

	State of Alaska Department of Corrections Policies and Procedures		Index #: 808.02	Page 1 of 3	
			Effective: 2/1/2012		
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Chapter:	Prisoner Rights				
Subject:	Media Policy				

I. Authority

In accordance with 22 AAC 05.155, the Department will maintain a manual comprised of policies and procedures established by the Commissioner to interpret and implement relevant sections of the Alaska Statutes and 22 AAC.

II. References

Alaska Constitution

Article 1, Sections 1.12 (Criminal Administration), 1.24 (Rights of Crime Victims)

Alaska Statutes

AS 44.28.030

Alaska Administrative Code

22 AAC 05.525

II. Purpose

To establish procedures for media contact with the Department and with prisoners

III. Application

All staff.

IV. Definitions

As used in this document, the following definition shall apply:

A. Media

A means of communication whether in physical form (books, magazines or newspapers), electronic wired (cable, internet) or wireless (internet, radio or television) which reaches or influences people locally or more widely.

B. News

A subject having sufficient relevance to the public or a special audience to warrant media reporting or coverage.

C. Community News

Information related to community activities or events reported on by local media which does not address policy or operations. Examples would include community fund-raising activities, picnics, or celebrations.

D. Media Representative

A person whose occupation is gathering or reporting news.

E. Communications Coordinator

Department employee designated by the Commissioner to receive, research and respond to requests for information, access to facilities or other accommodation by media representatives.

V. Policy

The Department recognizes the media's role in gathering news through communication with prisoners and department officials, the public interest in obtaining this news, and prisoners' right to seek communication with the media and will work with the media to provide relevant information while protecting the rights of crime victims, the privacy of prisoners and Department employees, and promoting public safety and the rehabilitation of prisoners.

VI. Procedures

- A. All requests by media representatives for information, interviews, or public comment should be directed to the Communications Coordinator.
 - B. Media representatives may contact any prisoner by mail while noting that incoming letters are opened, inspected for contraband, subject to be read, and then forwarded to the inmate. When corresponding with an inmate, media representatives may provide a telephone number where an inmate can call collect. It is up to the inmate to initiate the call. Telephone calls may be limited and may be recorded under normal Department security procedures.
 - C. In order to have an interview recorded (audio or video) prisoners must sign a Release and Permission for News Media Contact (form 808.02A) in advance.
 - D. Media representatives may visit an inmate if that visit is requested by the inmate and the media representative is placed on the approved visitor list. Established visitation rules shall apply. The Superintendent, in consultation with the health care staff, may limit media access to a prisoner if the prisoner's medical or mental health treatment plan makes visitation inappropriate.
 - E. Booking photos are not subject to release to media representatives unless special circumstances exist such as the escape of a prisoner or when releasing a booking photo will enhance public safety as determined by the division director, commissioner or commissioner's designee.
 - F. At the direction of the Communications Coordinator and approval of the Division Director, Media Representatives may be granted access to correctional facilities for the purpose of news gathering and reporting. The Superintendent may suspend or cancel media visits for administrative or security reasons. The Superintendent may provide access to secure areas and shall insure
 - 1. Camera operators do not film locations that if filmed might compromise the security of the facility.
 - 2. Camera operators do not film staff or prisoners in a way that would identify their person unless specific permission to be filmed has been obtained in advance.
 - 3. The crime victims of each prisoner who signs a release shall be notified as provided under P&P 1000.01 9 (a) and (b).
 - G. The following prisoner information may be released to the media: name, age, race, place of incarceration and past movements via transfer, charges and bail information, conviction date and length of sentence.
Note: for reason of security, a prisoner's imminent release date should not be given to the media.
 - H. Public records (Freedom of Information Act) requests shall be forwarded to the Communications Coordinator.
 - I. Special access or accommodation for media representatives of documentary television or film production companies, including 'reality TV,' may be considered on a case-by-case basis only when the request can show it will support the mission of the Department and with the approval of the Director of Institutions, the Commissioner or designee. Requests for access shall be forwarded to the Communications Coordinator who shall obtain the following information for presentation to the Commissioner or designee:
 - 1. Name of producer
 - 2. Written request for access, bearing official or company letterhead, addressed to the Commissioner requesting accommodation or special access and explaining the topic and purpose of the proposed documentary or program and explaining how the proposed film or program will support the mission of the Department.
 - 3. Example of program or previous work in digital form, for example on DVD.
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4. A detailed itinerary of dates, times and locations requested, proposed crew members, and list of prisoners or staff members sought for on-camera interview.
- J. The decision to grant special access or accommodation will take the following points into consideration:
1. Crime victims of any prisoner depicted in or featured in the proposed film or documentary will be contacted according to P&P 1000.01. Any opposition will be strongly considered.
 2. Value in promoting the work of the Department to the public at large.
 3. The level of disruption to the day-to-day operations of the facility.
 4. Purpose of the documentary.
- A response will be sent within 30 days of receipt of request.
- K. A superintendent may communicate with the media on topics of community news (see IV C) after informing the Communications Coordinator.

V. Implementation

This policy and procedure is effective 14 days following the date signed by the Commissioner. Each Manager shall incorporate the directions outlined in this document into local policy and procedure. All local policies and procedures must conform to these directions; any deviation must be approved in writing by the Division Director.



2/1/2012

Date

Joseph D. Schmidt, Commissioner
Department of Corrections