

# Print Pool Guidelines

White House Correspondents' Association

April 2025

## Print Pool

Poolers are the eyes and ears of the press corps for events at the White House and when the president travels.

## Expectations

- **Timely:** News should be delivered ASAP. Add details, color and full quotes later if necessary. Use your phone to send headlines and partial quotes from the room.
- **Fair, tasteful and objective:** Pool reports should reflect high journalistic standards. Keep in mind the audience: The press corps includes down-the-middle mainstream media along with outlets with a spectrum of standards. Pool reports serve them all. Description and context are fine but stick to relevant facts.
- **Your first obligation is to the pool** while on duty as pooler. No publishing material or using it on social media before filing it in a pool report.
- **Correct errors promptly.** Whether it's a name, title, quote etc. Issue a new pool report and indicate which previous report the correction refers to.

## Poolers' responsibilities:

- **Keep track** of when your outlet has a shift
- **Show up** on time and don't leave until the lid
- **Wranglers:** Be sure they have your contact info a day before your shift
- **Be available** by cell and email before the announced call time and after a lid has been called, in case of anything unexpected
- **Have phone etc.** to record, and to file pool reports fast, even when WiFi is not available
- **Respond** to colleagues' requests to clarify any pool report
- **Tone:** Keep it neutral
- **Communicate** any concerns to WHCA board members
- **Rookie poolers** and others who haven't done it in a while should confer with WHCA board members beforehand

## Format for pool reports

- Number each report

- Include a brief description in subject line (i.e. “pool report #3/Oval - Putin comments”)
- Flag news at the top
- Sign each report with your name, outlet, email and, preferably, cell number
- Email reports to the wranglers and, **using the BCC line**, to the (non-public) WHCA list

## Speed

- When the president makes news, **don’t wait**.
- It’s OK to send a report with one sentence or a partial quote.
- During extended pool sprays and other events not available in real time to the wider press corps, send as many updates as warranted.
- Don’t let your print colleagues get beaten by TV, radio and the wires. Their poolers are sending instant pool notes.
- File a more thorough report ASAP afterward.
- Do your best

## What to include:

- **Quotes:** Focus on NEWSWORTHY quotes. Don’t waste time transcribing long passages that aren’t likely to make it into a news story. Use your judgment. If context is important or the quote is newsy or colorful, feel free.
- If unsure of a quote, note the uncertainty and refer people to the official transcript. But keep in mind that official transcripts are not available from campaign events, and are often delayed, especially from evening and weekend events.
- **Who, what, where, when:** Include the facts of what the president did, when he did it, who he met, what he said, what they said. Include color. If there were protesters, report what they shouted and what the signs said.

## Other guidelines

- **Non-newsworthy social media posting:** Allowed as time permits. No need to share in a pool report. (i.e. selfies on the tarmac).
- **Swaps/substitutions:** Allowed **only** among outlets in the in-town pool. Alert the wranglers and WHCA board print rep ahead of time.
- Information/interviews/observations collected in your capacity as a pooler can only be used if shared in a pool report.
- **Photography:** Optional. Don’t let it interfere with your primary pooling obligations, but unique or especially newsworthy photos should be shared, and *must* be shared if used on social media.

- **Presidential movements:** Report the time. If there's an unscheduled stop, or trip out of the White House, report that ASAP. (See below for non-POTUS pooling.)
- Note **any** contacts between the pool and the president or senior officials.
- Ask the White House for help with names, titles, meeting attendees etc.
- Conversations with wranglers are presumptively off the record, as are WHCA communications involving pool logistics.
- No need to pool briefings or open press events.
- Pool coverage of gaggles is optional but encouraged when press attendance is limited at the White House. Alert your print colleagues it is happening.

### Non-POTUS pools

For the VP, pool reports do not need to be filed as frequently. Unless news is being made, don't feel obliged to fill your colleagues' inboxes. Instead, combine relevant details and information into fewer pool reports.

That goes double for the first lady, and triple for the VP's spouse.

### Important email addresses

- [wranglers@who.eop.gov](mailto:wranglers@who.eop.gov) -- hits all wranglers; use for pool reports/logistics questions
- [note@whca.press](mailto:note@whca.press) - we are currently using this address for pool reports instead of our usual distribution list ([all@whca.press](mailto:all@whca.press)) -- **use only on the BCC line** of pool reports. DO NOT SHARE
- At pooler's discretion, you can send a heads-up, **or pool note**, to this list only – e.g. in case of unusual delay that isn't worth a formal pool report via the wranglers.
  - [press@who.eop.gov](mailto:press@who.eop.gov) -- hits the whole press office
  - [presswaves@who.eop.gov](mailto:presswaves@who.eop.gov) -- to request White House access if you don't have a hard pass

### Background/off the record

If the president or an aide insists on speaking on background as a "senior administration official," be sure to explain the ground rules in the pool report. Keep names out of pool reports. Share upon request *with other pool outlets*, who are also expected to abide by the ground rules.

Off the record interactions between the pool and the president should be noted in a pool report. Members of the travel pool agree to provide a verbal summary on request to other members of the travel pool, with ground rules strictly respected by all.

## **Usage**

Outlets in the pool may quote or publish from reports verbatim without attribution.

## **Membership in the pools**

The WHCA board has sole authority over membership in Print pools: in-town, domestic travel and foreign travel pools, and the supplemental pool. All poolers, including approved supplemental poolers, can volunteer when a pooler is needed for the vice president, first lady, VP's spouse and other events.

## **Questions? Contact one of the WHCA print representatives:**

### Print Chair:

Courtney Subramanian, BBC News, [courtney.subramanian@bbc.co.uk](mailto:courtney.subramanian@bbc.co.uk) (630) 710-0255

### Representatives:

Linda Feldmann, Christian Science Monitor, [feldmannl@csps.com](mailto:feldmannl@csps.com), (202) 744-2857

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