

CITY OF CASTLEGAR

EMPLOYEE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Communications			
Section:	Administrative	Resolution No:	09-260
Policy Number:	1-10	Amended by:	58-10
Effective Date:	2009 03 16		

GENERAL STATEMENT:

The City aims to be open with the media and the public and to be respected and valued by our citizens. The City will take the initiative to ensure clear, concise and complete information is provided to the public regarding municipal decisions and the decision-making process. Public consultation is welcome and encouraged.

PROCEDURES:

Advertising

The City meets statutory requirements for notification and involvement of the public on developed proposals, borrowing bylaws and other initiatives that require public involvement and consultation.

The City purchases advertising to inform the public of specific Council decisions, upcoming public meetings and events, and new programs and services.

Annual Report

In accordance with Section 98 of the Community Charter, the City publishes an Annual Report each year that reports on the municipal services, operations and objectives for the previous year and includes a statement of municipal objectives for the current and next year. The Annual Report also includes the Auditor's Report and Financial Statements. The Director of Finance and Director of Corporate Services coordinate the report, which is available to the public at City Hall and posted on the City's web site.

Brochures

The Chief Administrative Officer should be informed of any intent to publish or update brochures, printed materials or other public communications.

E-Mails

E-mail is to be used for business purposes and should be business-like in format and tone. Full sentences, proper grammar and punctuation are expected. Profanity is prohibited, as is the use of racial or sexist jokes or slurs, or other comments that would be deemed in poor taste. Downloading of such material is not acceptable.

If staff will be away from the office for an extended period and unable to check e-mails, the Out of Office Assistant shall be activated and a date of return shall be noted, along with the name and e-mail address of an alternate contact in the event that an immediate reply is required. Members of Council shall advise staff if their e-mail is temporarily

unavailable and an alternate form of communication is required. Urgent e-mails shall be marked as such with a “Read Reply Requested” for confirmation and follow up.

Identification Cards

The Bylaw Enforcement Officer and any staff member providing inspection services will be issued identification cards featuring the Coat of Arms. Other identification cards issued will bear the City logo. Identification cards will be current for three years, with the exception of contract staff, whose cards will be current for one calendar year.

Logo/Coat of Arms

Official use – The City’s corporate logo serves to officially identify the diverse facilities and services provided by the City of Castlegar. References to the ‘corporate logo’ also include the City’s tagline.

The City’s Official Coat of Arms is to be used on all legal and financial documents as well as correspondence from the Office of the Mayor. The City corporate logo should appear on all other City documents, letterhead, business cards, vehicle identification, marketing and advertising materials, building signage and other public communications.

Authority for other usage – The City of Castlegar Coat of Arms and corporate logo are the exclusive property and right of the City of Castlegar and must not be displayed or used in any manner by any other individual, organization or entity without the written consent of City Council.

The corporate logo should be used in promotional materials for events and projects co-sponsored by the City of Castlegar, including signage for construction projects and events/programming by arts and social service organizations when funded by the City.

Castlegar City Council will evaluate the use and/or reproduction of the logo for commercial purposes on a per request basis.

Reproduction – The City of Castlegar logo must not be altered in any way without authorization by City Council. Design guidelines for the use and reproduction of the logo must be obtained by the Department of Corporate Services. Finalised design proofs must be approved by the Department.

MEDIA RELATIONS:

Spokesperson

Directors and identified management staff are authorized to speak with the media on policy issues to provide background information. (Directors should clarify in advance who is responsible for dealing with specific issues.)

A spokesperson may be appointed by the Chief Administrative Officer on an issue of major significance. If that occurs all managers will be notified and all inquiries regarding that particular issue should be forwarded to the appropriate spokesperson.

Any questions regarding political issues should be referred to the Mayor or Councillors or the Chief Administrative Officer.

Media Inquiries

Media should be referred to the Mayor and/or Councillors for any quotes. The Chief Administrative Officer will coordinate media inquiries for staff and refer calls to the appropriate spokesperson. If staff receives a call from the media and the question is not related to their area of responsibility the call should be transferred to the Chief Administrative Officer for appropriate referral.

Senior staff should respond promptly and accurately to all media inquiries in providing factual information. The positive should be emphasized (eg. new service, improvements, dollars saved).

The Chief Administrative Officer should be notified of media contact as soon as possible after an interview.

Radio/television Appearance Requests

The Chief Administrative Officer should be contacted prior to acceptance of any invitation to appear on a radio or television program. The Chief Administrative Officer will determine if it is advisable. Generally it should be the Mayor or a Councillor who appears on such a program.

Media Misrepresentation

Factual Discrepancies – It is the responsibility of Department Directors to contact the Chief Administrative Officer when a story has been published or aired that contains a factual error which significantly impacts the public's perception of the issue. The Chief Administrative Officer will work with the Department Head and the Mayor to assist in clarifying any inaccuracies where appropriate.

Editorial Discrepancies – The Mayor and the Chief Administrative Officer will determine if an official City response is appropriate.

News Releases

News releases are encouraged to promote municipal activities and services. Department Directors, or their designates, are to notify the Chief Administrative Officer of events, projects or issues that may be of interest to the general public and the media.

Relevant background information is to be provided by the department involved (written notes or draft release); the Chief Administrative Officer will review the final release. The appropriate Council member and staff member will be named at the bottom of the release, with the Chief Administrative Officer. Appropriate phone numbers will be provided.

All news releases are to be sent from Administration on City letterhead and copies will be circulated to the Mayor and Council and staff (via email). News releases will also be posted on the City's Website.

Voice Mail

Calls to the main City Hall number are always answered personally as are direct calls to key departments. Employees with voice mail are encouraged to provide an option for those callers who wish to speak with someone immediately (ex. dial 0), and that number should

always be answered personally. *Callers should receive no more than one voice mail message prior to reaching a staff member directly.*

Staff should record a new message prior to vacations mentioning the expected date of return and should provide an alternate phone number to call if immediate assistance is required.

All calls should be returned the same day if possible, the next day at the latest.

Website

The City will maintain an up-to-date user-friendly Website to assist citizens in their business with the City. The site will be informative and inter-active to facilitate communication between the public, City Council and City staff. A calendar of activities listing City meetings and events open to the public shall be maintained. The calendar will *not* list general community meetings and activities unless there is direct City involvement.

All requests for posting of information to the Website are to be referred to the Director of Corporate Services. Posting responsibilities are handled by designated staff.

The City will consider incorporating direct links to other websites if they are deemed useful to our citizens (eg. other government agencies) and do not promote a particular business or philosophy.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Employee Meetings

A City Hall employee meeting shall be held monthly to keep all staff up to date on city projects and initiatives, and the activities of their fellow co-workers.

Councillor Contact

Councillors are encouraged to visit with staff when they are in the building to pick up their mail and/or agendas.