DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Policy Number: 103.222
Title: Communication Outside the Department
Effective Date: 10/29/2025

PURPOSE: To outline the rights and obligations of department employees regarding their verbal or written communications outside the department, and to maintain department credibility in dealings and communications with the public, the legislature, and other governmental bodies. This policy does not prohibit an individual's right to free expression.

APPLICABILITY: All department employees

DEFINITIONS: None

PROCEDURES:

A. Presenting Formal Opinions
   1. Employees who wish to formally present personal opinions, verbally, or in writing, that differ from department policies or positions may do so on their own time.

   2. When formally presenting personal statements, employees must identify the statements as personal opinions.

   3. When formally presenting personal statements that conflict with department policies or positions, employees may not be in uniform, travel at state expense, print their presentations on department letterhead, or in any other way create the impression that they are acting in an official capacity and/or representing the department. If the employee is uncertain whether their actions could be perceived as representing the department, they should consult with the communications office.

   4. The communications office, government relations office, or other departmental data holder will retain electronic documentation of notable requests and incidents.

B. Conflicting official and personal views
   1. Employees who are assigned to present department policies or positions that conflict with their personal views and opinions may request to be excused from such assignments.

   2. If such conflicts repeatedly occur, employees may be transferred or reassigned, in accordance with applicable labor agreements or plans.

C. Protected information
   1. Employees must not disclose or use any information protected by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act or any other law governing the release and use of

information. Additionally, they must not violate any standards in the State Employee Code of Ethics.

2. This provision, however, must not be used to prevent any state employee from reporting impropriety or wrongdoing.

D. Personal social media use

1. Views expressed on public social media sites are an employee's own and do not reflect the department. Such views must not be made or implied as official statements made on behalf of the department.

2. Employees may repost publicly released information on their personal social media accounts. They may also repost their participation in or observation of positive department events. Employees should use their best judgment and be mindful of possible consequences. If in doubt, they should consult their supervisor.

3. Employees may not post defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, hateful, racially or ethnically offensive, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.

4. Employees are prohibited from posting department information that is considered private, confidential, nonpublic, or protected nonpublic (per Minn. Stat. Ch. 13) on a personal social media site or on a departmental social media site.

5. The department does not monitor the employee's personal use of social media but may investigate and take responsive action if the department becomes aware of or suspects conduct or communication that may adversely impact the department and/or violate applicable department policies.

State Correctional Facility Security Audit Standards: None

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. The communications office, government relations office, or other departmental data holder will retain electronic documentation of notable requests and incidents.

REFERENCES: Policy 103.220, "Personal Code of Conduct of Employees"
Minn. Stat. §§ 43A.38; 13.01; 241.01

REPLACES: Policy 103.222, "Communication Outside the Department," 6/19/18
Procedure D of Policy 105.210, "Department Websites and Social Media," 6/19/18
All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: None

APPROVALS: Commissioner of Corrections