

**THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF WINDSOR**

**POLICY**

Service Area:	<b>Office of the City Clerk</b>	Policy No.:	
Department:	<b>Customer Service and Communications</b>	Approval Date:	<b>June 1, 2015</b>
Division:	Communications	Approved By:	<b>M189/2015</b>
		Effective Date:	<b>June 1, 2015</b>
Subject:	<b>Media Policy</b>	Procedure Ref.:	Media Procedures
Review Date:	<b>June 1, 2018</b>	Pages: 5	Replaces M38-2012 approved January 23, 2012
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**1. POLICY**

- 1.1** The City of Windsor is committed to communication with, and through, the media in an open and transparent manner. The City will, whenever possible, initiate media contact and respond to media inquiries through designated spokespersons to ensure consistent and accurate messaging.
- 1.2** The City will engage in a proactive communications program that uses a variety of formats to accommodate the diverse needs of the community.
- 1.3** The City will afford media calls a high priority.

**2. PURPOSE**

- 2.1** This policy is intended to protect and promote the image of the City of Windsor, while ensuring accurate, timely, consistent, and professional messaging.
- 2.2** The policy is designed to clearly designate corporate spokespersons and provide employees with an understanding of the policies and procedures surrounding public statements and media relations.

**3. SCOPE**

- 3.1** The policy applies to all City of Windsor staff and any individual retained by the Corporation who is acting on the city's behalf.
- 3.2** This policy does not apply to the Mayor, Councillors and Council appointees to agencies, boards, commissions and committees as they are governed by the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards.

**3.3** The policy does not apply to the organizations listed below (see bullets).

- Windsor Police
- Enwin
- Windsor-Essex Development Corporation
- The Detroit Windsor Tunnel Corporation
- Your Quick Gateway (Windsor Airport)
- Tourism Windsor-Essex-Pelee Island
- Windsor Utilities Commission

**3.4** In the event of an emergency, the communications protocol as outlined in the City of Windsor's Emergency Response Plan will supersede this policy.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITY**

**4.1** The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible to:

- 4.1.1** Direct compliance with this policy
- 4.1.2** Be chief staff spokesperson and may speak on behalf of the municipality regarding all functions of the organization.

**4.2** The Chief Administrative Officer and The Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Directors are responsible to:

- 4.2.1** Speak to issues in their areas of responsibility and/or designate unit spokespersons and authorize subject matter experts to respond to media inquiries, in an effort to be as timely and helpful as possible.

**4.3** The Corporate Leadership Team or their designates are responsible to:

- 4.3.1** Speak on behalf of their areas of accountability and responsibility.

**4.4** The Senior Manager of Communications and Customer Service, with support from the Marketing & Communications Officers, is responsible for:

- 4.4.1** Monitoring the policy and accompanying procedure
- 4.4.2** Providing training to city departments, and suggesting revisions for Council's consideration.

**4.5** When media contact covers issues of a political or possibly controversial nature, employees are responsible to direct media inquiries to Corporate Communications and their Executive Director or the Corporate Leadership Team to facilitate a timely and accurate response.

- 4.5.1** Where inquiries are specific to Windsor Fire events or investigations, the media should be directed to the Chief Fire Prevention Officer or designate, with the Executive Director and Corporate Communications copied.

- 4.6** The Corporate Communications unit is responsible for tracking and archiving media exposure.

**5. GOVERNING RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- 5.1** A list of pre-approved spokespersons will be supplied by Corporate Leaders or Executive Directors to Communications, to deal with specific topical and recurring issues in their areas. This will help achieve quick responses to media inquiries.
- 5.2** Spokespersons are to remain neutral and factual. Spokespersons only speak to their area of expertise. No spokesperson is to interpret or offer opinion on Council's decision.
- 5.3** Authorized spokespersons provide factual information on programs, activities and initiatives that relate specifically to their business area.
- 5.4** In the absence of subject matter experts, or a pre-authorized spokesperson, and in an effort to be as accessible as possible, Marketing and Communications Officers may speak to the media where they have appropriate subject knowledge.
- 5.5** City staff contacted by the media concerning political or potentially controversial information should refer the request to their Executive Director and Corporate Communications, to help ensure the most appropriate spokesperson for the issue is found and that coverage is tracked for future reference.
- 5.5.1** Where inquiries are specific to Windsor Fire events or investigations, the media should be directed to the Chief Fire Prevention Officer or designate, with the Executive Director and Corporate Communications copied.
- 5.6** All media exposure should be shared with communications, preferably in advance of airing or printing, to help with tracking.
- 5.7** Media training will be made available to all corporate spokespersons through Corporate Communications.
- 5.8** Authorized spokespersons commenting on City business, regardless of medium, must identify themselves as City of Windsor employees.
- 5.9** Use of City property/equipment/assets/logos/intellectual property for purposes unrelated to the business of the City is forbidden.
- 5.10** To help maximize media exposure, departments or individuals planning to contact the media will seek input and approval from the Chief

Administrative Officer, or Corporate Leadership Team or designate whichever is most appropriate. Only Corporate Leadership Team approval is required in circumstances where the contact is of a routine nature including the following:

- Media releases for Council Meetings (issued regularly by Clerk's Office)
- Special meetings of Council (issued regularly by Clerk's Office)
- Cancellation of Council Meetings (issued regularly by Clerk's Office)
- Change of meeting location (issued regularly by Clerk's Office)
- Adding agenda items (issued regularly by Clerk's Office)
- Disruption of Service (typically issued by department unless Corporate Communications is approached for assistance)
- Public Service Announcements, e.g. leisure and recreation events and classes (issued by Parks and/or Recreation)
- Notice of tax mailings (issued regularly by Finance, in consultation with Corporate Communications)
- Notice of holiday service closures/delays (standard format written in consultation with Clerk's, 311, Solid Waste, Recreation, Library, Community Museum and Transit)
- Road closures (issued through Engineering and/or Operations)
- Snow removal releases (issued by Corporate Communications)
- Annual Recreation special events, such as Arbor Week plantings, pool openings, March Break, etc. (issued by Parks and/or Recreation)

- 5.11** Notice to Corporate Communications is always required for tracking purposes.
- 5.12** Departments that become aware of issues that may result in media scrutiny are to advise Corporate Communications and the Chief Administrative Officer, with notice to the appropriate Executive Director and CLT member.
- 5.13** Mayor, City Council and the Chief Administrative Officer must be made aware of new initiatives prior to release to the media.
- 5.14** Other applicable policies and legislation include: Acceptable Use, Code of Ethics & Conflict of Interest, Respectful Workplace, City of Windsor Council-Staff Protocol, Fraud, *MFIPPA*, Emergency Plan, and *Copyright*

*Act.* Where two policies or legislation govern the action, the most stringent policy or legislation will apply.

- 5.15** Contravention of this media policy and related policies may result in disciplinary action.
- 5.16** This policy shall be reviewed every three years from the date it becomes effective, or sooner at the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer.

## **6. RECORDS, FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS**

- 6.1** Records are the responsibility of Corporate Communications and will be kept in accordance with the Records Retention Bylaw #21-2013 as amended from time to time.
- 6.2** Procedures for dealing with media and examples of communications templates are available on the Communications Dashboard Page.