



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY  
**DEPARTMENT WIDE**  
OFFENDER MANUAL

REVISION DATE  
2/15/13

PAGE NUMBER  
1 of 5

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**DOC 150.100**

**POLICY**

TITLE  
**PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS**

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- Revised: 11/1/10
- Revised: 2/15/13

**SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:**

Major changes. Read carefully!

**APPROVED:**

Signature on file

\_\_\_\_\_  
**BERNARD WARNER**, Secretary  
Department of Corrections

2/11/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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 4-4279](#); [ACA 7F-01](#); [ACA 7F-02](#); [ACA 7F-03](#); [DOC 280.510 Public Disclosure of Records](#); [DOC 320.255 IMU/ITU/Segregation/Mental Health Segregation Operations](#); DOC 410.160 Emergency Information Management; [DOC 450.100 Mail for Offenders](#); [DOC 450.110 Mail for Work Release Offenders](#); [DOC 450.200 Telephone Use by Offenders](#); [DOC 450.300 Visits for Prison Offenders](#); [DOC 450.310 Visits and Social Outings for Work Release Offenders](#)

## POLICY:

- I. Providing accurate, timely, and relevant information to the public is an integral element of the Department mission. The Department encourages interaction with the public and news media. [4-4020] [4-4021] [7F-01]
- II. Employees will provide the public, media, and other agencies accurate and timely information per DOC 280.510 Public Disclosure of Records and the security objectives of the Department. During emergencies, DOC 410.160 Emergency Information Management supersedes this policy.

## DIRECTIVE:

- I. Responsibilities
  - A. The Communications Director will ensure the Department shares accurate, clear, and consistent information with the public. S/he will:
    1. Increase public awareness, understanding, and support of the Department's operations and strategies to increase public safety.
    2. Develop communication plans that provide guidance on the Department's message and how it should be delivered.
    3. Coordinate with members of the Executive Staff and the Appointing Authorities, Chair of the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board, and Public Information Officers (PIOs).
    4. Brief the Governor's Communications Office on high profile incidents and issues that are likely to generate news media coverage, and serve as Department spokesperson during these incidents.
    5. Prepare PIOs and subject matter experts for news media interviews.
  - B. PIOs will be identified as follows:

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1. Each Superintendent will designate a facility PIO.
2. The Field Administrators will serve as the PIO for their respective sections.
  - a. The Field Administrator may designate a Community Corrections Supervisor as a PIO.
3. The Correctional Industries (CI) Director will designate a PIO for CI operations.

C. PIOs will:

1. Serve as contacts for local news media seeking routine public information. [4-4021]
2. Consult with the Communications Office before agreeing to an interview that includes more than sharing routine public information about local operations.
3. Alert the Communications Office about high profile incidents, upcoming news media coverage, media requests to interview offenders, and media requests for a press tour.
4. Coordinate with the Communications Office to increase public awareness and understanding of local operations by hosting press events and ride-alongs, sending news releases, and attending community events. [4-4021]

II. News Releases and Media Advisories

A. PIOs can send:

1. News releases to local news media to release public information.
  - a. Emergency news releases will be handled per DOC 410.160 Emergency Information Management.
2. Media advisories to invite news media to a facility for an upcoming event or tour.
  - a. The media advisory should include the time and place of the event/ tour, contact and RSVP information, and a summary of what the reporters and photographers will see.

B. PIOs will send draft copies of news releases and media advisories to the Communications Office for approval prior to release.

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### III. Press Tours and Ride-Alongs

- A. The Communications Office will coordinate with local PIOs to organize press tours and ride-alongs to show the public how the Department achieves its mission of increasing public safety.
- B. For press tours at Department facilities, the local PIO will manage the security screenings for reporters and photographers.
  1. To obtain a security clearance, each reporter and photographer must provide his/her full name and date of birth and the last 4 digits of his/her Social Security number.
  2. Security clearance for reporters and photographers who frequently attend press tours may be tracked in a database managed by the Communications Office.

### IV. Photographs and Video Footage

- A. For press tours inside a Department facility:
  1. The local PIO will notify employees and offenders in advance that news media representatives will be on-site at the facility.
    - a. Employees and offenders should notify the PIO if they do not wish to be photographed or recorded on video.
  2. Recording devices and cameras are only allowed in facilities during approved press tours.
  3. Photographers are prohibited from recording images that could compromise security.
    - a. The PIO will explain in advance which images are prohibited.
    - b. Any news organization that publishes or broadcasts images that could compromise security may be prohibited from returning to the facility.
- B. For press tours or ride-alongs outside a Department facility:
  1. Photographers do not need permission to take a photograph or record footage of an employee or offender in the community. This includes any public area, such as parks, alleyways, and sidewalks.

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2. If a ride-along includes a field contact at an offender's residence, the photographer must have the offender's permission to be on his/her property.
3. If a ride-along includes a field contact at an offender's workplace, the photographer must have the employer's permission to be on the worksite.

#### V. Requests to Interview Offenders

- A. [4-4279] [7F-03] News media representatives and documentary filmmakers will have the same access to offenders as the public. [4-4021] [7F-02] Contact with an offender housed in a Department facility may be made:
  1. Through the mail per DOC 450.100 Mail for Offenders or DOC 450.110 Mail for Work Release Offenders, as applicable.
  2. By telephone per DOC 450.200 Telephone Use by Offenders.
  3. In-person, as either a general Prison visit per DOC 450.300 Visits for Prison Offenders or a special Work Release visit per DOC 450.310 Visits and Social Outings for Work Release Offenders.
- B. Per DOC 320.255 IMU/ITU/Segregation/Mental Health Segregation Operations, visits with offenders in Segregation or an Intensive Management/Treatment Unit (IMU/ITU) will not be allowed.
- C. News media representatives and documentary filmmakers may contact the facility PIO for assistance.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

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

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None

#### **DOC FORMS:**

None