

Sample Court Media Policy

MEDIA RELATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

These are suggested procedures for court supervisors, managers, and administrators to follow when the media calls or arrives unannounced.

- If the request is straightforward (such as factual information from the case file), give the reporter the information. Document journalist name, his or her media affiliation, phone number, and the requested information. Be sure to forward the information to the court public information officer or court administrator.
- If the call is non-factual and needs further attention resulting in a larger news story, notify the public information officer, court administrator, or the media contact designee.
- If the subject is controversial or sensitive, notify the court administrator, the public information officer, media contact designee, the presiding judge, or other appropriate judge.
- If time is needed to respond to the reporter's request, let him or her know an estimated time when someone from the court will respond.
- If the answer to the question is not known, tell the reporter. Offer to research the information and follow up at a later time.
- Do not refuse to comment or use the expression "no comment." Explain you will need to call back with an answer.
- Some reporters ask the same questions or try to confirm the information with multiple sources. *The court should speak with one voice and be consistent in its message. If the reporter has already discussed the issue with another judge or court employee, contact that individual before responding to the reporter to make certain the court provides a consistent response and the correct information, or refer the reporter back to the original source. Contact the court's PIO or media contact designee.*
- If the press contact involves a pending case, provide only procedural information. Do not explain what the case documents mean. Do not describe what happened in court, which is inappropriate, dangerous, and can cause problems for the court.