



## SCDC POLICY/PROCEDURE

Change 1 to GA-02.01: Sections [4.5](#) and [6.4](#)

Change 2 to GA-02.01: Sections [9.1](#); [9.2](#); and [10](#)

NUMBER: GA-02.01

TITLE: EMPLOYEE AND INMATE RELATIONS WITH NEWS MEDIA, *STATE AND FEDERAL* LEGISLATORS, AND OTHERS

ISSUE DATE: MARCH 1, 2013

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY: DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

OPERATIONS MANUAL: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

SUPERSEDES: GA-02.01 Change 1(April 12, 2010); February 1, 2009; March 1, 2005

RELEVANT SCDC FORMS/SUPPLIES: NONE

ACA/CAC STANDARDS: *4-ACRS-7F-01, 4-ACRS-7F-02, 4-ACRS-7F-03, 4-ACRS-7F-04, 4-4019, 4-4020, 4-4021, 4-4279*

STATE/FEDERAL STATUTES: NONE

**PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for the dissemination of information to news media representatives and *state and federal* legislators in response to requests for information. Also, to establish guidelines concerning requests for interviews with employees and inmates and requests for tours of SCDC institutions and/or buildings by news media representatives, *state and federal* legislators, and others.

**POLICY STATEMENT:** In an effort to keep the public informed on the operations of and activities within the SCDC, the Agency will ensure that all requests for information concerning any Agency incidents, emergencies, activities, employee(s), or inmate(s) are responded to in an accurate, expeditious, and professional manner by the Director's Office or designee. (*4-ACRS-7F-01, 4-ACRS-7F-02, 4-ACRS-7F-03, 4-ACRS-7F-04, 4-4019, 4-4020, 4-4021, 4-4279*).

### SPECIFIC PROCEDURES:

#### 1. RESPONSES TO NEWS MEDIA REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION:

**1.1** The Agency Director's Office will be responsible for coordinating all requests for information made by any news media representative(s).

**1.2** Name(s) of any victim(s) (whether employee or inmate) will not be provided to any news media representative until the family of the victim have been notified, and then only when the release of such name(s) would not impede an internal or external investigation. News media representatives may be provided with the following public information:

**1.2.1 Employee:** Name of employee, date of hire, salary range and band, job description, and title. (Note: When the employee is a victim, if possible, reasonable attempts should be made to contact the employee before having his/her name, job title, and job description released to the media. In some cases, the employee may not wish to have his/her name released following an incident or assault and in some cases, releasing the job title and job description might inadvertently identify the employee. When this information might identify an employee who is a victim, any release of information to media sources should only identify the employee as "an employee of \_\_\_\_\_ Correctional Institution." In addition, the Division of Human Resources should be consulted to ensure that any information which is released about an employee is accurate.)

**1.2.2 Inmate:**

- Full name with alias(es);
- Photograph;
- SCDC number;
- Prominent marks and tattoos;
- Date of birth, sex, and race;
- Committing county;
- Height, weight, build, complexion, and hair and eye color;
- Sentence (time) to include his/her sentence start date and date of admission to the SCDC;
- Offense;
- Eligibility dates, to include: work release eligibility, minimum parole eligibility, and good time release date;
- Sentence adjustments;
- Departmental transaction chronology;
- Co-defendants (with their SCDC numbers);
- Detainer/wanted;
- Custody arrangements and current status;
- Prior criminal history;
- Disciplinary record.

**(4-ACRS-7F-01, 4-4020)**

**(NOTE:** Any information provided to any news or non-news media representative will be limited to that which would not endanger or jeopardize any internal or external investigative efforts and/or jeopardize the integrity of the institution/Agency.)

**2. RESPONSES TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS:**

**2.1** In response to a critical incident (e.g., escape, disturbance, riot, etc.), the Agency Director's Office or a designated official will begin implementation of one of two internal office plans to prepare for inquiries

from news media representatives:

- Plan A: Escape from Medium (L2)/Maximum (**L3**) Facility, or High Profile Case from a Minimum Facility; or
- Plan B: Major Disturbance/Hostage Situation.

**2.2** Each member of the Director's Staff will be provided a copy of (or access to) each plan. (NOTE: Wardens will be responsible for including procedures in their emergency plans directing that the Agency Director's Office be contacted in the event of a critical emergency situation.) (**4-ACRS-7F-02, 4-4021**)

**3. NEWS/PRESS RELEASES:** The Agency Director's Office or an approved designee will be responsible for preparing and distributing all SCDC official press/news releases.

#### **4. RESPONSES TO NEWS MEDIA REQUESTS FOR TOURS OF SCDC INSTITUTIONS/ BUILDINGS:**

**4.1** Advance approval must be received from the Agency Director's Office or an approved designee prior to authorizing any news media representative to visit or tour any SCDC operated institution/building. News media representatives will be restricted to only those locations or areas of any institution or building pre-approved by the Agency Director's Office or designee. (**4-ACRS-7F-02, 4-4021**)

**4.2** The Agency Director's Office or an approved designee will be responsible for coordinating and making arrangements with the appropriate member of the Director's Staff, appropriate Warden, or Division Director for any pre-approved tour/visit by news media representatives.

**4.3** All approved news media representatives will be required to be escorted by at least one (1) SCDC employee assigned to the institution/building/area to be visited and by at least one (1) representative or designee of the Director's Staff at all times. Any person(s) designated by the Agency Director's Office to accompany a news media representative(s) will be briefed by the Agency Director's Office or an designated official prior to the tour/visit.

**4.4** News media representatives will be expected to abide by all security safeguards, rules, regulations, and conditions of any prearranged and approved visit or tour, to include the same dress code requirements outlined for visitors in SCDC Policy/Procedure OP-22.09, "Inmate Visitation." The Agency Director's Office or an approved designee will be responsible for informing news media representatives of these conditions prior to their visit/tour. The failure of any news media representative to abide by any rules, regulations, and conditions may result in the immediate termination of the visit/tour and/or suspension of any future visitation/tour privileges as directed by the Agency Director's Office or an approved designee.

**4.5** News media representatives will be prohibited from taking photographs **and/or audio/video recordings** of inmates that may identify the inmate at any time. The Agency Director's Office may authorize news media representatives to photograph **and/or audio/video record** buildings, property, or other "inanimate" objects provided that when doing so no inmates are identifiable. Any camera or video equipment approved to be brought into any institution/building will be subject to search pursuant to Agency policies and procedures. (**Changes in BLUE amended per Change 1 dated February 9, 2021**).

**4.6** The Agency Director's Office or an approved designee reserves the privilege to cancel any scheduled tour/visit as a result of legitimate concerns for safety and security and/or due to a critical incident or other emergency situation.

#### **5. COMMUNICATION WITH **STATE AND FEDERAL** LEGISLATORS AND OTHER ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS/DIGNITARIES:**

**5.1** All communication with legislators and other elected public officials/dignitaries concerning tours, visits, arrangements for speaking engagements, and requests concerning employees or inmates will be the responsibility of the Agency Director's Office. (**4-ACRS-7F-04, 4-4019**)

**5.2** To ensure adherence to proper protocol, all requests from, invitations extended to, or other contacts with *state and federal* legislators, elected officials, dignitaries, public officials, their staff, or the news media will be coordinated through the Agency Director's Office. Contacts from *state and federal* legislators, elected officials, dignitaries, public officials, their staff, or the news media should be directed to the Institution's Warden, the Agency Legislative Liaison, or the appropriate member of the Executive staff. Wardens will notify the Legislative Liaison, or the appropriate member of the Executive staff.

**5.3** All requests for tours and visits and/or any arrangements for speaking engagements by *state and federal* legislators and other elected officials will be authorized by the Agency Director's Office, with notification to the Division of Operations and the Division of Programs and Services.

## **6. RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR TOURS OF SCDC INSTITUTIONS/ BUILDINGS:**

**6.1** All other requests for tours and visits, and/or any arrangements for speaking engagements by non-news media (e.g., citizen, school, or youth groups, etc.), should be referred to the Public Awareness Program Manager. See GA-02.03, "Public Awareness Programs," for additional information. *(4-ACRS-7F-01, 4-4020)*

**6.2** The Agency reserves the privilege to suspend, cancel, or disapprove any request to tour or visit any SCDC institution or building, or to interview any employee at any time based on legitimate concerns related to the safety and security of the Agency, employees, and inmates, or based on an individual's failure to abide by the conditions, rules, and regulations of any prearranged visit, tour, or interview.

**6.3** All individuals approved to tour or visit any SCDC operated building or institution will be subjected to search under current Agency policies and procedures.

**6.4** News and non-news media representatives will be prohibited from taking identifiable photographs *and/or audio/video recordings* of any inmate(s) (to include untried county safekeepers and death-row inmates). (Changes in *BLUE* amended per Change 1 dated February 9, 2021).

**7. NEWS MEDIA REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYEES:** Advance approval must be received from the Agency Director's Office or an approved designee prior to authorizing any news media representative to interview any SCDC employee. The Agency Director's Office or an approved designee reserves the right to deny any media request for an employee interview. **NOTE: Under no circumstances will any employee respond to any inquiries/questions from any news media representative without first receiving approval from the Agency Director's Office or an approved designee.**

**8. REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH INMATES:** Personal contact interviews with any SCDC inmate, untried county safekeeper, or death row inmate by anyone will be prohibited. (NOTE: This prohibition does not apply to internal or external law enforcement, Agency officials, internal and external auditors, or legal professionals who may need to interview inmates for purposes of an investigation or pending legal action or to researchers approved pursuant to SCDC Policy/ Procedure ADM-15.07, "Research Conducted Within the SCDC.") *(4-ACRS-7F-03, 4-4279)*

## **9. NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF PAROLE HEARING ACTIVITIES:**

**9.1.** The Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services (DPPPS) will contact the Agency Director's Office or an approved designee should any news media representative(s) desire to cover any ~~parole hearing taking place at the Broad River Correctional Institution (BRCI) hearing room or agency~~ any other parole *video* teleconference *hearing* site. The Agency Director's Office or an approved designee will be responsible for contacting ~~BRCI officials~~ *the Institution's Warden* to coordinate the admission of news media representatives to the *parole video teleconference* hearing ~~rooms or for contacting any other facility where hearings are conducted~~ *site* if media representatives are to be admitted.

9.2. The SCDC will maintain jurisdiction over all news media activities occurring ~~outside the BRCI hearing room~~ **on agency property**. The DPPPS will maintain jurisdiction over all news media activities occurring ~~inside the BRCI hearing room~~ **outside of SCDC property**. Consistent with the Agency's position on inmate interviews, personal contact interviews with inmates outside ~~the BRCI hearing room~~ **of agency property** will be prohibited. (Changes in **GREEN** amended per Change 2, dated March 20, 2025)

## 10. DEFINITIONS:

**News Media Representative(s)** refers to any person who is primarily employed in the business of gathering news or reporting news for any or all of the following: A newspaper of general circulation in the community in which it publishes; a magazine, ~~or newsletter,~~ **website or digital application available to** ~~of statewide or national circulation sold at newsstands or by mail to~~ the general public **for free or by subscription**; a national or international news service; any radio or television station and/or news gathering operation that is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and has a news gathering staff; and/or independent news gathering operations (e.g., local publications available to the public either for a fee or for no fee). (Changes in **GREEN** amended per Change 2, dated March 20, 2025)

***Legislators, when used in this policy/procedure, refers to all elected officials at the state and federal levels.***

SIGNATURE ON FILE

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**William R. Byars, Jr., Director**

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