



POLICY DIRECTIVE

Policy:	DOC 3.3.4 MEDIA ACCESS TO OFFENDERS
Effective Date:	08/01/1997 Page 1 of 2
Revision Date(s):	06/20/2012; 04/24/2026
Signature/Title:	/s/ Eric Strauss, Director

I. POLICY

The Department will provide news media representatives with access to offenders who are in Department custody or under Department supervision when consistent with the security and the orderly operation of its facilities and programs.

II. APPLICABILITY

All divisions, facilities, and programs Department-owned and contracted, as specified in contract.

III. DEFINITIONS (see Glossary)

IV. REQUIREMENTS

A. General Requirements

1. The administrator will provide the facility or program rules and regulations to news media representatives prior to permitting offender interviews.
2. Department and contracted facilities and programs will protect offender confidentiality and comply with the consent requirements in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

B. Incarcerated Adult Offenders

1. Adult facilities will follow applicable procedures for media access to offenders in accordance with the following:
 - a. offenders may choose to accept or reject media interview requests;
 - b. media representatives will submit interview requests in writing through the Department's Public Information Officer (PIO);
 - c. the PIO must obtain approval from the facility administrator before scheduling media access to offenders;
 - d. offenders who agree to an interview will do so in writing, state the purpose, and receive no compensation, in accordance with the *Interview and Photo Consent* form;
 - e. approved offender access must be arranged at reasonable times of day consistent with facility security or operational needs;
 - f. offenders will not be photographed in a manner that allows individual identification without the offender's written consent;
 - g. the PIO will make any necessary arrangements with regard to news media presence in consultation with the division or facility administrators and the news media representative; and
 - h. the PIO will arrange for a staff member to:
 - 1) verify the offender's written consent for an interview;
 - 2) act as a staff representative by accompanying the media representative to the interview; and
 - 3) be present during the interview to ensure the media representative complies with permissions granted on the *Interview and Photo Consent* form.

C. Probation and Parole

1. Offenders who are under community supervision do not ordinarily need to provide written consent or receive Department approval for news media interviews.
2. Offenders will sign a consent form in the following circumstances:
 - a. when the news media interview is arranged by a Department staff member; or
 - b. when the interview occurs at a Department facility, program, or office.

D. Incarcerated Youth Offenders

1. The facility administrator will permit news media access to youth correctional facilities:
 - a. at reasonable times of the day consistent with the security needs of the facility;
 - b. only after news media representatives sign the required *Youth Confidentiality* form and agree not to:
 - 1) identify youth offenders by name either in media reports or in correspondence; or
 - 2) photograph or film offenders in a manner that allows for visual identification.
2. If consent forms are unavailable, the only information facility staff may disclose is whether a specific offender is in residence at the facility.

E. Youth Parole Offenders

1. News media representative access to youth offenders on parole requires the offender's permission and the approval of the offender's legal guardian.
2. The offender and legal guardian must sign the required consent form.

F. Denial of Media Access

1. Media access to offenders may be denied when:
 - a. the facility is operating under emergency conditions as defined in *DOC 3.2.1 Emergency Management* and *DOC 3.2.1 (A) RD Emergency Operations Plan Procedure Guide (Restricted Distribution)*;
 - b. an offender, who ordinarily may be available for a news media interview, is placed in confinement, for example, disciplinary or administrative segregation or maximum custody;
 - c. an offender chooses not to be interviewed, refuses to sign a consent form, or a youth offender does not have legal guardian consent;
 - d. the media representative fails to abide by the rules, regulations, and applicable procedures governing offender access; or
 - e. the media representative behaves in a manner that jeopardizes the safety and/or security of the facility or program.

V. CLOSING

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Department Public Information Officer or the Department Communications Director.

VI. REFERENCES

- A. *DOC 1.1.8 Media Relations; DOC 3.2.1 Emergency Management; DOC 3.2.1 (A) RD Emergency Operations Plan Procedure Guide (Restricted Distribution)*

VII. FORMS

Interview and Photo Consent
Youth Confidentiality