Minnesota Department of Corrections

Division Directive:	**204.090**	**Title:**	**Offender Newspaper**
Issue Date:	**1/5/16**		
Effective Date:	**1/19/16**		

AUTHORITY: Minn. Stat. §241.01.

PURPOSE: To establish a consistent and standardized organizational format for publication of offender newspapers that provides items of news, information and creative expression to the offender population, department staff and people in the community.

APPLICABILITY: Adult facilities

DIRECTIVE: Offender newspapers must be published free of censorship except in those circumstances when the publication, in whole or part, would threaten facility security or when the publication would have a detrimental effect on rehabilitative efforts. The publication of sexually explicit, libelous and defamatory materials is prohibited.

DEFINITIONS:

Copyright material – standardized statement must be printed in all offender newspapers, "Previously published copyrighted material cannot be reprinted in the newspaper without the written consent of the copyright holder or publisher of the material. Blanket approval once obtained and retained on file removes this restriction."

Disclaimer – standardized statement must be printed in all offender newspapers, "statements, viewpoints and opinions expressed in articles, letters to the editor and editorial commentary are those of the individual author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the facility or the Department of Corrections."

Managing editor – a Department of Corrections (DOC) staff who supervises and approves publication of a facility offender newspaper

Production schedule – identification of time schedules to meet publication deadlines

PROCEDURES:

A. Prior to publication, the final draft of each newspaper must be reviewed and approved by the facility managing editor, education director, the office of special investigations (OSI), and the associate warden of operations (AWO) or designee.
   1. The warden or designee must provide final approval for publication of the newspaper.
   2. The education director must provide oversight for, and approve content and format of, the newspaper.
   3. The Offender Newspaper Approval form (attached) contains space for all of the approval signatures and must be maintained with the final hard copy version of the newspaper issue. The managing editor must store the final draft and attachment in a secure location. An electronic version of the final version of each newspaper must be retained on the facility of DOC education's iShare site.

B. The education director may serve as managing editor or may appoint a managing editor. The managing editor must:
   1. Monitor the timely publication of the newspaper.

2. Hire and supervise offenders responsible for publication of the newspaper.

3. Maintain and control all state property and equipment utilized in the publishing of the newspaper.

4. Review and approve all communication to and from offender editors on behalf of the newspaper.

5. Review interview questions as submitted by the offender editor.

6. Review and approve all newspaper photos for appropriateness prior to publication.

7. Establish facility instructions to include the following:
   a) Maximum number of pages allowed;
   b) A section devoted to education or other programs available in the facility in each issue;
   c) Production schedule and frequency of publication;
   d) Story/article approval format;
   e) Photo taking and processing procedures including photo release procedures;
   f) Retention schedules for photos, waiver for liability issues and copyright and submitted materials;
   g) Final pre-publication review process;
   h) Newspaper distribution procedure;
   i) Inclusion of disclaimer and copyright statement in each newspaper issue;
   j) Rebuttal of printed article procedures; and
   k) Subscription information.

C. The offender editor must:
   1. Be responsible and held accountable for verification of authorship and validity of submitted materials, including required release forms. Necessary supporting documentation must be provided prior to publication. The offender editor's failure to verify authorship may result in disciplinary action.

   2. Submit story/article ideas and interview article questions to the managing editor for review and approval.

   3. Receive pay according to the offender pay plan.

D. Offender newspaper content
   1. All content in an offender newspaper must conform to Division Directive 301.030, "Contraband."

   2. The author's name and address or offender identification number must be included with material submitted for publication.

   3. The author may have his/her name withheld from publication upon written request by the author.

   4. Designated staff may edit and correct submitted materials to bring materials into conformance with acceptable journalistic standards and available space. Not all submitted materials are published.

5. Prior to publication, interview subjects must have an opportunity to review the article for content accuracy and, if desired, may provide a written response to the article. The written response may be published if the warden/designee deems it appropriate.

6. Department media release waiver forms must be signed and on file for any published offender photo or interview material.

7. Advertisements are not permitted in the offender newspaper.

8. Publication of material written by juveniles not adjudicated to the department must have written approval by their guardian or parent. Publication of full names or photos of juveniles is not permitted.

9. An offender newspaper must not contain articles or information about offenders under the DOC's authority except for material that recognizes the offender(s) for positive achievements or activities within a department facility (e.g., education, work, sports, personal interests).

10. Any content submitted by community legal professionals about offender legal matters must be edited in such a way as to minimize risk to an offender's safety (e.g., if reprinting synopses of public criminal cases, the offender's name and/or information concerning his/her offense must be removed).

E. Costs of producing offender newspapers must be charged to offender funding sources.

F. Distribution and subscription

1. Offender newspapers may be distributed free of charge to:
   a) Offenders within the facility that published the newspaper;
   b) Staff within the facility that published the newspaper;
   c) Other State of Minnesota correctional facilities' wardens, libraries, facility education directors, and offender newspaper editors;
   d) The DOC commissioner, deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners, communications director, and legislative liaison;
   e) The public defender's office;
   f) State of Minnesota law library services;
   g) State of Minnesota legislative reference library; and
   h) Other individuals/agencies as requested by the commissioner.

2. The offender newspaper must be placed on DOC and/or facility iShare/Intranet sites.

3. Subscriptions to offender newspapers are set at $2.00 per issue. All subscription fees received must be deposited back to the offender funding source that funds the cost of the newspaper production.

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. Documented review and approval are recorded on the Offender Newspaper Approval form (attached) and maintained with the final hard-copy version of the newspaper issue.

B. An electronic version of the final copy of each newspaper is available on the facility or DOC's education iShare site.

REVIEW: Annually

REFERENCES: Division Directive 204.010, "Offender Assignment and Compensation Plan."
Policy 302.020, "Mail."
Policy 303.110, "Offender Access to the Public News Media."
Division Directive 301.030, "Contraband."
Minn. Stat. §3.302, subd. 3

SUPERSESSION: Division Directive 204.090, "Offender Newspaper," 7/6/10.
All facility policies, memos, or other communication whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: Offender Newspaper Approval form (204.090A)

/s/
Assistant Commissioner, Facility Services

Instructions
204.090LL, "*Lino Ledger* – Offender Newspaper"