


<p align="center"><b>SOLANO COUNTY CALIFORNIA PROBATION DEPARTMENT</b></p>	<p><b>POLICY NUMBER:</b></p> <p align="center">505</p>	<p><b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b></p> <p align="center"><b>October 1, 2018</b></p>
	<p><b>SUPERSEDES:</b></p> <p align="center">November 6, 2006</p>	
<p><b>APPROVED BY:</b></p>  <p><b>CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER</b></p>	<p><b>TITLE:</b></p> <p align="center"><b>News Media, Public Relations, and Disclosure of Public Records</b></p>	

1. **Policy**

- A. The Probation Department shall provide information regarding its operations and performance in accordance with statutes governing public disclosure and Probation Department policies and procedures. Pursuant to the California Public Records Act, public agencies are required to disclose public records if so requested. In general, public records are defined as "any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used or retained by any state or local agency, regardless of physical form or characteristics." However, there are many exceptions to an agency's obligation to disclose records. All Department personnel share accountability in providing professional, courteous, timely, and accurate responses to inquiries. The Chief Probation Officer is the official spokesperson for the Department and will represent the Department on the following matters:
1. Department policy
  2. Official Department positions on issues and internal investigations
  3. Any past, current, or pending legal actions regarding the Department
  4. All Personnel matters
  5. Other matters as determined

2. **Procedures**

- A. The Chief Probation Officer shall coordinate dissemination of information to the news media and the public as it relates to the Department. To guarantee the confidentiality and accuracy of information released, all requests for information, statements, interviews, etc., from any news media source will be coordinated through the Chief Probation Officer. In the absence of the Chief Probation Officer, the Chief Deputy Probation Officer, Juvenile Detention Facility Superintendent, or Deputy Director will handle media requests and public relations issues.
- B. Any request made by a probation client, the public, the media, or other agency to the Probation Department for disclosure of public records will be referred to a Manager within one business day of the request. The Manager will forward the request to the appropriate Deputy County Counsel within one business day of the Manager's receipt of the request.
- C. News Media Inquiry: Department personnel receiving news media inquiries are responsible for referring the inquiry to the appropriate personnel for response. The

receiving staff member will document such contacts and forward the information to the Chief Probation Officer.

1. News Media Representatives Defined: Those individuals who are directly employed by agencies of the electronic or print media such as radio, television, newspapers, and internet.
  2. Media Access: News media visits and tours are allowed **only** in accordance with Department policies and procedures. **Random, unescorted facility/office access is prohibited.**
  3. News Media Access During an Emergency: When emergency response plans are activated at a Probation office or facility, access will be restricted in accordance with Probation Department policies and procedures regarding emergency response plans.
  4. News Media Interviews-Clients: Clients are not permitted in-person and/or telephonic access to the media while at Probation Department offices or facilities unless specifically authorized by the Chief Probation Officer.
  5. Other Than News Media Access: Requests for on-site access and in-person interviews by persons other than news media may be honored at the discretion of the Chief Probation Officer.
- D. Use of Cameras and Audio/Visual Recording Equipment in Probation Department offices or facilities:
- Use of cameras and other recording devices are only permitted with prior authorization of the Chief Probation Officer.
1. The media shall be prohibited from taking any pictures of youth that are placed in a County facility without permission from the Court.
  2. A Department release form must be completed by the media entity prior to any interview, filming, taping, photographing, or voice recording. Violation of Department policy may result in the revocation of further access to the office/facility.
  3. This policy does not preclude the ability of the media or the public from using audio/visual recording equipment outside of Department offices/facilities to document Department activity.
- E. Media requests to accompany and document Probation Department personnel in the field without prior authorization from the Chief Probation Officer is prohibited to protect the Constitutional rights of citizens and to protect the Department from civil liability.
1. The media will not be allowed to accompany Probation Department personnel onto private property during the performance of their duties without prior authorization from the Chief Probation Officer. The legal resident must consent to such media access and will only be allowed if their

presence does not interfere with the Probation Department's official business.

3. **Written Responses to Media and Other Entities**

- A. Formal written responses to questions from the media, Court, County Administrators Office, etc. must be approved by the Chief Probation Officer.
- B. Department letterhead shall be used only for official Departmental purposes unless otherwise authorized by the Chief Probation Officer or her/his designee.
- C. All other correspondence is to be sent on Non-County/Department paper to clearly signify that the correspondence does not represent the Department's policy or position, but only the thoughts or requests of the author (s).
- D. Unsolicited correspondence with the Court, District Attorney, Public Defender, law enforcement agencies, and other public and private organizations, which is not about an official and routinely assigned Probation matter, are to be pre-approved by the immediate supervisor and manager. The Chief Deputy Probation Officer and Chief Probation Officer are to be notified and will be provided with a copy of the correspondence, when requested.

4. **Exceptions**

- A. This policy does not apply when other probation departments or other public agencies which are not located within Solano County are requesting policies, procedures or statistics to assist in the requesting agency's practices or operations.
- B. This policy does not apply to confidential case information, which is addressed in the Department's Administrative Policy Manual, Policy Number 504, Case Confidentiality, Criminal Records, and Probation Files.
- C. Any other exceptions to the provisions set forth in this policy shall require written approval by the Chief Probation Officer.