



LEON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Standard Operating Procedure 450.F24 News Media Contacts

<i>EFFECTIVE:</i>	<i>REVISED:</i>	<i>RESCINDS:</i>
1 OCTOBER 1999	16 June 2017	1 NOVEMBER 2000

- A. PURPOSE:** The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines that will assist Detention Facility Staff in providing cooperation and assistance to the News Media.
- B. SCOPE:** This procedure shall apply to all Corrections Personnel.
- C. POLICY:** It is the policy of the Leon County Detention Facility to permit inmates access to the News Media consistent with the secure and orderly management of the Facility. It is the policy of the Leon County Sheriff's Office to cooperate and assist News Media with regard to investigations of criminal offenses and/or incidents over which the agency has primary responsibility and jurisdiction. News Media inquiries shall be referred to the Public Information Officer.
- D. DEFINITIONS:**

Public - For the purpose of this procedure, the term "**public**" encompasses individuals who are not officials in the law enforcement or academic communities, media representatives, employees of the Sheriff's Office or Detention Facility, or inmates or their family members.

News media representatives - The term "**news media representatives**" refers to qualified properly identified representatives of general circulation newspapers, magazines of national circulation sold through news stand and/or mail subscriptions to the general public, national and international news services, and radio and television stations holding a Federal Communications Commission license.

E. PROCEDURE:

1. AGENCY POLICY

- a. Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedure pertaining to News Media relations and contacts shall apply to Detention Facility Personnel. The Agency Public Information function includes:[FCAC 1.06]

- 1) Assisting the Media in covering news stories at the Facility;

- 2) Being available for on-call responses to the News Media;
 - 3) Preparing and distributing Agency/Facility News Releases;
 - 4) Arranging for and assisting at News Conferences;
 - 5) Coordinating and authorizing the release of information;
- b. Established Procedures in the Agency Policy for Press Releases include:
- 1) Frequency of Press Releases;
 - 2) Subject matter;
 - 3) Media Recipients;
 - 4) Person(s) authorized to release information.
- c. All Detention Facility Personnel shall become familiar with and adhere to Sheriff's Office General Order 54.1 regarding News Media relations.

2. DETENTION FACILITY INCIDENTS

- a. News Media inquiries arising from an incident occurring at the Detention Facility, or involving employees of the Sheriff's Office shall be referred to the Detention Facility Chief, or Public Information Officer.

3. ACCESS TO PERSONS IN CUSTODY

- 1. News media requesting access to any person held in custody within the Detention Facility or other Sheriff's Office Facility shall be referred to the Public Information Officer.
- 2. Inmate's may correspond with news media using Institutional telephones or in writing using the inmate mail system.
- 3. News media may correspond with inmates in writing or visit as a public visitor.

4. NEWS MEDIA ACCESS INTO THE FACILITY

- a. News media access into the facility shall be prearranged by the Public Information Officer and shall have approval from the Detention Facility Chief or higher authority. Sheriff's Office Policy grants representatives of the news media access to the facility consistent with security, good order and the inmate's right to privacy.

- b.** News media photography or video recording of inmates inside the Facility is not permitted. News media access into the First Appearance Court Room shall be approved by the presiding judge.
- c.** An inmate has the right not to be interviewed or recorded by the media. Before interviewing or recording the voice of an inmate, written permission must be obtained from that inmate. The original authorization will be placed in the inmate's file, and a copy of the authorization will be given to the media representative.
- d.** Tours of the facility by news media shall have prior approval from the Detention Facility Chief and should be conducted during regular business hours.

5. NEWS MEDIA ACCESS TO CRIME AND DISASTER SCENES

- a.** News Media shall be permitted to photograph and enter onto Facility grounds. However, any special access to a crime or disaster scene inside the Facility shall have prior approval from the Detention Facility Chief or higher authority.
- b.** All other News Media access to crime and disaster scenes is outlined in Sheriff's Office General Orders.

APPROVED:



DEPARTMENT OF DETENTION CHIEF