### I. PURPOSE

To describe the methods that shall be used in the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) institutions to maintain informative relations with news media representatives and the public.

### II. POLICY

Within security limitations and privacy protection statutes, including consideration of possible disruptiveness and resource demands on department staff, it is the policy of the IDOC to maintain open communication with representatives of the news media and the public and, within security concerns, allow access to the institutions.

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A. Media Visits and Interviews

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III. DEFINITIONS – As used in this document:

A. News Media Representative – A qualified and properly credentialed representative of general circulation newspapers, magazines of national circulation sold through newsstands and/or mail subscriptions to the general public, national/international news services, or radio/television stations holding a Federal Communications Commission license.

B. Public – Individuals who are not officials in the law enforcement or academic communities, news media representatives, employees of the IDOC, or incarcerated individuals or their family members.

C. See IDOC Policy AD-GA-16 for additional Definitions.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Media Visits and Interviews

1. When media representatives visit an institution, the Warden or designee and the IDOC’s Communications Director have the responsibility to grant, deny, or guide the extent of:

   a. Coverage of institutional functions and special events.

   b. Use of facilities, personnel, incarcerated individuals, or records in connection with the making of motion pictures and the writing of books, magazine articles, or syndicated stories.

   c. Interviews with incarcerated individuals and staff.

2. Personal interviews and photographs of an incarcerated individual are not allowed except under special circumstances, and only with the approval of the Warden or designee and the IDOC’s Communications Director. These requests must be submitted in writing or email and shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If approved and the incarcerated individual agrees to the interview, the incarcerated individual shall be required to consent (see AD-GA-09 F-1, Media Request Form) in writing, waiving any and all liability against the institution and the IDOC.
The interview shall take place in areas where security of the institution is not a concern. The approval and consent restrictions are waived during public meetings (i.e., Parole Board hearings) pursuant to Code of Iowa, Chapter 21, absent security violations or concerns.

3. Any media visit of any purpose can be denied, canceled, or restricted by the Warden or designee and the IDOC's Communications Director for security concerns based on present circumstances, and subject matter, including, but not limited to, pending appeals, or legal matters including criminal and civil related to the incarcerated individual, institutional adjustment, need to complete treatment programming, unsuccessful or failure to participate in required or recommended treatment programming, seriousness of the criminal conviction, re-victimization, security status, pending commutation reviews, etc.

4. Correspondence and communication between the media and incarcerated individuals shall be guided by the same regulations imposed by the institution for general correspondence (see OP-MTV-01, OP-MTV-03, OP-MTV-04).

5. Scheduled media visits must be submitted in writing or email and, at a minimum, shall include the person(s) (staff/incarcerated individual) to be interviewed, reason for interview, subject matter, the name of representing media organization and the name of the media representative. (4-4279)

6. All media contacts, even unscheduled media contacts with staff of a routine or general nature shall be immediately reported to the Warden or designee who shall report to the IDOC’s Communications Director.

7. With the exception of public meetings, all media representatives are subject to a security check and must be prepared to present media credentials showing that they represent or are employed by a bonafide or incorporated media organization. If media representative is conducting a visit with an inmate that was scheduled using the department visiting policy, media will be allowed a pencil and paper to record notes during the visit. They should make either the Warden or Communications Director aware of the date(s) of the visit so that visiting room security staff can be made aware and allow for the writing utensils.
B. Release of News Items

1. Information of a routine or general nature can be released to the newspaper, radio, television station, wire service, etc. by the Warden or designee. *(4-4021)*

2. Media contacts or inquiries regarding an incident that is considered serious or critical shall be released to the DOC media distribution list. Routine matters such as minor disturbances or a fight may not be reported to the media. The IDOC shall maintain a media notification list for those media organizations that request to be directly contacted upon initial notice of an incident. All media notices or releases shall be sent by e-mail and posted on the DOC website.

3. There are two types of media releases:
   a. General Media Release – normally involves major changes, improvements, staff or incarcerated individual recognitions of the institution. Such changes or improvements shall be described in writing and be released by the Warden, Communications Director, or designee.
   
   b. Emergency Media Release – normally involves deaths, escapes, acts of violence, hostage situations, disturbances, fires, and natural disasters. If the incident in such cases necessitates coverage at an institution, representatives of the news media shall be located in a designated area on or near the perimeter of the institution. The Warden, Communications Director, or designee shall periodically update the situation.

4. News releases shall have two formats:
   a. Telephone or person-to-person interviews - The information shared with the media shall be factual in nature. Relevant information shall be limited to the event or incident.
   
   b. Written media releases (press release). Major media releases shall be brief, concise, factual, and approved by the Warden or designee and the IDOC’s Communications Director. The Communications Director shall forward copies of all media releases to the Director.

5. Information that may jeopardize security, investigations, and control of the institution’s attempt to restore or return the institution to normal
operations shall be withheld until such time as the need no longer exists. Confidential information shall be withheld.

C. Emergency Announcement

1. If an incarcerated individual(s) escapes or absconds, the supervising institution shall immediately contact all area law enforcement agencies and the IDOC’s Communications Director.

2. The IDOC’s Communications Director shall immediately notify the largest print media organization within 25 miles (minimum) of the institution and the Associated Press.

D. Public Contacts

1. Employee contacts with the public, incarcerated individuals or incarcerated individual family members, regarding institutional operations must be professional and respectful at all times.

2. Employees that are authorized contact with the public, incarcerated individuals or incarcerated individual family members, shall be knowledgeable of the subject matter and experienced in public speaking, to ensure prompt, courteous, and correct responses to inquiries.

3. Personnel assigned or authorized to publicly address the IDOC or institution issues must be knowledgeable of public information, and confidentiality regulations and applicable statutes.

4. Employees receiving requests from the public, incarcerated individuals or incarcerated individual family members, regarding IDOC business information shall refer all such inquiries to the office of the Warden, the institution’s Public Information Officer, or the IDOC’s Communications Director.

5. Employees receiving requests for comments or information from the news media or public, incarcerated individuals or incarcerated individual family members, shall refer such requests directly to the office of the Warden, the institution’s Public Information Officer, or the IDOC’s Communications Director.

   a. Response to inquiries must be prompt and accurate.

   b. All responses shall meet all applicable local, state and federal laws governing public information and right of privacy. (4-4019)
E. Compensation

1. Individual compensation for participation in public information programs related to the employee’s job responsibilities shall not be accepted.

2. Donations to the institution may be accepted, and must be processed through the institutional Associate Warden/Administration.