

**STATE OF VERMONT
AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

Policy: 26

Subject: Media Relations
Effective Date: January 20, 1992 **Review and Re-Issue Date:**
Supersedes: 330 **APA Rule Number:**
346
361

Recommended for approval by:		Authorized By:	
_____	_____	_____	_____
Signature	Date	Signature	Date

1. Authority:

1.1 Under Title 3 V. S. A., Section 3052 (a) and Title 28 V. S. A., Section 102 (b) (2) and (c) (1), the Commissioner is required to determine, establish and administer policies and programs by which the Department operates. The Commissioner or his/her designees are also responsible for making such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out those programs and policies.

2. Purpose:

2.1 It is the purpose of this policy to establish public information and media relations programs and the standards and guidelines by which the Department shall accomplish them. Further, it shall establish programs by which the professional knowledge and experience of the department may be brought to bear on problems related to criminal justice issues and to the prevention of criminal behavior, particularly for those populations found to be at high risk to become offenders.

3. Applicability/Accessibility

3.1 This policy shall apply to all individuals and groups affected by the operations of the Vermont Department of Corrections. Anyone may have a copy of this policy.

4. Policy

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- 4.1** Thoughtful and forthright relations with the media are an important aspect of any good public information plan and program. Developing processes that enable clear, consistent and credible communication with media will improve public confidence and understanding of what we do and how we do it as well as broadening access to community resources and support.
- 4.2** The Commissioner shall designate an individual as Chief of Public Information whose objective will be the development and coordination of media relations programs and initiatives on a statewide basis. Each Area Manager, site manager, the Director of Vermont Correctional Industries and the Director of the Vermont Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Abuse shall designate one or more persons under their supervision as Public Information Officers to assist them in their local media relations programs.
- 4.3** The department shall develop directives and procedures that implement this policy. At a minimum, these directives and procedures will:
 - 4.3.1** Develop and define the role of public information officers.
 - 4.3.2** Develop plans that assure that all local managers and public information officers are familiar with local media sources and their staff.
 - 4.3.3** Ensure that confidentiality be upheld where mandated by statute and policy while ensuring reasonable access for the media and the public.
 - 4.3.4** Identify potential and actual breaking news events that warrant the attention and notification of the Commissioner.
 - 4.3.5** Establish procedures for media conferences and for publishing and releasing information, documents, media releases and news memos.
 - 4.3.6** Ensure that the media and the public are informed of newsworthy events, programs and activities of the staff, volunteers and offenders.
 - 4.3.7** Establish processes for the dissemination of accurate and timely information during emergencies, disturbances and escapes.
 - 4.3.8** Establish processes for media/offender contact.
 - 4.3.9** Establish, in conjunction with HRD Division, training programs about media relations for staff, managers, Public Information Officers and volunteers.
 - 4.3.10** Develop operating budgets to implement and maintain local and statewide programs.

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4.3.11 Develop an audit process that provides for an annualized assessment (at minimum) of compliance with this policy and any directives developed in relation to it.

5. Training Method

5.1

6. Quality Assurance Processes

6.1

7. Financial Impact:

7.1

8. References

Dictionary of Criminal Justice Terms - Gould Publications
VSA Title I Sec 315 to 320
VSA Title 28 Sec 601
Department of Corrections Policies 266 Confidentiality
1016 Serious Disturbances
On Deadline: Managing Media Relations - Howard and Matthews
When You are the Headline: Managing a Major News Story - Irvine
Promoting Issues and Ideas - The Foundation Center
Making PSA's Work - US Dept of Health and Human Services
Media Resource Guide - Foundation For American Communications
Power of Public support - California P, P and C Assoc.
National Institute Of Corrections - Media Relations Course 11/90 .
Policies and Operational Procedures - 41 States and Jurisdictions
Sam McKuen and David Partridge - Correctional Media Consultants

9. Responsible Director and Draft Participants