAS (2427), M-F 9am-5pm

Interpretation in 240+ languages

We Accept All Relay Calls

Report Online at [StandAgainstHate.Oregon.gov](https://standagainsthate.oregon.gov)

6. Tell community members where and how to report any information to police about this crime/incident, or any other bias crime.
 - a. Will there be a specialized reporting line/hotline utilized?
 - b. Will there be a language-specific officer available? Be sure to share what service you use for interpretation, and that the interpreters are confidential.
7. If it's necessary to release the victim, witness, or perpetrator's name and/or protected class information, get it right. Spell their name correctly, know how to pronounce their name correctly, identify their actual protected class, and use correct pronouns.
8. Share any law enforcement safety steps that are being taken.
 - a. Will there be increased patrol in certain areas? Additional officers working certain hours?

Additional tips from the ADL:

1. To the extent possible, we encourage groups to avoid naming GDL when discussing the incidents. This organization revels in the public attention that results from their propaganda distributions. Their main goal is to make money and spread their brand to encourage hateful people participate in activities. We can deprive them of that by refusing to give them airtime.
2. Focus instead on the impact that these flyers have on communities and on mobilizing to send a strong message that hate has no place in our city/region. We can do this by hosting community events about antisemitism, conversations with our family/friends/colleagues, and by encouraging public statements denouncing these flyers from public officials and leaders.
3. Use this as an opportunity to elevate how pressing the need to address antisemitism is in our community.

[Here's a statement from the Forest Grove Police Chief](#) from September 2022 after a hate flyering event in his community. This is an example of a Police Chief who was transparent and empathetic with his comments to the public after the incident.