



CITY OF PRINCE RUPERT

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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1 GOALS

The Communications goals of the City of Prince Rupert are as follows:

- To provide citizens with information on policies, programs, services and initiatives that is timely, accurate, and clear.
- To celebrate the accomplishments and initiatives of the City.
- To employ varied means of communication to accommodate the diverse needs of the citizenry.
- To develop mechanisms to allow citizens to supply Council with feedback, including community consultation and engagement processes.
- To ensure that information provided by the City is clearly and consistently branded as such.

2 APPLICATION

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees including Board and Council members.

3 COMMUNITY UPDATING

- 3.1 To ensure that citizens are notified in a timely fashion regarding activities in the City, Senior Managers from the City's various Departments will notify the Communications Manager concerning:
- significant changes to programs and services;
 - emergencies;
 - significant maintenance of City infrastructure;
 - and, events.
- 3.2 The Communications Department will post approved content on behalf of the City within 48 hours or less of receipt, or as preferred by the Department Manager. Information may be posted to the City's website, affiliated social media sites, and a press release may be drafted, as needed.
- 3.3 The City will endeavour to set up an email subscription service or application that permits the public to subscribe to receive automatic notice of public notifications such as disruptions to service, event announcements, emergency events, notice of paving, etc.

4 MEDIA RELATIONS

- 4.1 The City of Prince Rupert will conduct media outreach to supply timely, appropriate and effective communication of significant service changes, Council decisions, initiatives, emergency communications, and plans.
- 4.2 Media releases, news conferences and media advisories are issued and arranged by the Communications Manager in conjunction with the City Manager and the appropriate Department Manager or Mayor, as needed. The Communications Manager is responsible for issuing media releases about council's activities, decisions and plans, with approval from the City Manager.
- 4.2.1 All staff is required to pass on important information to the City Manager and Communications Manager that could be used as a basis for a press release.
- 4.2.2 The City Manager, in consultation with Communications staff and appropriate Department Manager, will decide if the event warrants a media release and/or photo.
- 4.2.3 All press releases will receive final approval from the City Manager.
- 4.3 News media enquiries, whether by phone, email, letter, or in person, should be addressed promptly to accommodate publication, posting or broadcast deadlines, where possible. Staff members and members of Council should ensure that news media requests, particularly for interviews or technical information, are directed to the Communications Manager and/or designated spokesperson(s) to ensure accuracy and consistency of information.
- 4.3.1 Unless otherwise stated, the designated spokesperson for the City of Prince Rupert will be the Mayor or Communications Manager.
- 4.3.2 Press releases will include the contact information for the Communications Manager, who will contact the City Manager and Mayor to schedule an interview, and to debrief on talking points, as needed.
- 4.3.3 As outlined in the Standard of Conduct policy, City employees will not speak to the media on behalf of the City unless authorized to do so by the City Manager. All media enquiries should be referred immediately to the Communications Manager for response.
- 4.3.4 The City of Prince Rupert will only respond to media requests from clearly identified media sources, contingent upon the provision of an associated name and contact information.

- 4.3.5 Should misreporting occur, the Communications Manager will contact media to clarify the misreported information and request a published correction.

5 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

- 5.1 The City of Prince Rupert is committed to open and transparent communication. The City will communicate to its citizens using a variety of accepted tools, including social media, as an efficient two-way mode of communication to our citizens.
- 5.2 Any staff wishing to start a social media account on behalf of the City of Prince Rupert, must first receive authorization from the City Manager and Communications Manager.
- 5.3 The City will authorize specific individuals or “Site Moderators” to utilize social media in an official capacity to ensure that, as with all communications activities, communications through social media channels are accurate, consistent and professional. Site moderators will be responsible for:
 - 5.3.1 Ensuring social media use is consistent with the existing Social Media Policy No F25. For the Social Media Policy that applies to both professional and personal use for all City employees, please see Appendix A.
 - 5.3.2 Correcting misinformation and ensuring content is up to date.
 - 5.3.3 Ensuring responses, where they are questions related to fact and related to the topic of the post, to wall posts, inbox messages and discussion comments are made within 48 hours of posting, where feasible.
 - 5.3.4 Denying access to users who post inappropriate or offensive comments.
 - 5.3.5 Removing posts deemed inappropriate.
 - 5.3.6 Responding to any concerns or questions, or forwarding queries to the appropriate Manager for response.
 - 5.3.7 Ensuring all content is in line with the City’s Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct, as well as all other applicable policies.

- 5.4 All social media sites representing the City of Prince Rupert will, where possible, display relevant contact information and will be clearly identified as belonging to the City of Prince Rupert.
- 5.5 Pages created by Mayor and Councilors to represent themselves for political purposes will be self-administered, and do not belong to the City. In their use of social media, elected Officials will continue to represent their constituents according to the Local Government Act and Community Charter, which outline standards of behavior and confidentiality.
- 5.6 Any posts to the City's social media sites will be removed if they contain offensive, or libelous material, or if they are in violation of the City's Confidentiality Policy.
- 5.6.1 All social media sites that represent the City of Prince Rupert, where possible, will display a disclaimer outlining expectations regarding standards of behavior. This disclaimer will also inform commenters that any posts violating City standards shall be removed.

6 COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.1 The Communications Manager will be responsible for summarizing key decisions and items from City Council meetings. The Communications Manager will:
- Post summaries to social media and City website as needed
 - Forward summaries to the internal City email listserv as needed
- 6.2 As laid out in Section 124 of the Community Charter, the City will provision a schedule of meetings with the date, time and place of regular Council meetings. These notices are sent to the local newspaper for a minimum of two weeks, posted to the City's public notice board, and posted online. Any updates to the schedule will also be posted as per the City's procedural requirements.
- 6.3 Closed Meetings are meetings that are closed to the public due to the nature of information under discussion. Council is authorized to hold Closed meetings only under the circumstances set out in section 93 of the *Community Charter*. The City will additionally abide by the following Closed communications policy to ensure that the City of Prince Rupert remains transparent and accountable.
- 6.3.1 The City will continue to follow all requirements set out by Section 127 of the Community Charter that legislates minimum requirements with respect to notice of Meetings and Special Meetings, including that

Closed sessions provide a description in general terms of the meeting's purpose.

- 6.3.2 As per Section 92 of the *Community Charter*, a resolution must be passed in an Open Meeting before closing a meeting or part of a meeting. This resolution will continue to be read aloud to ensure that those in attendance are informed of the basis and authority for the resolution. Council will also indicate whether the Open Meeting will reconvene at the end of the In-Camera session.
- 6.3.3 Decisions and Reports from Closed sessions will be released as soon as they are no longer considered sensitive.
- 6.3.4 The City shall provide resources online via the City's website to improve public understanding regarding the definition of Closed Meetings.

7 CITY BRANDING

- 7.1 To guarantee the streamlining of all City public-facing documents so that they accurately represent the City brand, have a consistent look and feel, and meet the City's communications goals and standards, public-facing communications documents and/or templates will be reviewed by the Communications Manager.
 - 7.1.1 The City shall use consistent logo, headers, fonts, graphics, spacing, colour schemes, etc, to identify our unique brand in the creation of public documents—including but not limited to: advertisements; brochures; forms; public reports; presentations; signage; business cards, etc.
 - 7.1.2 All City staff shall use a uniform email signature template with appropriate/current City branding.

8 EMPLOYMENT POSTINGS

- 8.1 As outlined in the City of Prince Rupert Human Resource Policy:
 - 8.1.1 External postings shall be shared on the City's website, social media, and with the local newspaper, where required.
 - 8.1.2 Internal postings shall be shared in accordance with Union guidelines.

9 CRISIS AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- 9.1 In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency, communications, as directed by the City Manager and/or Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Director, the Communications Manager or alternate delegate will follow the directives laid out for an 'Information Manager' in the Emergency Response Plan. The directives of the Emergency Response Plan are described under responsibilities of the Information Officer. Should this document be updated in future, the most recent Emergency Response Plan directives will apply. See Appendix C for reference.

10 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

CITY OF PRINCE RUPERT – HUMAN RESOURCES			
POLICY TITLE:	Social Media	POLICY NO:	HR-F25
EFFECTIVE DATE:	February 26 th , 2014	SUPERSEDES:	
APPROVAL:	Management Meeting 02/26/14	PAGE:	1 of 3

Purpose:

This Policy is intended to provide employees with guidelines for appropriate online social media activity. Although this Policy cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use, it is intended to offer guidelines to employees, thereby helping employees avoid potentially costly missteps online. The nature of the Internet is such that what you “say” online will be captured forever and can be transmitted endlessly without your consent or knowledge. Employees should remember that any information that is shared online instantly becomes permanent and public.

Scope:

This Policy applies to all employees’ participation in and use of social media, regardless of whether such use occurs in the workplace and regardless of whether such use involves the City of Prince Rupert’s electronic equipment or other property.

“Social Media” Defined:

“Social Media” is the term given to websites, online tools and interactive communication technologies that allow users to interact with one another to share information, opinions, knowledge, photos and interests. The rapid speed at which technology continuously evolves makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify all types of social media. By way of example, social media includes: social-networking sites (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn); blogs and micro-blogs (i.e. Twitter, Blogger); content-sharing sites (i.e. Scribd, SlideShare); image sharing sites (i.e. Flickr, YouTube); wiki’s (i.e. Wikipedia) and others. This list is for illustrative purposes only, however, and social media activity is governed by this Policy.

Application of other Policies:

All of the City of Prince Rupert’s employment policies apply to conduct that occurs online in the same way that they apply to conduct that occurs in the workplace.

Association with the City of Prince Rupert:

Employees who identify themselves online as being associated with the City of Prince Rupert must comply with the rules set forth in this section. When endorsing or promoting his or her employer, an employee must disclose his or her affiliation with (i.e., employment by), the City of Prince Rupert. Thus, although the City of Prince Rupert appreciates the loyalty and enthusiasm of its employees, employees must disclose their employment if they endorse the City of Prince Rupert online.

To ensure continuity of the City of Prince Rupert’s message, employees may not represent themselves to be speaking on behalf of the City of Prince Rupert unless expressly authorized to do so.

Prohibited Conduct:

Employees are prohibited from engaging in any of the following in their online activities and posts:

- Disparaging the City of Prince Rupert’s services, clients, executive leadership, employees, or strategy;
- Making any false or misleading statements;
- Promoting or endorsing violence;

- Promoting illegal activity, including the use of illegal drugs;
- Directing any negative comment towards or about any individual or group based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, or other characteristic protected by law;
- Disclosing any confidential or proprietary information belonging to the City of Prince Rupert or obtained by the employee as a result of his employment with the City of Prince Rupert; and,
- Posting, uploading, or sharing any recording or images (including audio, pictures, and videos), taken in the workplace or at any City of Prince Rupert-sponsored event without express advance authorization.

Responsible Dialogue and Exchange of Ideas:

The City of Prince Rupert believes in the importance of open exchange and learning between the organization and external and internal partners. Online social networking enables individuals to share their insights, express their opinions and share information within the context of globally shared conversation.

The following guidelines provide users with parameters for conversation:

- Follow City of Prince Rupert Information Technology (IT) Systems Policy;
- Be thoughtful about how you present yourself in online social networks;
- Protect the City of Prince Rupert's confidential and proprietary information;
- Respect your audience and your coworkers;
- Add value;
- Use your best judgment;
- Don't forget that all networks are monitored and that your online activities should not interfere with your job or your organizational commitments; and,
- All internet postings, whether or not thought to be private, are in fact accessible by the public and should not be treated any different than print media such as newspapers.

Principles of Use:

- As a condition of employment, all employees and users must acknowledge that they have read and understood the City of City of Prince Rupert's Information Technology (IT) Systems Policy;
- All data **including personal data** stored on Municipal systems are considered Municipal property even if the system is being used by the employees during their own time;
- All information regarding access and how to use the City of Prince Rupert's computer systems is considered proprietary and is not to be released to anyone who is not authorized to access these systems;
- Employees need to ensure viruses are not being transmitted through the system. Employees should not attempt to download any software onto their computer or any drive;
- Specific questions of responsibilities of employees regarding social networking software applications should be directed to the IT Department or to the user's immediate supervisor;
- Any alleged or suspected violations of the policy will be investigated and may result in disciplinary actions;
- If you can be identified as an employee of the City of Prince Rupert through your profile, you are indirectly representing the City of Prince Rupert every time you are on that platform and must adhere to the these Guidelines; and,
- Any social networking site developed to directly represent the City of Prince Rupert (ie. Facebook Group) must get approval of IT Department and add IT Department on the administrators list. In addition, corporate branding must be followed.

City of Prince Rupert reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

Duty to Report:

Employees have an ongoing duty to report any violations of this policy by any other employees. The City of Prince Rupert considers the duty to report to be a critical component of its efforts to ensure the safety of its employees and to preserve the City of Prince Rupert's reputation and goodwill in the community. Therefore, any employee who fails to report any conduct that reasonably appears to be in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline for such failure.

Questions about this Policy:

Social media changes rapidly and there will likely be events or issues that are not addressed in this policy. If, at any time, you are uncertain about the application of this policy or if a question relating to the appropriate use of social media arises that is not fully addressed by this policy, you should seek the guidance of the IT Department or your immediate supervisor. When in doubt, employees always should ask for guidance first because, once the information is online, it can never be deleted.

APPENDIX B:

Acknowledgement and Agreement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the City of Prince Rupert Communications Policy and Procedures. Further, I agree to adhere to this policy and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules/procedures outlined in this Policy, I may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

APPENDIX C:

Responsibilities of the Information Officer in the event of an emergency.

These responsibilities are as follows:

Responsibilities:

1. Serve as the coordination point for all public information, media relations and internal information sources for the EOC.
2. Coordinate and supervise all staff assigned as Assistant Information Officers and their activities.
3. Ensure that the public within the affected area receives complete, accurate, and consistent information about life safety procedures, public health advisories, relief and assistance programs and other vital information.
4. Coordinate media releases with officials representing other affected emergency response agencies by requesting they fill the position(s) of Assistant Information Officer.
5. Develop the format for press conferences, in conjunction with the EOC Director.
6. Maintain a positive relationship with the media representatives.
7. Supervise the Assistant Information Officer(s).

Activation Phase

- Determine staffing requirements and make required personnel assignments for the Information Section, as necessary.
- Follow the Generic Activation Phase checklist.

Operational Phase

- Obtain policy guidance from the EOC Director with regard to media releases.
- Keep the EOC Director advised of all unusual requests for information and of all major critical or unfavourable media comments. Recommend procedures or measures to improve media relations.
- Coordinate with the Situation Unit and identify methods for obtaining and verifying significant information as it develops.
- Develop and publish a media-briefing schedule, to include location, format, and preparation and distribution of handout materials.
- Implement and maintain an overall information release program.
- Establish a Media Information Centre, as required, providing necessary space, materials, telephones, and electrical power.

- Maintain up-to-date status boards and other references at the media information centre. Provide adequate staff to answer questions from members of the media.
- Interact with area EOCs as well as the PREOC and obtain information relative to public information operations.
- In coordination with other EOC sections and as approved by the EOC Director, issue timely and consistent advisories and instructions for life safety, health, and assistance for the public.
- At the request of the EOC Director, prepare media briefings for elected officials and provide other assistance as necessary to facilitate their participation in media briefings and press conferences.
- Ensure that a rumour control function is established to correct false or erroneous information.
- Ensure that adequate staff is available at incident sites to coordinate and conduct tours of the disaster areas when safe.
- Provide appropriate staffing and telephones to efficiently handle incoming media and public calls.
- Prepare, update and distribute to the public a Disaster Assistance Information Directory, which contains locations to obtain food, shelter, supplies, health services, etc.
- Ensure that announcements, emergency information and materials are translated and prepared for special populations (non-English speaking, hearing impaired etc.).
- Monitor all media, using information to develop follow-up news releases and rumour control. Liaise with Risk Management Officer.
- Ensure that file copies are maintained of all information released.
- Provide copies of all media releases to the EOC Director.
- Conduct shift change briefings in detail, ensuring that in-progress activities are identified and follow-up requirements are known.
- Prepare final news releases and advise media representatives of points-of-contact for follow-up stories.

Demobilization Phase

- Follow the Generic Demobilization Phase checklist.
- Prepare final news releases and advise media representatives of points-of-contact for follow-up stories.
- Leave a forwarding phone number where you can be reached.