



ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

NUMBER: 2011-02

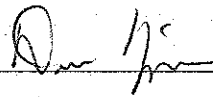
EFFECTIVE DATE: February 6, 2011

DEPARTMENTS: ALL

EXPIRES: Until Rescinded

SUBJECT: Public Information
Policy

ISSUING AUTHORITY: Mayor Dawn Zimmer

 2/6/11
Date

The City of Hoboken is going through many changes in the way we do business. Communication is vitally important during this process and who and how information that impacts our community is shared. It is our objective and intent of sharing data that is accurate and timely. To facilitate the information process flow, we have developed the following "Public Information Policy".

I. Purpose:

The goal of this policy is to provide the City of Hoboken personnel with guidelines for dealing with the news media, speeches and public statements, preparing and distributing news releases.

II. Scope:

This policy applies to all agencies/departments of the City of Hoboken. Individual departments may have additional policies and/or procedures, which are more restrictive, for the release of information. In no way is this policy meant to impede or obstruct the Open Public Record Act, or the State of New Jersey Governor's Executive Order No. 69.

III. Policy Statement:

It shall be the policy of the City of Hoboken to maintain and promote open avenues of communication between the City and the news media, and provide accurate, informed, timely and relevant information to the press and to the public.

IV. Current Policy RESCINDED

All policies, memorandum, orders and the like, for all Departments that in any way relate to employees of the City of Hoboken releasing information to the public including but not limited to press releases and statements to the press are hereby RESCINDED.

V. General Policy:

Media Interaction

1. Prior to any formal speaking engagement or presentation, the employee participating will notify the Business Administrator's office in writing of the event and its subject matter.
2. Prior to any statement to the media relating to City business, policies, personnel, programs or issues, all employees shall notify the Business Administrator for review and receive approval for the intended statement.
3. When communicating with the media, City staff should be mindful that they would be perceived to be acting on behalf of the City, whether or not they intend to be doing so. Therefore, staff will always behave professionally and courteously, staying focused on the message they are trying to convey, while avoiding extraneous commentary, speculation, falsification, or drawing of conclusions with incomplete information.
4. While truthfulness is required in all dealings, staff as representatives of the City of Hoboken should work towards the presentation of City issues in a positive manner.
5. The City of Hoboken is required to be responsive to the media. Directors and other City staff members may also be required to interact with the media, if requested by the Mayor or Business Administrator.
6. Employees, like all citizens, have a First Amendment right of free speech. On occasion, an employee's personal interest in an issue may be different from the City's position. When this occurs, employees are required to clearly state that their position is personal. Notification following a conversation or interview with the news media must be made the same day of the contact. Notification of media contact must be made to the City's Business Administrator and the employee's immediate supervisor. Notification must be in person, by telephone, or by e-mail.

Records

1. To insure that only accurate and legally open personnel and City government information is released, all requests for City documents, including personnel records shall be treated as public information requests. Public information requests must be made to the Office of the City Clerk.

News Releases

1. Draft of all news releases developed by an agency or department will be submitted to the Mayor's Office for review, approval and distribution coordination.

2. Once approved, the Business Administrator will be responsible for coordinating releases to the news media. The initiating department is responsible for sending copies to their personnel.

Press Conferences

Press Conferences will be coordinated and facilitated solely by the Mayor's office. Departments and agencies desiring to have a press conference will present their request in writing to the Business Administrator. The Mayor and Business Administrator will determine if a press conference is warranted.

Publications

All published reports, brochures, fact sheets, etc., are to be sent to the Business Administrator, from the specific sending agency or bureau, to be archived and considered for availability and future use and inclusion on the City's web site.

Adherence of this policy is required and expected of all City employees. Failure to comply will result in the administration of disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.