



WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**Policy and Procedure #1.015
Media and Public Relations**

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<p>Authority: Wyoming Statute(s): 1-40-301; 1-40-303; 7-13-409; 7-19-101, <i>et seq.</i>; 25-1-104; 25-1-105 ACA Standard(s): 4-4021; 2-CO-1A-27; 2-CO-1A-27-1; 2-CO-1A-25; 4-APPFS-1C-01</p>	<p>Effective Date: August 22, 2016 Revision/Review History: 06/15/15 05/15/14 07/01/13 07/01/12 06/20/11</p>
<p>Cross Reference of Policy: P&P #1.009, <i>Release of Information</i>; P&P #3.306, <i>Capital Punishment – Execution by Lethal Injection</i></p>	<p>Summary of Revision/Review: Updates existing policy pursuant to annual review.</p>
<p>Approved: R.O. Lampert Robert O. Lampert, Director</p>	<p>Supersedes Existing Policy : 8-16-16 Date</p>

REFERENCE

1. ATTACHMENTS
 - A. WDOC Form #100: *Photo, Name, Voice Release*
 - B. WDOC Form #100.1: *Media Request and Background Check*
 - C. WDOC Form #100.2: *Release of Use for Non-Offender*
 - D. WDOC Form #100.3: *Media Visit Checklist*

2. OTHER – None Noted



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I. PURPOSE

- A. **Relationships with the Public and News Media.** The purposes of this policy and procedure are to provide a system for establishing and maintaining appropriate relationships with the public and news media, to establish a process to inform the community of incidents and activities within the Wyoming Department of Corrections (WDOC), and to direct staff on the issue of media and public access to offenders and staff within the WDOC, contracted correctional facilities and adult community correctional facilities or programs (ACCs).

II. POLICY

- A. **Public Information Program.** It is the policy of the WDOC to provide for a public information program that provides for and fosters contact with representatives of the news media and the public. (2-CO-1A-27) (4-APPFS-1C-01).
1. The Public Information Program shall be reviewed and updated at least annually. (2-CO-1A-25)
 2. WDOC employees and media representatives shall be informed of the public information process. (4-APPFS-1C-01)
- B. **Management of Public Information.** It is the policy of the WDOC to protect the privacy and other rights of offenders and members of the staff, while ensuring a better informed public. To that end, the WDOC shall manage public information as an integral element of its mission, providing stakeholders accurate and timely information.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Adult Community Correctional Facility or Program (ACC):** A community based or community-oriented facility or program which is operated pursuant to the Adult Community Corrections Act. (W.S. §§ 7-18-101 through 7-18-115)
- B. **Central Office:** The Director, administrators and related support and management staff responsible for the administration and oversight of all aspects of the Wyoming Department of Corrections.



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- C. **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** A CEO is identified, but not limited to, the following positions: Director, Deputy Director, division administrators, deputy administrators, wardens, district supervisors, adult community corrections coordinator, adult community corrections directors.
- D. **Contract Staff:** Individuals providing specific services to the Wyoming Department of Corrections through mutual contractual agreement.
- E. **Field Public Information Officer (FPIO):** Any staff member designated by an administrator, Chief Executive Officer or work unit manager to deliver information to the public and to the media. The FPIO will coordinate with the Public Information Officer.
- F. **Media:** Any bona fide representative of print, wire service, television, radio news, internet or production organization. Free-lance writers are considered media, but can be required to verify their assignment with a letter from the organization they purport to represent.
- G. **News:** An event or situation of potential interest to the public.
- H. **News conference:** A media interview that involves a representative of more than one media outlet at a time.
- I. **Personal Media Interview:** A face to face or telephonic interview of a Wyoming Department of Corrections staff member or offender and a representative of the media.
- J. **Public Information Officer (PIO):** The staff member designated by the Director to deliver Wyoming Department of Corrections information to the public and to the media. The PIO works under the supervision of the Director and is the official spokesperson for the Wyoming Department of Corrections.
- K. **Speakers Bureau:** Wyoming Department of Corrections staff and others identified by the Wyoming Department of Corrections and trained by the Public Information Officer to serve as representatives of the Wyoming Department of Corrections at scheduled public forums, other than victim impact panels, civic organizations and other events through prepared talks, tours, the presentation of professional papers, participation in panel discussions, and discussion of primary talking points.

IV. PROCEDURE



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- A. Public Information.** The WDOC Central Office, Division of Field Services, and WDOC correctional facilities shall each inform the public and the media of events within their areas of responsibility. This policy, together with WDOC Policy and Procedure #1.009, *Release of Information*, and local operational procedures shall address emergency and non-emergency responses to the media and should include, at a minimum, the following: (ACA 4-4021) (2-CO-1A-27-1)
1. The identification of areas of the facility or office that are accessible to media representatives, consistent with preserving offenders' right to privacy and maintaining order and security;
 2. The contact person for routine requests for information;
 3. Identification of data and information protected by federal or state privacy laws, or federal and state freedom of information laws;
 4. Special events coverage;
 5. News release policy; and
 6. The designation of individuals or positions within that area authorized to speak with the media on behalf of the facility.
- B. Public Information Officer.** The Director shall designate a departmental Public Information Officer (PIO). The PIO shall have the following areas of responsibility: internal communications; external communications; speakers bureau coordination; and co-ordination of training related to Field Public Information Officer (FPIO) duties, speakers bureau, and staff/offender media access.
1. **Internal communications.** The PIO shall be responsible for all internal communications to include instructing staff about the news media; designing, writing, and editing the WDOC newsletter; and disseminating information of general interest within the WDOC.
 2. **External communications.** The PIO shall initiate and respond to external communications to include media inquiries; public relations; coordination of media and public tours through the FPIOs; interviews; on-site and off-site crisis communication; and public requests for public information or documents. In addition, the PIO shall maintain direct contact with the FPIOs, assisting them in their PIO functions; and compose and update information presented on the WDOC public Internet site. The PIO may also assist in providing material for presentations by staff. The PIO shall



circulate copies of pertinent print articles to the departmental administrators.

3. **Speakers bureau.** The PIO will serve as chair of the WDOC speakers bureau. The PIO will work with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to develop standardized talking points and key messages for use by speakers bureau members to insure consistent delivery of information supportive of the vision, mission, values and goals of the WDOC.
 4. **Training.** The PIO will work with the training section to develop and deliver training on this policy to FPIOs, CEOs, speakers bureau members, and selected staff.
- C. **Field Public Information Officer.** The Central Office, Division of Field Services and each WDOC operated correctional facility will designate a FPIO in writing and notify the PIO. The FPIO shall function as the correctional facility/field services information officer subject to the limitations of this policy.
1. Each FPIO shall work with the PIO to establish each office or facility's commitment to informing the public and media of events that fall within the office's or facility's area of responsibility. FPIO will also work with the PIO to maintain open lines of communication with media representatives, respond to inquiries from the media about activities, programs and events; provide opportunities for on-site observations of WDOC correctional facilities and field services offices in collaboration with the PIO; and respond to other public requests for public information or documents in conjunction with the CEO. Release of public information will be subject to WDOC Policy and Procedure #1.009, *Release of Information*.
 2. The FPIO shall:
 - i. Submit copies of news articles to the PIO on the day of receipt for distribution to departmental administrators;
 - ii. Encourage submission of articles from their jurisdiction for submission to the WDOC newsletter;
 - iii. Develop two (2) news articles per year highlighting an activity or event for presentation to the PIO for publication by the media;
 - iv. In an emergency or significant media event, initiate the site specific media staging site and assist the PIO as needed; and



- v. Encourage staff and speakers bureau members to make themselves available to public forums through prepared talks, the presentation of professional papers or participation in panel discussions by coordinating requests and providing information.

D. Media Access to Correctional Facilities, Field Services Offices and Central Office. Requests for media access to WDOC correctional facilities, field services offices and the Central Office may be directed to the PIO or to the CEO/FPIO of the correctional facility, field service office or central office. FPIOs will be the lead individual for coordination and escorting of all media visits, with the exception of the Central Office, which will be the department PIO. However, the PIO shall be informed of requests for news media access to correctional facilities, field services offices and Central Office. Such requests shall utilize two forms. The first is WDOC Form #100.3, *Media Visit Checklist*. This form will walk the FPIO through the necessary information they need to organize a media visit. In addition, the FPIO will use WDOC Form #100.1, *Media Request and Background Check*, which will be completed by the requesting media and the FPIO and shall include:

1. The name of the media;
2. The nature and subject matter of the proposed news item;
3. The method of coverage and the type of equipment requested for the proposed coverage; and
4. The names of all those requesting access to the correctional facility, field services office, or Central Office. When practicable all names shall be provided to the PIO at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the anticipated visit.

E. Evaluation of Access Request. Each request for news media access shall be evaluated by the PIO or the FPIO in consultation with the PIO, and approved by the CEO.

1. Media access to WDOC correctional facilities, field services offices, or the Central Office may be denied where there is undue risk to the safety, security, order or schedule of the correctional facility, field services office, or Central Office.
2. Media access to WDOC correctional facilities, field services offices, or the Central Office may be denied where there is undue risk to the safety of any individual, including the offender being interviewed and/or his certified victim(s).



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3. A media interview request may be denied for any of the following reasons:
 - i. The media representative does not agree to the conditions established by this policy or has, in the past, failed to abide by the required condition;
 - ii. The inmate or offender is physically or mentally unable to participate as determined by a medical officer (a psychologist or psychiatrist will verify mental incapacity);
 - iii. The inmate or offender is a juvenile (under 18) and written consent has not been obtained from the inmate's or offender's parent or guardian, or the court, if necessary;
 - iv. The inmate's or offender's written consent has not been granted;
 - v. The interview, in the opinion of the CEO, would endanger the health or safety of the interviewer or would adversely affect the good order of the correctional facility, field services office, or Central Office;
 - vi. The inmate or offender is involved in a pending court action and the court with jurisdiction in that matter has issued an order forbidding such interviews (*i.e.*, issued a "gag" order); and/or
 - vii. If information regarding the inmate's or offender's whereabouts would endanger the inmate's or offender's safety.
 4. The CEO will document any disapproval of a requested interview and note the reason for the denial.
- F. Requests for Access.** Requests for access must be approved by the CEO or his/her designee, prior to allowing the access by media or the public, including tour groups. Media, or the public, who request to visit correctional facilities, field services offices or Central Office to report on programs or activities or to view same shall be instructed of the following:
1. **Identification and Inspection.** All media representatives and tour group members must provide proper identification which shall include a photo identification card or driver's license. Any item in a tour or visiting group member's possession shall be examined prior to admission and nonessential items may be required to be left outside the secured area of the correctional facility. Background checks may be required prior to correctional facility access.



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2. **Age Limits for Tours of Correctional Facilities.** In no case shall children under the age of twelve (12) be permitted to tour WDOC operated correctional facilities. Children under the age of eighteen (18) will not be permitted to tour without the written consent of their parent or guardian or without a valid court order, and must be accompanied by at least one on-duty staff throughout the tour.
 3. **Conduct During Tours.** No tour participants may make contact (*i.e.*, physical, verbal or written) with any offender or take photographs or audio or visual recordings without prior permission from the CEO/FPIO.
 4. **Tour Termination.** Any tour may be denied, cancelled or terminated for any reason by the CEO at any time.
 5. **Photos and Recordings of Correctional Facilities.** Media representatives and others may photograph or film only those areas of the correctional facility approved in advance by the CEO/FPIO. Filming or photographing controlled areas and security features will not be authorized.
- G. Interviews, Photos and Recordings of Inmates or Offenders.** An inmate or offender has the right not to be interviewed, photographed, or recorded by the media. The CEO will be notified of and approve all inmate or offender interview requests prior to the scheduled interview. Unless the correctional facility or office has verified that a permission slip signed by the inmate is on file, the media must obtain written permission from the inmate or offender, using WDOC Form #100, *Photo, Name, Voice Release*, before interviewing, photographing, or recording the voice of an inmate or offender. Public release of video, photo and audio recordings of an inmate or offender by the media shall require the prior approval of the CEO/FPIO, using WDOC Form #100, *Photo, Name, Voice Release*. The CEO/FPIO shall not authorize the public release of video, photo and audio recordings of an inmate or offender who is under the age of eighteen (18), as the result of a media request, without the additional written consent of the inmate's or offender's parent or guardian.
- H. Interview Guidelines for Inmates and Offenders.** A personal media interview may be authorized by the CEO between an inmate or offender and a representative of the media, subject to the following conditions:
1. **Routine Requests.** Routine requests for interviews with inmates or offenders shall be directed in writing to the CEO and the PIO within a reasonable time period to the proposed interview (generally 48 hours or more). In circumstances where timeliness of reporting is a proper consideration, the written request may be faxed or e-mailed to the CEO and the PIO. If the interview has been initiated by the WDOC in



conjunction with the media, staff will notify the inmate or offender of each interview request and will, as a prerequisite, obtain written consent from the inmate or offender and CEO/FPIO prior to the interview taking place, using WDOC Form #100, *Photo, Name, Voice Release*. The written consent or denial will become part of the inmate's or offender's base file.

2. The request should state:
 - i. Purpose of the interview and the subject matter to be covered;
 - ii. Requested date and time;
 - iii. Correctional facility, field services office or location of the inmate or offender;
 - iv. The duration of the interview; and
 - v. Requested location of the interview.
3. **Consent by an Inmate or Offender.** An inmate or offender may consent or decline an interview. Any consent to an interview will be signed by the inmate or offender and the CEO/FPIO using WDOC Form #100, *Photo, Name, Voice Release*.
4. **Limits of Interview.** Only previously taped interviews shall be allowed to be aired. The interview shall be limited to the approved purpose, and subject matter may not be expanded or changed from the approved topic. In the interest of safety and security, in the event of a requested in-person interview by news media, the inmate will be managed in the manner dictated by their current classification/custody level. Inmates on non-contact visit status may, therefore, not have contact interviews. Such inmates shall not be denied access to the news media, but may communicate only through written correspondence or outgoing collect telephone calls where permitted by the CEO.
5. **Offenders' Access to Media.** Inmates or offenders, including those who are denied personal interviews, may correspond with the media and/or use the approved inmate telephone system to contact media. Media mail shall be treated as general correspondence and shall be subject to inspection. Requests by media for taped telephonic interviews will be coordinated with security by the FPIO in accordance with correctional facility guidelines upon approval of the CEO. Inmates may not:
 - i. Participate in more than one interview per day nor hold a news conference;



- ii. Be employed by a news organization, act as a reporter, or publish under a byline, or enter into an agreement with a media outlet to be published under a byline;
 - iii. Receive compensation or anything of value for interviews with media or production of any news material; or
 - iv. Participate in personal media interviews if the inmate is involved in a pending court action and the court with jurisdiction in that matter has issued an order forbidding such interviews (*i.e.*, issued a “gag” order).
- 6. **Safety and Security.** The PIO/FPIO may request a list of questions to be asked in advance of the interview. Questions which jeopardize the safety of the community, the staff, or offenders will not be permitted.
- 7. **WDOC Presence at Interview.** A representative from the WDOC or ACC will be present during the interview.
- 8. **Interview Termination.** An interview may be denied, cancelled or terminated for any reason at any time by the representative from the WDOC or ACC present during the interview.
- I. **Interviews, Photos and Recordings of Non-Offenders.** Any individual who is not an offender has the right not to be interviewed, photographed, or recorded by the media. The media must obtain written permission from the individual, using WDOC Form #100.2, *Release of Use for Non-Offender*, before interviewing, photographing, or recording the voice of the individual. Public release of video, photo and audio recordings of an individual by the media may be denied by the CEO/FPIO. The CEO/FPIO shall not authorize the public release of video, photo and audio recordings of an individual who is under the age of eighteen (18), as the result of a media request, without the additional written consent of the individual’s parent or guardian.
- J. **Interview Guidelines for WDOC Staff Members.** Staff members of the WDOC have the right to accept personal media interview requests. During these interviews, staff members shall not represent that they are speaking specifically on behalf of the WDOC unless they are assigned to appear on behalf of the agency. Release of information shall be subject to WDOC Policy and Procedure #1.009, *Release of Information*, regarding confidentiality and the release of public information.
 - 1. **Scheduled interviews**



- L. Executions.** All media relations associated with an execution of an inmate shall be in accordance with WDOC Policy and Procedure #3.306, *Capital Punishment – Execution by Lethal Injection*. The warden shall arrange for a press room to be used during any scheduled execution. The capacity of the designated press room shall dictate the number of news media representatives whom shall be approved access to the designated press room during the execution.
1. Representatives of news media will not be permitted to witness an execution unless the media member is eligible to witness as a friend or relative of the condemned inmate. No cameras, electronic recording devices, or other recording equipment will be permitted in the witness room.
- M. Publication of Inmate Writings/Articles.** Profit from any inmate writings/articles will be subject to W.S. §§ 1-40-301 and 1-40-303.

V. TRAINING POINTS

- A. Who is the official spokesperson of the WDOC?
- B. What type of information/activities does the spokesperson for the WDOC coordinate?
- C. What are the responsibilities of the Field Public Information Officer (FPIO)?
- D. When a request from news media is received, to whom is the request referred?
- E. Who approves or denies a request for information from news media?
- F. Can photos be taken of offenders?
- G. Under what circumstances can a staff member being interviewed reveal confidential information?
- H. Under what circumstances can the media be denied access to a correctional facility, field services office or Central Office?