

Local Criminal Rule 5-1 - Release of Information by Attorneys in Criminal Cases

It is the duty of the attorneys for the government and the defense, including the law firm, not to release or authorize the release of information or opinion which a reasonable person would expect to be disseminated by any means of public communication, in connection with pending or imminent criminal litigation with which a lawyer or a law firm is associated, if such dissemination poses a serious and imminent threat of interference with the fair administration of justice.

The following actions will presumptively be deemed to pose a serious and imminent threat of interference with the fair administration of justice:

(a) With respect to a grand jury or other pending investigation of any criminal matter, the release, by a government lawyer participating in or associated with the investigation, of any extra-judicial statement, which a reasonable person would expect to be disseminated by any means of public communication, that goes beyond the public record or that is not necessary to inform the public that the investigation is under way, to describe the general scope of the investigation, to obtain assistance in the apprehension of a suspect, to warn the public of any dangers or otherwise to aid in the investigation.

(b) From the time of arrest, issuance of an arrest warrant or the filing of a complaint, information, or indictment in any criminal matter until the commencement of trial or disposition without a trial, the release or giving of authority to release by a lawyer or law firm associated with the prosecution or defense, of any extra-judicial statement, which a reasonable person would expect to be disseminated, by any means of public communication, relating to that matter and concerning:

(1) the prior criminal record (including arrests, indictments, or other charges of crime), or the character or reputation of the accused, except a factual statement of the accused's name, age, residence, occupation, and family status, and if the accused has not been apprehended, the release by a lawyer associated with the prosecution of any information necessary to aid in the apprehension of the accused or to warn the public of any dangers he/she may present;

(2) the existence or contents of any confession, admission, or statement given by the accused, or the refusal or failure of the accused to make any statement;

(3) the performance of any examinations or tests or the accused's refusal or failure to submit to an examination or test;

(4) the identity, testimony, or credibility of prospective witnesses, except announcement of the identity of the victim if the announcement is not otherwise prohibited by law;

- (5) the possibility of a plea of guilty to the offense charged or a lesser offense;
- (6) any opinion as to the accused's guilt or innocence or the evidence in the case.

The foregoing shall not be construed to preclude the lawyer or law firm during this period, in the proper discharge of his/her or its official or professional obligations, from announcing the fact and circumstances of arrest (including time and place of arrest, resistance, pursuit, and use of weapons), the identity of the investigating and arresting officer or agency, and the length of the investigation; from making an announcement, at the time of seizure of any physical evidence other than a confession, admission or statement, which is limited to a description of the evidence seized; from disclosing the nature, substance, or text of the charge, including a brief description of the offense charged; from quoting or referring without comment to public records of the Court in the case; from announcing the scheduling or result of any stage in the judicial process; from requesting assistance in obtaining evidence; or from announcing without further comment that the accused denies the charges made against him/her and stating without elaboration the general nature of the defense.

(c) During a trial of any criminal matter, or any other proceeding that could result in incarceration, including a period of selection of the jury, the release or giving authority to release by a lawyer associated with the prosecution or defense, of any extra-judicial statement or interview, relating to the trial or the parties or issues in the trial, which a reasonable person would expect to be disseminated by any means of public communication, other than a quotation from or reference without comment to public records of the Court in the case.

Nothing in this Rule is intended to preclude the formulation or application of more restrictive Rules relating to the release of information about juvenile or other offenders, to preclude the holding of hearings or the lawful issuance of reports by legislative, administrative, or investigative bodies, or to preclude any lawyer from replying to charges of misconduct that are publicly made against him.