



SHAWNEE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Administration and Management  
Section A: General Administration

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_

Brian Cole, Director

Policy No.: AM-A-08

Title: Agency Relationships

Current Effective Date:

03/11/16

Replaces Policy Issued:

09/13/12

Original Issue Date:

05/30/89

02/09/99

Reference: 4-ALDF-7F-01; 3-JDF-1A-30-31; K.A.R. 28-4-353

General Use

Employees Read Only

Forms/Appendices

**POLICY:**

The Shawnee County Department of Corrections recognizes the importance of having positive interaction with the public, the news media, and other agencies. The department shall have established procedures in place to allow for visits, interviews, and tours by the news media and other professional organizations. The department may provide newsworthy information to the public through the news media.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**ADC:** For the purpose of this policy, this term shall be used to identify the Shawnee County Adult Detention Center (ADC) and the Shawnee County Corrections Annex (Annex).

**JDC:** For the purpose of this policy, this term shall be used to identify the Shawnee County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC).

**Inmate:** For the purpose of this policy, this term is used to define any person housed in the (ADC), the Annex, or the (JDC).

**News Media:** For the purpose of this policy, this term shall be used to identify an organization in the business of gathering or reporting news for a newspaper; a news magazine or periodical having a national circulation; a national or international news service; and/or a radio or television news program holding a Federal Communications Commission license.

**Public Information Officer (PIO):** For the purpose of this policy, this term shall be used to identify an individual assigned by the Director who shall be responsible for all official information and press releases referring to the department, department policy, or department programming. The Deputy Director over Adult Detention and Legal shall serve as the department's PIO, unless someone different is assigned by the Incident Commander in an emergency situation.

**PROCEDURES:**

**I. Employee Interaction with the Public, News Media, or Other Agencies**

A. Employees shall be expected to conduct themselves with professionalism at all times when dealing with members of the public, news media, or other agencies.

1. These interactions shall include but are not limited to:

a. Person to person interactions;

- b. Telephone conversations; and/or
  - c. Written correspondence.
- B. Any employee receiving a request for official information from members of the public, the news media, or other agencies shall immediately forward the request to the department's PIO.
- C. If a member of the public or professional organization requests to make a report and/or a complaint, the person shall be encouraged to complete a Public Report and/or Complaint Form (AM-A-08 Form 1) and submit it to the front desk employee of the ADC, the Annex, or the JDC.
- 1. The completed form shall be forwarded to the PIO for follow-up.
- D. Employees shall be allowed to discuss department operations with any member of the Board of Shawnee County Commissioners.

## II. News Media Requests for Interviews

- A. Either an inmate or a news media representative may initiate a request for a personal interview.
- B. All requests from the news media to visit or conduct an interview with an inmate shall be forwarded to the Director for his/her approval.
- 1. If the news media requests to conduct an interview with an inmate, the Director shall notify the inmate's attorney prior to making a decision.
  - 2. If the Director approves the request, the news media representative shall complete a News Media Access Agreement (AM-A-08 Form 2) prior to being granted access to the department.
- C. A news media representative who requests to visit or conduct an interview in regards to an allegation that has been made towards the department or a department program shall acknowledge his/her attempt to verify the legitimacy of the allegation prior to requesting an interview.

## III. News Media Interviews and Visits

- A. An inmate that agrees to visit with, or to be interviewed by a news media representative or organization, shall be required to complete an Inmate Consent to Contact with the News Media form (AM-A-08 Form 3).
- 1. The completed form shall be filed in the inmate's active file and a copy shall be sent to the news media representative.
    - a. If the inmate refuses to complete the form or disagrees with the conditions established in the form, the inmate shall not be allowed to participate in the visit or interview.
- B. The Director shall determine the areas within the department that are accessible to the news media on a case-by-case basis.
- C. Inmates housed in the JDC may be interviewed or photographed by news media representatives for news coverage of department programs, with signed consent from the inmate, the inmate's parent or legal guardian, the inmate's attorney, and approval from the Director.
- 1. Inmates housed in the JDC shall not be interviewed or photographed for news coverage connected with his/her delinquency charges.
- D. The Director or his/her designee shall have the authority to suspend all news media visits during an emergency situation.
- E. An inmate being interviewed by the news media shall be required to authorize the department to respond to comments made in the interview and to release information to the news media relative to the inmate's comments.
- F. An inmate currently detained in the facility may not act as a reporter or publish under a byline.
- G. An inmate shall not receive compensation or anything of value for interviews with the news media.
- H. The Director shall notify the Board of County Commissioners and other officials when he/she feels it is of significant newsworthy attention.

#### **IV. Denial of News Media Visits or Interviews**

- A. The Director or his/her designee may deny a news media representative or organization's request to visit or interview an inmate if the representative or organization does not agree to the conditions established by department policy or has, in the past, failed to abide by those conditions.
- B. The Director or his/her designee may also deny a visit or interview for the following reasons:
  - 1. The inmate is housed in the JDC and written consent has not been obtained from the inmate's parent, legal guardian, and/or attorney;
  - 2. The Director or his/her designee believes the interview would endanger the safety, security, and/or cause substantial disruption to the daily operation of the facility;
  - 3. The subject of the interview is involved in a pending court action and the court having jurisdiction has issued an order forbidding such interviews;
  - 4. The subject of the interview has not yet been convicted (including competency commitments and/or prisoners of other agencies); and/or
    - a. Inmates that are not yet convicted are not authorized for interviews until cleared with the organization having jurisdiction.
  - 5. The inmate is in protective custody and notice of his/her whereabouts would endanger his/her safety.

#### **V. Public Information Officer and Release of Information**

- A. The PIO shall make factual prompt announcements of unusual newsworthy incidents to the local news media.
- B. The PIO shall provide information about an inmate housed in the ADC that is a matter of public record to representatives of the news media upon request unless the inmate is in protective custody.
  - 1. This information shall be limited to:
    - a. Name;
    - b. Age;
    - c. Address;
    - d. Charges;
    - e. Arresting Agency; and
    - f. Bond.
- C. The PIO shall respond to all requests for official information from the public and organizations legitimately involved with the department.
  - 1. The PIO shall ensure all inquires are answered promptly, accurately, and completely in compliance with local, state, and federal laws governing public information and rights of privacy.
- D. Information on inmates housed in the JDC shall not be released to the news media unless ordered by the courts.

#### **VI. Department Tours**

- A. The Director or his/her designee shall have the authority to approve department tours.
  - 1. The Director or his/her designee may require the following written information prior to approving a tour:
    - a. A specific date and time of the tour;
    - b. The first and last name of all tour participants;
    - c. Date of birth;
    - d. Authorization to conduct a check on each participant for warrants and any past incarcerations; and
    - e. The reason for the tour request.

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- B. Tours shall normally be scheduled during a time that provides the least amount of interference to department operations.

## REPORTS REQUIRED

None

## APPENDICES

AM-A-08 Form 1  
AM-A-08 Form 2  
AM-A-08 Form 3

**NOTE:** The procedures set forth herein are intended to establish directives and guidelines for employees, inmates and those entities who are contractually bound to adhere to them. They are not intended to establish state-created liberty interests for employees, inmates, or an independent duty owed by the Shawnee County Department of Corrections to employees, inmates, or third parties. This policy is not intended to establish or create new constitutional rights or enlarge or expand existing constitutional rights or duties.

**Shawnee County Department of Corrections**  
**Public Report / Complaint Form**  
**Confidential**

This form is intended for the purpose of making a report and/or complaint. Please fill out the information below as completely and accurately as possible. You may be contacted to supplement any investigation necessary.

**NAME:** (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF INCIDENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

In your own words, please describe as completely as possible your complaint / what you are reporting about: (Use back of page if necessary)

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**LOCATION OF INCIDENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WITNESS(ES):** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF OFFICER TAKING REPORT:** \_\_\_\_\_

Note to officer taking report: Please forward this form to the Public Information Officer after report is taken.

**ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY**

**DATE / TIME REPORT RECEIVED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS:**

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Shawnee County Department of Corrections  
News Media Access Agreement

Inmate's name \_\_\_\_\_

Inmate's booking number \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby state that I am primarily employed in the business of gathering or reporting news for a newspaper qualifying as a general circulation newspaper in the community to which it publishes; or a news magazine or periodical having a national circulation; or national or international news services; or a radio or television news program holding Federal Communications Commission license.

My employer is (business name) \_\_\_\_\_, my immediate supervisor is \_\_\_\_\_, who may be reached at (phone) \_\_\_\_\_.

I have familiarized myself with institutional policy governing my conduct during interviews and visits within the institution and agree to comply fully with them.

I hereby fully and completely waive my personal right to be free from search of my person or property so long as I remain within the boundaries of the institution grounds.

I agree to provide no compensation, either direct or indirect, to the inmate or his or her family for any interviews conducted within the boundaries of the institution grounds. I further agree to respect the rights of privacy of all inmates and to obtain a release from any inmate before any photos or recordings are utilized or personal information derived from any interview or correspondence is used in any publication or broadcast.

I recognize a visit to a correctional facility presents certain hazards, and I agree to assume all ordinary and usual risks to my personal safety inherent in a visit to an institution of this type.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Approved

Denied

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Shawnee County Department of Corrections  
Inmate Consent to Contact with News Media

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Inmate's full name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of institution \_\_\_\_\_

Name of news media representative \_\_\_\_\_

Name of media represented \_\_\_\_\_

Address of media represented \_\_\_\_\_

I, the above-named inmate, do hereby freely give permission to the above-named news media representative to interview me on or about \_\_\_\_\_ and I do hereby authorize the news media represented by this person to use and publish any information gathered about me during this interview. I further authorize the Director, the agency, and their authorized representatives to release to representatives of the news media any documents or information relating to allegations or comments made by me in this interview.

Inmate's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

I, the above-named inmate, refuse permission to the above-named news media representative to interview me.

Inmate's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

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I, the above-named inmate, do further freely give permission to the above-named news media representative to make recordings of my voice during this interview and to take photos of me (still, movie or video) and I do hereby authorize the use of such pictures or recordings by the news media represented by this person for any legitimate purpose.

Inmate's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Approved       Denied

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date