

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

**WEST VIRGINIA
DIVISION OF CORRECTIONS
& REHABILITATION**

NUMBER: 331.00

EFFECTIVE DATE: 05 April 2025

SUBJECT: MEDIA ACCESS BY INMATES

POLICY DIRECTIVE

PURPOSE:

To provide policy and procedure ensuring reasonable access for inmates to the communications media while preserving the offender's right to privacy and subject to the limitations necessary to maintain facility order and security.

REFERENCE:

ACA Expected Practices 5-ACI-3D-06 and 2-CO-3C-01.

RESPONSIBILITY:

No additional written instructions on this subject are required.

CANCELLATION:

Any previous written instruction on the subject including DCR Policy Directive 331.00, dated 12 October 2020.

APPLICABILITY:

All adult facilities within the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR). This Policy is available for general distribution and is to be made available for inmate review upon the effective date.

DEFINITIONS:

Media: The main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the internet) are regarded collectively. Members of the media may be an employee of a media organization or can be freelance.

POLICY:

- I. Adult inmates may correspond with the media or members of the media through written correspondence, telephone communication or electronic communication in the same

manner and subject to the same rules and limitations as they are allowed to communicate with members of the public.

- II. Members of the media may visit with inmates in the same manner as members of the public and shall be subject to the same security precautions.
- A. If a member of the media desires to conduct an in-person interview with an inmate, such person shall make a written request to the Superintendent. The written request shall include verifiable documentation that such person is a member of the media.
 - B. The interview may be electronically recorded (audio, still camera, and/or video) at the request of the member of media and agreement of the inmate. Cellular phones which are NOT government-issued are prohibited from entering DCR facilities.
 - C. Live audio/video interviews (e.g., on-air, live to satellite truck, live internet video) will not be granted.
 - D. The Superintendent may exclude any member of the media if he/she determines their contact with the inmate will jeopardize facility order or security.
 - E. Upon receipt of the request, the Superintendent shall inquire of the inmate whether he or she wishes to have contact with the media and the inmate shall complete a Media Consent Agreement (**Attachment #1**). Signed copies will be uploaded to the inmate's record in the Offender Information System (OIS).
 - F. Approved interviews will allow for a maximum of two (2) hours. With prior approval of the Superintendent, the time can be extended to a maximum of four (4) hours.
 - 1. The days and times of the interview will be at the discretion of the Superintendent considering the operational schedule of the facility.
 - 2. The location of the interview will also be at the discretion of the Superintendent subject to safety and security concerns.
 - 3. All members of the media are subject to search and monitoring in the same manner as any other member of the public.
 - G. When a Superintendent approves an interview to be electronically recorded, the Superintendent will notify the appropriate Assistant Commissioner through his or her chain of command prior to the interview.
- III. Access to a facility may be denied by the Superintendent when the following conditions exist.
- A. The security and safety of the media personnel would be jeopardized.
 - B. Visits by the media may cause a disruption to facility harmony.

- C. Media coverage may contribute to increased levels of facility tension.
 - D. Contact by the media may adversely affect an individual inmate's or victim's physical or emotional stability.
 - E. Continued contact becomes disruptive by virtue of their numbers.
 - F. There is credible information that the visit could further additional crimes.
- IV. When a member of the media has been denied access to a facility, the Superintendent/designee shall provide a verbal explanation to that person and immediately advise the appropriate Assistant Commissioner through his or her chain of command.

ATTACHMENT(S):

#1 Media Consent Agreement

APPROVED SIGNATURE:  
William K. Marshall III, Commissioner Date

