

## CONTACT WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

- AUTHORITY:** Administrative Directive
- RESCINDS:** Procedure Manual Item 1-2-108, dated 03/10/14
- FORMS:** None
- PURPOSE:** To establish uniform guidelines for handling media requests in order to guarantee that appropriate confidentiality is maintained and that the information provided is accurate and provided in a timely fashion by the appropriate spokesperson for the department.

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The Chief Probation Officer (**CPO**) and the Chief Deputy Probation Officers (**CDPOs**) are the official spokespersons for the agency.
- B. The Department's Public Information Officer (PIO), as designated by Executive Management (EM), is responsible for screening media inquiries, advising, and coordinating any response including the following:
1. Coordinating media contacts with official departmental spokespersons
  2. Gathering pertinent data regarding emergent situations and releasing appropriate information to the press when directed to do so
  3. Coordinating press conferences
  4. Developing and distributing press releases
  5. Assisting in the development and distribution of public information material
  6. Reviewing and finalizing Media Contact **Emails** for the approval of EM, and assuring they are forwarded to the County Executive Offices and members of the Board of Supervisors
- C. Cameras
1. Do not permit cameras into any **facility** or any area housing youth. Exceptions require specific authorization from EM **or Court Order**.
  2. If authorized, photos for use outside of the agency must be taken so that individual youth are not identifiable, i.e. from the rear, at a distance. **All photographs and/or video should be reviewed by the PIO, Division Director (DD), or EM prior to being released**

## II. PROCEDURE

- A. If you are contacted, in person or by phone, by a representative of the news media requesting information:
1. Get the case name or incident about which they are seeking information.
  2. Politely, but firmly, decline to give any information and explain that you are not authorized to speak for the agency without the approval of EM.
  3. Advise your supervisor who will then pass the information up the chain of command. The DD will inform EM of the contact the same working day and provide follow-up instructions as required.
- B. If you are asked by EM to talk with the media:
1. Management (your CDPO, DD, or supervisor) will give you specific authorization - written or verbal
  2. Clarify with the authorizing person **and/or the PIO** the type and amount of information to be shared. Have a clear understanding of what, if any, information is to be withheld. If photos have been authorized, determine what restrictions will apply
  3. Arrange an interview setting so that it is convenient and comfortable for you.
  4. If it will increase your comfort level, ask your supervisor to attend the interview
  5. If the case/incident is sensitive and you fear misquotes or misrepresentation:
    - a. Take notes during the interview **and/or** tape record it
    - b. Make notes after the interview
    - c. If your supervisor or another witness(es) attends the interview, ask him/her or them to take notes
  6. Immediately following the interview, complete the Media Contact Email (located on ProbNet under Department Publications) and send to the PIO with a copy to your supervisor. Whenever possible, the email must be transmitted to the above listed parties no later than 3:30 p.m. on the day of the contact.
  7. The PIO or another authorized manager must send the Media Contact Email to the County Media Relations Office, the County Executive Offices, and the Board of Supervisors Offices by 4:30 p.m. on the date of the media contact.
  8. When the information appears in the media, if available, forward a copy of the article or send an email message with a hyperlink to the PIO.

- C. If a media representative contacts you seeking information, claiming management authorization, but you have not been contacted by management or the PIO, advise the media representative that you have no comment on the issue at this time and proceed as follows:
1. Ask for identification and credentials: name, agency, press card, telephone number, etc.
  2. Determine what case or incident is the subject of the inquiry
  3. Determine which member of management authorized the inquiry and when
  4. Immediately notify management of the media contact whether it was authorized or not
  5. If the contact is authorized, proceed as directed

**REFERENCES:**

Procedure:	1-1-101	Access to and Release of Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)
	1-1-109	Confidentiality of California Department of Corrections Diagnostic Reports
	1-2-101	<b>Speakers' Cadre</b>
Policy:	A-2	Upholding Departmental Philosophy and Principles
	A-3	Dress, Grooming, and Personal Appearance
	A-7	Employees as Departmental Representatives
	A-8	Telephone Calls, Voice/Electronic Mail and Correspondence
	A-10	Contact with News Media
	B-1	Case Confidentiality – Client's Right to Privacy
F-4	Visits with Minors in Juvenile Institutions; Placement	

J. Palmquist

**APPROVED BY:**