



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
DEPARTMENT WIDE
OFFENDER MANUAL

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POLICY

TITLE
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS

SUPERSESION:

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SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Major changes. Read carefully.

APPROVED:

HAROLD W. CLARKE, Secretary
Department of Corrections

6/23/06

Date Signed

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REFERENCES:

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; RCW 10.97; ACA 4-4020; ACA 4-4021; ACA 4-4022; ACA 4-4279; ACA 7F-01; ACA 7F-02; ACA 7F-03; DOC 280.510 Public Disclosure of Records; DOC 410.160 Emergency Media Management; DOC 420.340 Searches of Facility Visitors; DOC 450.100 Mail for Offenders; DOC 450.200 Telephone Use by Offenders; DOC Media Relations Handbook

POLICY:

- I. Public information is an integral element of the Department mission. The Department encourages interaction with the public and news media. [4-4020] [7F-01]
- II. Staff will provide the public, media, and other agencies accurate and timely information in compliance with DOC 280.510 Public Disclosure of Records, DOC Media Relations Handbook, and security objectives of the Department. This policy will be superseded by DOC 410.160 Emergency Media Management during emergencies.

DIRECTIVE:

- I. Responsible Staff
 - A. The Communications Director is responsible for the administration of the Public Information Program and will:
 1. Coordinate with divisions and departments to ensure that public information strategies are consistent with the Department mission, goals, and objectives.
 2. Develop Department-wide guidelines promoting a uniform appearance and standards of quality in public information material.
 3. Collaborate with senior managers in Prisons, Community Corrections, Administrative Services, Health Services, and Risk Management on the public response to issues likely to have a significant impact on the Department.
 4. Provide training and support to staff.
 - B. Public Information Officers (PIOs) will be identified as follows:
 1. Each Superintendent will identify a PIO for his/her facility.

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2. The Correctional Industries (CI) Administrator will identify a PIO for CI operations.
 3. Each Regional Administrator (RA) will identify a PIO for his/her region.
 4. The Communications Director will designate appropriate Communications Department staff to meet the public information and media relations needs of Administrative Services Division, Health Services, and Risk Management.
- C. A Western Regional Public Information Team and an Eastern Regional Public Information Team will be established and will consist of the PIOs for Prisons and Community Corrections in the 2 regions of the state defined by the Cascade Mountain Crest. The CI PIO will participate in the Western Regional Team. The Communications Director will assign Communications Consultants to serve as Regional Team Leaders.
1. Regional Public Information Teams will:
 - a. Meet and consult regularly on public information matters, including current media requests and upcoming events or activities likely to be of interest to the media and public,
 - b. Maintain lists of elected/public officials, community resource persons and locations, and news media representatives,
 - c. Maintain lists of regional/site specific promotional multi-media materials,
 - d. Maintain situational based notification procedures (i.e., press notification, stakeholder notification), and
 - e. Facilitate training for staff in media relations.
- II. Public Information Officer Responsibilities [4-4021]
- A. Serve as the principal point of contact for news media and stakeholders seeking routine information pertaining to the facility or region. PIOs will not engage in extensive news media interviews without authorization from their designating authorities.
 - B. In consultation with the Regional Team Leader and Superintendent/RA/CI Administrator, engage in local public information activities, including news releases, special events, facility tours, interviews, and other efforts to inform the public about the work of the facility or field program.

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- C. Identify areas in the facility/office that are accessible to representatives of the news media.
- D. Identify data and information protected by federal or state privacy laws or federal and state freedom of information laws.
- E. Provide copies of news articles pertaining to his/her facility or region to the Regional Team Leader and Superintendent/RA within 24 hours of publication. Internet links forwarded via e-mail are preferred.
- F. Review articles submitted by staff in their assigned area for internal and external publications and forward to the Regional Team Leader.

III. News Releases

- A. News releases of interest to local/regional media may be released by PIOs. Regional Team Leaders will first review and approve press releases and other press-related materials whenever feasible. [4-4021]
- B. The Communications Director/designee will distribute news releases with statewide/national interest.
- C. Emergency news releases will be handled per DOC 410.160 Emergency Media Management.

IV. Media Contacts

- A. The authorized media spokespersons will consist of the Executive Team, Superintendents, RAs, and Regional Team Leaders. Public Information Officers may serve as spokespersons with the consent of their designating authorities.
- B. To accommodate special media requests and to facilitate interest in sharing accurate and timely information with the public, additional staff may serve as media spokespersons. Such staff will first obtain approval from an authorized media spokesperson or PIO before engaging in interviews.
- C. Any employee contacted by a news media representative will prepare a Media Contact Report at the earliest opportunity, but no later than 24 hours from the time of contact. The Media Contact Report will consist of an e-mail message containing the following information:
 1. Name of the news media organization,
 2. Date and time of contact,
 3. Brief description of the information or assistance requested, and
 4. Brief description of the information or assistance provided.

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D. Media Contact Reports prepared by Prison or Community Corrections staff will be distributed to:

1. The employee's immediate supervisor,
2. The appropriate Superintendent/RA,
3. PIO, and
4. Regional Team Leader.

E. Media Contact Reports prepared by members of Executive Staff, Administrative Services Division, Health Services, Risk Management, Communications, Headquarters, Prison, and Community Corrections will be distributed to:

1. The appropriate Deputy Secretary or Department Director, and
2. The Communications Director.

F. Staff will inform their supervisor and PIO of any events that may attract public and/or news interest.

V. News Media Access

A. News media representatives consist of persons whose principal employment is gathering and reporting news for a:

1. Radio or television program whose primary purpose is news reporting for a licensee of the Federal Communications Commission,
2. Newspaper reporting general interest information news and circulated to the public in the community where it is published,
3. News magazine that has a national circulation, is sold by mail subscriptions, or on newsstands to the general public,
4. National or international news service, and
5. Website whose primary purpose is news reporting or a web-based counterpart of any of the above.

B. Pre-arranged news media visits to facilities are encouraged. News media representatives requests for access to the facility must be in writing and include the following information:

1. Full name, Social Security number, date of birth, race, and gender for the purpose of NCIC/WASIC background checks,
2. Purpose of visit,

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3. Time and duration of visit,
 4. Identity of staff/offender(s) to be seen, if applicable, and
 5. Proposed use of camera or other recording devices. The PIO or Superintendent/designee must approve possession of news media cameras and recording devices before being allowed into the facility.
- C. News media representatives must provide positive identification. Foreign media, except for Canadians, must have an "I" Visa on their passport.
- D. Representatives of news media visiting a facility are subject to search procedures per DOC 420.340 Searches of Facility Visitors.
- E. The PIO will ensure media representatives sign the completed DOC 21-900 Media Visit Information Sheet and complete and sign DOC 21-902 News Media Agreement prior to being allowed into the facility.
- F. [4-4022] News media representatives must be escorted by staff. Random access not specific to the purpose of the visit is prohibited.
- G. During an emergency, news media representatives will be restricted to a designated media center per DOC 410.160 Emergency Media Management.
- VI. Other Media Representatives
- A. Other media representatives consist of persons engaged in the production of documentary films, non-fiction books, or other freelance projects.
 - B. Requests by other media representatives for access to facilities, staff, or offenders will be submitted in writing to the Communications Director on company letterhead at least 2 weeks prior to commencement of the project. The Communications Director may ask that the following information be included in the request:
 1. A description of the media representative's project, including a proposed list of facilities, offenders, activities, or situations the representative wishes to include in the project,
 2. An estimated project completion date and proposed schedule for completing each element involving the Department,
 3. A list of major financial contributors to the project, and

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4. An estimate of time required to complete each element involving the Department.

C. The Communications Director may reject, in whole or in part, the other media representative's request.

D. Upon a recommendation from the Communications Director, the Superintendent/RA will approve or reject the request in whole or in part.

E. Other media representatives whose projects have been approved by the appropriate Superintendent/RA will be regarded as news media representatives for purposes of granting access.

VII. Offender Interviews

A. Incarcerated offenders may correspond with representatives of the news media via US Mail per DOC 450.100 Mail for Offenders and may be permitted in-person interviews and/or telephonic interviews per DOC 450.200 Telephone Use by Offenders with representatives of the news media. [4-4279]

B. News media representatives must obtain the incarcerated offender's permission in writing prior to an interview being scheduled. [4-4279] [7F-02] [7F-03]

1. Offender interviews will be scheduled at times that are not disruptive to the orderly operations and security of the facility.

C. The facility Superintendent/Supervisor may deny or restrict in-person interviews if the contact is determined to be disruptive or a threat to the safety, security, and/or orderly operation of the facility. Representatives of the news media may be denied in-person contact if the offender:

1. Has been segregated for disciplinary reasons,
2. Is undergoing mental health treatment,
3. Has filed criminal charges against another offender, or
4. Has been determined to endanger the security of the facility.

D. Incarcerated offenders will complete DOC 21-901 Offender Consent to Contact with News Media prior to any interview, filming, taping, photographing, or voice recording. [4-4022] [4-4279]

E. Staff will not participate in the interviewing, filming, taping, photographing, or recording of an offender under Community Supervision unless the offender has completed DOC 21-901 Offender Consent to Contact with News Media. [4-4022] [4-4279]

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- F. Offenders cannot accept compensation, or anything of value, for news or other media interviews.

VIII. Staff Interviews

- A. On duty, in-person interviews and photographs of staff may be permitted only with prior authorization of the Superintendent/RA and the staff member.
1. Staff cannot accept compensation for on duty news or other media interviews.
 2. Photographing on duty staff without their consent in locations not generally accessible to the public is prohibited.

DEFINITIONS:

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS (See Appendix):

- DOC 21-900 Media Visit Information Sheet
- DOC 21-901 Offender Consent to Contact with News Media
- DOC 21-902 News Media Agreement