



Media Policies and Guidelines for Oklahoma DOC Inmate Interviews

How to request an interview with an inmate:

- Media representatives wishing to interview inmates incarcerated within the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC) should submit a request in writing, by Email, to Communications Director Terri Watkins, terri.watkins@doc.ok.gov or Public Information Officer Alex Gerszewski, alex.gerszewski@doc.ok.gov.
- All requests must include the media representative's name and contact information, including an e-mail address and phone number. The request should also include the inmate's name, DOC number and interview topic.
- Media representatives must send correspondence in the form of a written letter to the inmate requesting the interview.
- Inmates must agree in writing prior to the interview. An agreement via phone conversation is not an acceptable agreement. The agreement must be in writing and provided to the DOC communications office.
- Interviews with DOC inmates may be scheduled weekdays during business hours with the permission of the facility warden and the communications office.
- Request for interview dates must be submitted at least one week prior to the date of the media representative's desired visit. The media representative must provide at least three different dates and times to the communications office to avoid a scheduling conflict.

Guidelines for media representatives once inside a DOC facility:

- Media representatives will have one hour to interview an individual inmate. Interviews with multiple inmates at the same time will adhere to the same time constraints.
- A reasonable amount of time will be allowed for camera crews to set up equipment. This set-up time is not considered part of the hour granted to the media representative.
- All interviews will take place in a location determined by the facility.
- Requests to interview correctional officers, wardens or other members of the staff at the facility must be agreed upon by the individual DOC employee.
- No other photos or video footage may be taken in or outside the predetermined interview location unless agreed upon by the warden or communications representative present from the DOC.

- Crews are limited to no more than four people and two cameras. Each crewmember must have a valid driver license, passport or other official form of photo identification in order to enter a unit.
- Media representatives must declare all personal property to officers at the facility before entering. If items are deemed contraband, the items must be taken outside or thrown away.
- The following items are allowed in the media representative's possession: recording devices, wireless microphones, notepads, writing instruments and camera equipment.
- All equipment will be searched upon entering the facility.
- It is recommended media representatives arrive at the unit at least 30 minutes before the scheduled interview time.
- Everyone entering the facility will be subjected to a pat-down security search.

Additional guidelines:

- Families, spiritual advisors and other individuals on an inmate's personal visitation list are not permitted to be present during media interviews. Likewise – media representatives are not able to accompany any of these individuals on personal visits.
- Media representatives may not be listed on an inmate's visitation list if they wish to be recognized as media by the communications office.
- A media representative who is placed on an inmate's personal visitation list will not be allowed to visit that inmate as a media representative.
- The organization affiliated with the media representative placed on the inmate's personal visitation list will also not be able to visit the inmate.

Additional information:

More access or detailed projects where the organization is looking to obtain facility access should be negotiated with the communications contacts listed above.

Failure to adhere to the agency's media policies and/or guidelines may result in removal from the facility. Such failure may also jeopardize the organization's ability to conduct future interviews at DOC facilities.

Questions about the DOC media policies may be directed to the communications contacts listed above.