



Category: Administration Standard

Title: Media Relations, Social Media and Public Statements
Adopted by: Director, Customer Service and Communications
Effective Date: August 26, 2023
Last Updated: August 26, 2023
Responsible Service(s): Strategic Marketing and Communications

1. ASSOCIATED GOVERNANCE

1.1. This standard outlines requirements in support of the Administration Policy on Social Media, Media Relations and Public Statements.

2. PURPOSE

2.1. This standard shall be followed when employees and volunteers interact with media and social media or are present in a public forum. Following this standard protects the reputations of The City and its employees.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. *In this administration standard:*

- a. **"Business Unit Communicator"** means an employee of Customer Service and Communications with responsibility to advise, or communicate on behalf of, City business units;
- b. **"City Spokesperson"** means an employee that has been officially approved by the Director of Customer Service & Communication to communicate publicly on behalf of The City;
- c. **"Employee"** means any person employed by The City and reporting to a City of Calgary business unit, department, the City Manager's Office, the City Auditor's office, the Calgary Housing Company or the Calgary Police Service, including those working under an employment contract with The City;
- d. **"Media"** means television, radio, newspaper outlets, online reporting, blogs and forums that provide news reported by journalists;
- e. **"Media Relations"** means an ongoing relationship between The City and local, national and international media outlets and journalists;

- f. **“Public Forum”** means an open-access place, situation, or group in which people exchange ideas and discuss issues. Public forums include social media accounts, online or traditional media publications, and public meetings;
- g. **“Public Statement”** means a declaration made by an employee in any public forum, which can include statements that relate to The City, its business or its employees;
- h. **“Social Media”** means an internet-based communication tool with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation and information sharing. Social media includes social networking sites, forums, weblogs, wikis, online chat sites, video/photo sharing sites, etc.;
- i. **Social Media Monitors** means an employee of Customer Service and Communications with responsibility to regularly review posts to the City’s social media accounts and ensure compliance with City policies; and
- j. **“Volunteer”** means an individual who has agreed to perform a service or task at the direction of and on behalf of The City without expecting or receiving compensation.

4. **APPLICABILITY**

- 4.1. This standard applies to all City of Calgary employees and volunteers, except employees of Calgary Housing Company or employees and volunteers of the Calgary Police Service.
- 4.2. This standard does not apply to the Mayor, Councillors, or Ward Office staff.

5. **STANDARDS**

- 5.1. All Employees and volunteers must avoid making personal social media posts or public statements that damage the City’s reputation, operations, or other employees.
- 5.2. *Employees that have not been designated as City spokespersons must:*
 - a) Identify that their actions and opinions are as an individual and not on behalf of The City if they choose to participate in social media or make public statements related to City issues;
 - b) Refer media inquiries to their business unit communicator or designated spokesperson; and

- c) Refer ideas for media stories about City programs, services or incidents to their Supervisor or business unit communicator.

5.3. Only Directors and Managers may nominate City spokespersons to the Director of Customer Service and Communications.

5.4. City Spokespersons must:

- a) Complete a City media course prior to responding to any media inquiries;
- b) Make every reasonable effort to present accurate information on the City's position and actions; and
- c) Work with their business unit communicator to prepare news releases, stories, public statements or editorials on behalf of The City.

5.5. Social Media Monitors will:

- a) Remove or delete social media comments on City social media channels that are in violation of the Respectful Workplace policy;
- b) Communicate violations to business unit leaders and propose corrective actions.

5.6. Only the Director of Customer Services and Communications may:

- a) Establish and terminate social media accounts that represent The City;
- b) Designate employees with the responsibility to post and monitor each social media account and manage distribution of credentials; and
- c) Confirm business unit Communicators as nominated by Directors and Managers.

6. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

6.1. Failure to adhere to this Administration policy and its related standards and procedures may result in:

- a. Disciplinary action for employees in accordance with either the Labour Relations or Exempt Staff policies; and/or
- b. Disciplinary action for volunteers according to contracts and agreements, or by discontinuing work with individuals or organizations.

7. HISTORY

Procedure Action	Approval Date	Description
New	August 26, 2023	Standard created based on statements formerly in the policy