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Curbs on Pre-Trial News Are Drafted

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The Justice Department is thinking in terms of continuing to work on legislation to impose its proposed new restrictions on limitation on pre-trial information. The tentative feeling appears to be that the restrictions can be handled through instructions to U.S. attorneys and others.

A Department official said the matter had provoked "lively discussion" and that no agreement had been reached on a final draft. He said as many as 15 versions had been prepared.

The Department's studies are aimed at establishing a set of standards governing the amount and kind of information that U.S. attorneys and other Justice Department officials could make public.

Meanwhile, Sen. Wayne L. Morse (D-Ore.) has introduced legislation far exceeding the probable scope of the projected Department rule.

Morse would forbid any Federal employe, a defendant or his attorney—or "agent of either"—to give practically any information to reporters in advance of a trial in Federal court.

The Department is not

The rules under study include possible limitations on releasing information about a suspect's past criminal record. They also would restrict release of photographs in some cases, as well as press interviews with suspects, or use of pre-trial statements by persons arrested for crimes.

A Justice Department spokesman insisted that the proposed guidelines were designed to strike a balance between protection of a suspect's right to a fair trial and providing the public with information to which it is entitled on crime cases.

Presumably, the limitations would apply to all employes of the Justice Department including the FBI, the Bureau of Prisons, the Immigration Service and Federal attorneys.