

**RULES  
OF  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION  
ADULT SERVICES DIVISION**

**CHAPTER 0420-3-4  
SELECTION OF NEWS MEDIA AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES TO ATTEND  
AN EXECUTION OF A DEATH SENTENCE**

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**0420-3-4-.01 PREFACE**

Under the authority of T.C.A. §40-23-116, the Department of Correction is authorized to promulgate rules that establish criteria for the selection of news media representatives to attend an execution of a sentence of death.

*Authority: T.C.A. §40-23-116. Administrative History: Original rule filed July 28, 1999; November 29, 1999. Repeal and new rule filed November 22, 2000; effective February 6, 2001.*

**0420-3-4-.02 APPLICABILITY**

Pursuant to the authority of T.C.A. §40-23-116, these rules shall apply to all news media agencies and their representatives.

*Authority: T.C.A. §40-23-116. Administrative History: Original rule filed July 28, 1999; November 29, 1999. Repeal and new rule filed November 22, 2000; effective February 6, 2001.*

**0420-3-4-.03 DEFINITIONS**

- (1) Community Print News Media Agency: A Print News Media Agency other than a Metro Print News Media Agency.
- (2) General Interest and Coverage: The handling of a broad range of spot news such as traffic accidents, fires, disasters, governmental events, as well as economic, business, social, sports, and human interest news.
- (3) Metro Print News Media Agency: A Print News Media Agency which maintains a full-time presence at the state Capitol, covering day-to-day operations of state government.
- (4) News Media Agency: A Print, Radio or Television News Media Agency or The Associated Press.
- (5) News Media Agency Representative: A person Regularly Employed by a News Media Agency and designated by such News Media Agency to attend and witness an execution of a death sentence on behalf of the New Media Agency.
- (6) Print News Media Agency: A newspaper of general circulation, bearing a title or name, regularly issued at least as frequently as once a week for a definite price, having second class mailing privilege, being not less than four (4) pages, published continuously during the immediately preceding one-year period, which is published for the dissemination of news of general interest, coverage and circulation in an area within Tennessee.

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(Rule 0420-3-4-.03, continued)

- (7) Radio News Media Agency: The Tennessee Radio Network or a radio broadcast station which regularly disseminates news of general interest and coverage and has either its city of license (as determined by the federal government) or broadcast transmitter located in Tennessee.
- (8) Regularly Employed: Employed on a consistent, continuing basis and not solely for the purpose of witnessing an execution of a sentence of death or otherwise on a temporary or short-term basis.
- (9) Television News Media Agency: A television broadcast station which regularly disseminates news of general interest and coverage and has either its city of license (as determined by the federal government) or broadcast transmitter located in Tennessee.
- (10) Warden: Warden of the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution.

*Authority:* T.C.A. § 40-23-115; § 40-23-116. *Administrative History:* Original rule filed November 22, 2000; effective February 6, 2001.

**0420-3-4-.04 APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

- (1) The selection of News Media Agency Representatives shall be by drawing to be held at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, 7475 Cockrill Bend Industrial Road, Nashville, Tennessee.
- (2) The Public Information Office of the Department of Correction shall notify all News Media Agencies of a scheduled drawing through issuance of an advisory to the Associated Press. An announcement will also be published in the Tennessee Administrative Register; provided, however, in the event the Department has insufficient advance notice of an execution date to meet publication deadlines for the Tennessee Administrative Register, the announcement shall be issued as soon as practicable after the Department receives notice of the execution date.
- (3) The advisory and announcement shall include the following:
  - (a) Deadline date, time and location for receiving applications from a News Media Agency desiring to be included in the open drawing to witness the execution of the death sentence.
  - (b) Date, time, and location where the open drawing will take place.
- (4) To be eligible for the drawing, a News Media Agency shall submit an application on a form provided by the Department of Correction on or before the deadline specified in the advisory and/or notice. The applicant agency shall designate its News Media Agency Representative and the news media pool for which it qualifies under these rules. The Department will accept only one (1) application from each News Media Agency. A person may be named as a News Media Agency Representative on only one (1) application.
- (5) The Warden or designee shall assign an identifying number to each application received. Prior to the commencement of the drawing the Warden or designee shall post a list containing the News Media Agency name, News Media Agency Representative name, number and assigned category of each application which meets the requirements set forth in this rule.
- (6) Procedure for Drawing:
  - (a) From those applications received which meet the requirements set forth in this rule, a total of seven (7) News Media Agencies shall be selected. The agencies shall be selected from the following categories in the following order:
    1. The Associated Press (one application);

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(Rule 0420-3-4-.04, continued)

2. One News Media Agency in the county where the offense occurred;
  3. One Metro Print News Media Agency;
  4. One Community Print News Media Agency;
  5. Two Television News Media Agencies; and
  6. One Radio News Media Agency.
- (b) In the event more than one qualifying application is received for category (a)(ii), the applications not selected in that category shall be reassigned to appropriate categories.
- (c) If one or more categories cannot be filled due to an insufficient number of qualifying applications in the category, qualifying applications remaining after all other selections have been made shall be combined into one selection pool from which an application shall be drawn to fill each unfilled position.
- (d) After seven (7) News Media Agency Representatives have been selected through the process set out in (a) through (c), all remaining applications shall be combined into one selection pool from which a first alternate and a second alternate shall be drawn. Alternates shall be allowed, in order of selection, to substitute for a News Media Agency Representative selected as a witness who is unable to attend and witness the execution of a death sentence.
- (7) After the drawing the Department of Correction shall promptly issue an advisory to the Associated Press identifying the News Media Agency Representatives selected.
- (8) News Media Agency Representatives shall be subject to the approval of the Warden. The Warden may, in the Warden's discretion, disapprove or exclude a witness for reasons of safety or security. No News Media Agency Representative shall be related to the condemned prisoner or the condemned prisoner's victim or victims or have any personal interest in the case. News Media Agency Representatives must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.
- (9) The Department of Correction will allow no substitution of News Media Agencies or News Media Agency Representatives.
- (10) In the event the execution does not take place within one (1) year of the date of the drawing, the Commissioner, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, may cancel the result of a drawing and, if necessary, direct that a new drawing be held.

*Authority:* T.C.A. § 40-23-116. *Administrative History:* Original rule filed November 22, 2000; effective February 6, 2001.

**0420-3-4-.05 WITNESS GUIDELINES**

- (1) No News Media Agency Representative allowed to witness the execution of a death sentence shall have exclusive rights to the story. Immediately after the execution of the death sentence is complete, all News Media Agency Representatives shall make themselves available for a news conference of other news media representatives and shall remain at the news conference until it is completed.
- (2) The news conference shall be held at a location designated by the warden immediately following the execution.

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(Rule 0420-3-4-.05, continued)

- (3) Photographic or recording equipment are prohibited at the execution site during the execution.
- (4) News Media Agency Representatives shall abide by all departmental and institutional rules and policies, and the directives of authorized staff. Failure of a witness to do so may result in the witness being excluded and /or removed from the premises. The News Media Agency Representative and the News Media Agency being represented shall be ineligible to attend future executions without the specific approval of the Commissioner.

**Authority:** T.C.A. § 40-23-116. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 2000; effective February 6, 2001.