

Contacts with Government Agencies and Outside Investigators

If contacted at home by an external governmental agent without a search warrant or subpoena concerning business of UHD or a component institution, the employee should request that the agent make such contact at work the next business day, and the employee should immediately contact his or her supervisor, followed by contact with the Vice President for Administration and Finance.

SUBPOENAS

If a subpoena (or other legal document or inquiry from an external governmental agency) related to UHD business is received by an employee, whether at home or in the workplace, the employee is required to notify his or her supervisor and the Vice President for Administration and Finance immediately. The Vice President for Administration and Finance or designee will immediately forward the subpoena (or document) to the UHS Office of General Counsel for review.

The Office of the General Counsel analyzes the enforceability of a subpoena under the requirements of Rule 176 of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. Such requirements include, but are not limited to, the subpoena being issued in the name of “The State of Texas,” identifying the person (or Custodian of Record/University of Houston campus) to whom the subpoena is directed, etc.

Please note that the release of *educational records* is subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1232g (FERPA) (commonly known as the “Buckley Amendment”), and Sections 552.026 and 552.114 of the Texas Government Code. These laws require the University to notify the student prior to complying with a lawfully issued subpoena for student records. The University will attempt to contact the student and/or student’s attorney via letter, allowing 14 days from the date of the letter for the student and/or student’s attorney to file a motion to quash the subpoena.

Note that there is an exception to the above-mentioned notice requirement where the subpoena is issued by a law enforcement agency, such as a grand jury, the District Attorney’s Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, etc., and the subpoena specifically orders that notice not be given to the student as it may impede law enforcement.

Please note that medical records will not be released without a fully authorized Medical Records Release.

Reference:

UH System Administrative Memorandum

09.A.01 - [Governmental Relations Communications and Appearances](#) (PDF)

Question: Last evening, while having dinner with my family, the doorbell rang. The person at the door identified herself as an FBI agent and wanted to talk to me about my work at UHD. Should I have spoken to her?

Answer: You are not required to speak with the agent at your home. UHD does not prevent you from talking to the agent; however, to protect yourself and UHD, you may ask the FBI agent to contact you at your office. You should notify your supervisor and the Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance (713-221-8610) or UHD Police (713-221-8065).

Question: A government agency just came to our office to conduct an inspection on our facility and equipment. I'm not sure what they are interested in. What should I do?

Answer: Even if you understand the purpose of the inspection and you believe everything is in order, explain to the individual that you need to contact the University's Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Office. Excuse yourself and contact the EH&S Manager at 713-221-8040. You should also notify your supervisor and UHD Police (713-221-8065) or the Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance (713-221-8610).

Question: I just received a phone message from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board asking about UHD student success initiatives. Do I return the call or forward it to a central office?

Answer: Contact your supervisor and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs at 713-221-8003.