CITY OF DUBLIN

CITY OF DUBLIN
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS
OF THE CITY MANAGER

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 1.21
TO: All Dublin Employees
FROM: Timothy C. Hansley, City Manager
SUBJECT: Media Relations Policy Manual
DATE: May 20, 1997
New Administrative Order

I. PURPOSE & INTENT

The attached Media Relations Policy Manual is hereby established in order to provide a record of media relations policies, procedures, rules, regulations and guidelines. It is the City's intent through this manual, to assist in developing a successful working relationship with the media by outlining a comprehensive policy governing dissemination of official City information. Any questions regarding the Media Relations Policy Manual should be directed to the Office of the City Manager or to the Division of Community Relations.

II. INTERPRETATION & POLICY

Attached hereto is the Media Relations Policy Manual which you shall use for the following:

X disseminating official City information

X understanding the role of the Director of Community Relations

X Identifying which staff members should respond to media inquiries and when

X providing timely response and accurate information to the media

X assisting the media in accurately covering official City business

X identifying information available to the media and specifying information not

for public disclosure

X ensuring timely and accurate media coverage of City Council actions

X correcting inaccurate media reports on City business

X understanding the role of press conferences

X identifying the place of articles written on innovative City programs in professional publications.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Administrative Order shall be effective immediately upon distribution.

Attachments

CITY OF DUBLIN

Media Relations Policy Manual

City of Dublin
Division of Community Relations
5620 Post Road
Dublin, Ohio 43017

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Introduction to Effective Media Relations

The media is one of the most effective tools to disseminate accurate/timely coverage of City issues, programs and events to residents and target audiences. For most residents, print and television coverage is the primary link to City affairs and decision making.

The City of Dublin encourages accurate media coverage of programs, events and decisions that could be of interest and impact a significant segment of the community. In this regard, the City of Dublin and the media have a mutual responsibility to provide accurate, objective information of City affairs to Dublin residents and target audiences.

The purpose of this Media Relations Policy is to assist City employees and members of Council and Boards and Commissions in developing a successful working relationship with the media by outlining a comprehensive policy manual governing dissemination of official City information.

The media, as referred to throughout this policy, is defined as:

- Local, regional and national print outlets (i.e. daily/weekly newspapers; professional and commercial magazines; journals; etc.);
- Radio, broadcast television and cable television stations;
- Wire services, United Press International (UPI); Associated Press (AP).

MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

Any City employee may answer any question from any reporter. However, the employee is responsible for what is said.

Employees must inform their department and/or division director and the Director of Community Relations or their respective Public Information Officer when a response to a media inquiry is made.

Employees are encouraged to contact the Director of Community Relations or their respective Public Information Officer before being interviewed, if possible.

Employees who are uncomfortable talking to the press should refer calls to their department and/or division director or the Director of Community Relations.

The Division of Community Relations

- **PURPOSE**
  To establish and maintain a central information center and an individual responsible for the coordination of community relations, public affairs and media relations.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  The Division of Community Relations - specifically the Director or a Public Information Officer - has the primary responsibility for the day-to-day interfacing with the media.

- **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**
  The Director of Community Relations is the primary public information contact when the emergency operation center is activated by the City Manager.

- **RELEASE OF INFORMATION**
  The Director of Community Relations is responsible for ensuring that information released by the City to the media is accurately and appropriately distributed.

- **MEDIA ACCESS**
  The Director of Community Relations or a Public Information Officer will assist the press in gaining access to City employees, Council members, Board and Commission members and public records.

- **ASSISTANCE TO CITY DEPARTMENTS**
  The Division of Community Relations assists departments in preparing news releases, responding to media inquiries and promoting programs, events and policies.

- **ASSISTANCE TO CITY COUNCIL AND ITS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**
  When deemed necessary by the City Manager, the Director of Community Relations assists the City Manager in preparing news releases and responding to media inquiries involving decisions and/or actions made by the City Council and Boards and Commissions as a whole. The Director of Community Relations and/or a Public Information Officer also assists City Council and Boards and Commissions in promoting City programs, events and policies.

- **EVALUATION OF PRESS ACTIVITIES**

  The Division of Community Relations is responsible for providing an ongoing review and evaluation of the City's press information efforts and shall maintain:

  Press Release Log - The Division of Community Relations maintains a file of press releases distributed by the City of Dublin and all departments (providing the departments forward copies to the Division of Community Relations).

  News Clippings - The Division of Community Relations maintains files on most articles published throughout the area relating to City affairs. Video files are kept on a limited basis of issues of utmost importance.

  News clippings from media outlets other than local weeklies are forwarded in a timely fashion to the City Manager, staff, City Council and community leaders. These news clippings are also available to the general public for review.

STAFF AND THE DIVISION REPRESENTATIVES/PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS

			Nextel	email
Director	Sandra Puskarcik, ABC	410-4501	206-3303	spuskarcik@dublin.oh.us

Community Relations Specialists/
Public Information Officers

David Ball Community Relations Volunteer Services Information Technology Human Resources Streets & Utilities Recreation Services Grounds & Facilities	410-4508	206-6946	dball@dublin.oh.us
Colleen Gilger City Manager Legislative Affairs Police Courts Law	410-4504	206-5797	cgilger@dublin.oh.us
Cristie Keller Economic Development Engineering Planning Building Standards Accounting/Auditing Tax	410-4506	402-0546	ckeller@dublin.oh.us

Division of Community Relations

General Number	410-4545
Fax	410-4535

Who Responds to Media Inquiries?

Anyone can respond – but you are responsible for what you say !

- **PURPOSE**
  To identify which staff members respond to media inquiries.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  Every attempt should be made by department directors or their designee to respond promptly and accurately to all media inquiries. Department directors and identified management level staff are authorized to serve as liaisons to media representatives regarding policy issues. Non-management staff may respond to routine factual information relating specifically to their function.

- **SPOKESPERSON**
  The department director or his/her designated division director or employee who has direct knowledge of an issue or event may respond to media inquiries.

  When appropriate, including on an ongoing basis, the City Manager or department director may designate a spokesperson to respond to an issue of major significance to the community to ensure that information is disseminated swiftly and accurately to all interested media sources. When such a designation is made, the City Manager or Director of Community Relations will notify the department directors to forward all inquiries regarding a particular issue to the appropriate spokesperson.

- **CITY COUNCIL AND BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS**
  City Council and Board and Commission members respond to media inquiries at their own discretion and should realize that the media is contacting them as a community representative.

  Members of Council and its Boards and Commissions should declare if their response is on behalf of the entire Council, Board or Commission, or if they are speaking as an individual. The Mayor is usually the spokesperson for City Council and the chairperson of a Board or Commission usually serves as its chief spokesperson.

  Members of City Council and its Boards or Commissions are encouraged to notify other members if they plan to write an editorial, letter to the editor or issue an individual media release and then provide the Director of Community Relations advance copies. City Council members should notify the Mayor and/or City Manager if they have been contacted by the media, excluding the *Dublin News* and *Dublin Villager*. Board and Commission members should notify appropriate City staff or the Director of Community Relations if they have been contacted by the media (other than the above stated). If, however, the inquiry relates to a controversial, a potentially controversial or unusual topic, the City Manager, the appropriate department director or the Director of Community Relations should be notified.

- **CLASSIFIED STAFF**
  There are occasions when a non-management employee's involvement in an event makes that individual a logical respondent for a media inquiry. A non-management employee may respond directly to an inquiry regarding routine factual information relating specifically to their function. If the inquiry involves policy issues, the staff member may respond after direction to do so from his or her department director (or designee) and with the department director's knowledge of the response.

- **DIVISION OF POLICE**
  It is recognized that the Division of Police receives ongoing media requests regarding daily activities. It is understood that certain incidents or events involving police intervention could be jeopardized with early or inappropriate release of information. In those situations, no information will be released without the authority of the commanding officer at the scene, the Lieutenant, Chief of Police or City Manager, unless release is otherwise mandated by the Ohio Revised Code.

  In responding to daily beat checks for police activities, the following procedures for media contact should be followed: A media request for information regarding a policy matter or field incident should be referred to the Officer in Command. When there is a fast-breaking story involving major police activity, the first media contact is the Officer in Command, Chief, Lieutenant, or designee; followed by the Director of Community Relations, the Division of Police Public Information Officer and/or City Manager.

  Throughout the entire chain of command, it is essential that each individual involved in providing information to the media is kept abreast and briefed on the status of the event as it occurs. The chain of command can be modified to expedite release of crucial information. In all cases, the Director of Community Relations and/or City Manager should be contacted immediately when a fast-breaking story occurs and called in to assist in responding to press inquiries when necessary. It should be the responsibility of the appropriate officer to keep the Director of Community Relations and/or City Manager informed of all major stories, which may be of interest to the general press.

What to do when Contacted by the Press?

- **PURPOSE**
  To provide timely response and accurate information to the media.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  All media inquiries received by the Administration should be responded to with accuracy as soon as possible, keeping in mind the frequent deadlines that are often imposed upon the working media. Be sure to only respond when you know the answer, do not speculate. Staff should be instructed to give priority to phone calls received from the media. Reasonable efforts should be made to honor deadlines; ask the reporter what his or her deadline is.

- **SCHEDULED MEDIA INTERVIEWS**
  Print Media Inquiries – Interviews with newspaper or magazine reporters are usually held over the phone or in person during a pre-scheduled interview. Prior to being interviewed, it is important to determine the focus of the story as well as the specific information desired by the reporter. Simply ask the reporter from what angle he/she is approaching the story. During the interview, always assume that all your statements are quotable even if you believe the conversation is "off the record." The reporter may also record the interview as backup information.

  Depending on the nature of the story, a photographer may accompany the reporter or schedule a follow-up session. The photographer will appreciate any assistance you can provide in appropriate photographs, which could enhance the story. If desired, staff members can decline to be photographed.

  Television Inquiries - Television is a visual medium. Television reporters will be most interested in interviewing a staff spokesperson on camera or taping an activity with high visual appeal.

  Staff members who have received a request to be interviewed on camera should notify their department directors, who will then notify the Director of Community Relations. When interviewed on-camera wear bright colors and simple patterns. Avoid light (pale) colors (white, yellow) as they do not photograph well. All interviews are subject to editing before airing.

  Radio Inquiries – Radio interviews are usually pre-taped during in-person interviews or taped over the phone. When interviewed over the phone, most reporters will ask permission before running a tape. All interviews are subject to editing before final airing.

- **UNSCHEDULED MEDIA INTERVIEWS**
  Television Inquiries – Television crews do not cover City Hall on a regular basis so reporters may be unfamiliar with the roles of specific staff members, the location of City facilities, or the background on City issues. Television crews who arrive in the City with no pre-arranged interview appointment should be directed to the Director of Community Relations or appropriate Public Information Officer for assistance. If a television crew requires footage only with no interview (commonly referred to as a B-roll), the department/division director or designee should accompany the photographer whenever possible. The name of the station and the purpose of the project should be noted and forwarded to the appropriate Public Information Officer.

Print Media Inquiries - When unsure of a response to a surprise inquiry, tell the reporter that you must check facts and that you will return the call in a prompt fashion.

Ongoing - Divisions that have ongoing daily contact with the media (e.g. Division of Police, Division of Recreation Services) are required to notify the Director of Community Relations and/or City Manger only of those media contacts which involve issues of significant concern to the City.

- **NOTE**
  Whether it is a scheduled or unscheduled interview, it is best to write your response or the information you wish to communicate. Be sure to document, in writing, your verbal contact with the media.

- **CHALLENGING REPORTERS**
  Reporters have the obligation to seek out news and then report it. Some aggressive reporters have an investigative style, posing rapid-fire questions. Remember, you are in control of the situation. You have the information the reporter wants. Think before you speak.

- **APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO THE MEDIA**
  Responding to Council Actions – Staff shall not make judgmental comments regarding individual Council members, Council actions or official City policy when responding to media inquiries. Staff should also refrain from anticipating an action or position which has not formally been taken by the City Council or City Administration. Any inquiry regarding "why" an individual Council member voted in a particular manner on a specific issue should be forwarded to the Council member in question.

Traditionally, Council members have made a practice of being fully accessible to the media. Every attempt should be made to encourage the press to directly contact the Council members for comment on Council policies and issues. Unless otherwise notified, Council members' home and work phone numbers can be given to the media. Council members' telephone numbers are available through the Clerk of Council.

Board and Commission member telephone numbers are generally available to the public. Staff should take a message and relay it to the member as soon as possible.

Scope of Response - Staff members should not respond to media inquiries that are not directly related to carrying out the employee's professional responsibilities for the City. If such a media inquiry is made, the staff member should assist the media by referring the media to the appropriate department director or, when in doubt, to the Director of Community Relations.

Inaccurate Information - The media should not be intentionally misled or provided with inaccurate or incomplete information by a staff member regarding any City policy or event.

Litigation - Staff members should not respond to media inquiries regarding an issue involving City litigation or offer legal opinions on City policies or activities. Once a case has been filed, it is public information. Media inquiries regarding filed cases should be referred to the City Law Director or the Director of Community Relations.

Personnel - Do not discuss employees or personnel actions. These requests should be directed to the Director of Human Resources or the Director of Community Relations.

News Releases

- **PURPOSE**
  To assist the media in accurately covering Official City business.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  To initiate factual announcements of official City business and distribute to the identified media.

- **RELEASE OF INFORMATION PERTAINING TO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AND EVENTS**
  It is the responsibility of department directors to notify the City Manager or the Director of Community Relations of significant events or issues that occur within their departments that may be of major interest to the general public or media.

  Such issues could include:

  - The completion of a major project and/or any unique situation involving a major project. (This includes unusual photo opportunities.)

  - An unexpected work stoppage or inability to provide a critical City service or change in a City service.

  - Major malfunctions of City equipment or in a City facility which could impact the general welfare of the public or environment of the ability of the City to provide service.

  - Newly adopted City Council policies that have an impact on the general population or target audience.

  - Economic development programs, incentives and accomplishments.

  - Programs which receive awards or grants, and City employees/City officials who receive recognition for outstanding achievement.

  - Major police activities.

  - Injury or death of a City employee/City official on or off official City duty.

  - The arrest or conviction of a City employee/City official that may impact that individual's ability to successfully carry out his/her professional responsibility.

  - New employees, promotions and terminated staff members.

  - Emergency information such as natural or man-made disasters.

  The City Manager and/or the Director of Community Relations will determine if it is appropriate to contact the City Council and other department directors. If public release of the information is deemed appropriate, the Director of Community Relations, in consultation with the department director and the City Manager, will determine the most appropriate mechanism to notify the press.

  On those occasions when the City Manager, the Director of Community Relations and Public Information Officers are unavailable, and the story is fast-breaking, the department director should use his/her own judgment in releasing information to the press. This information should then be forwarded to the Director of Community Relations.

- **PREPARATION OF TRADITIONAL NEWS RELEASES**
  Non-routine news releases shall be reviewed and distributed by the Director of Community Relations or a Public Information Officer. Routine releases, such as those prepared by the Divisions of Police or Recreation Services, and fast-breaking news updates regarding major police activity may be prepared by the appropriate division and reviewed by the Director of Community Relations or a Public Information Officer. Departments requiring news releases should provide the Director of Community Relations or the appropriate Public Information Officer with basic information in a written format as well as a distribution list (if pertinent to more than local media). When more detailed information is required, attachment of additional documents is encouraged.

- **DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS RELEASES**
  All news releases distributed by the City of Dublin should be on official City news release letterhead. The release should include the date and the name of the City staff person who can serve as a media contact for inquiries or additional information. A distribution list should accompany each release to assure correct distribution. The Division of Community Relations will maintain an updated media list of local beat reporters, Public Affairs Directors, business editors, calendar editors and wire services. News releases distributed by a department/division must be forwarded to the Division of Community Relations. News releases faxed or delivered to the Division of Community Relations should be marked either (1) distributed (date) or (2) for review by the Division of Community Relations. All filed news releases are available for review in the Division of Community Relations.

- **PURPOSE**
  To identify information available to the media and to specify information not for public disclosure.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  Media and resident requests for inspection and copying of public information and records shall be accommodated during normal business hours.
  (See Administrative Order 1.45)

  Under Ohio's Public Records Law, otherwise known as the "Sunshine Law", the media is no more or no less privileged than the general public in being provided access to City records during normal working hours. While City operations need not be disrupted or extraordinary accommodations made to provide the media access to public records, it should be emphasized that accurate information provided to the media is beneficial both to residents and the City in carrying out its public information efforts.

- **PUBLIC RECORDS**
  The media should be provided access to all records or proceedings that have been deemed to be of a public nature including, but not limited to:

  - Written record of City Council meetings, Board and Commission meetings, special ad hoc committee meetings, public hearings, etc. No official action can be taken in executive session

  - Official City contracts, ordinances and resolutions.

- Financial documents including:

  - Budget
  - Payable records
  - Copies of warrants, invoices
  - Revenue/expenditure
  - Computer printouts
  - Business license records

- Access to employee grievance hearings when the employee has requested an open hearing before the Personnel Board of Review

- Salary ranges of City employees.

- Fair political practice/conflict of interest disclosure statements filed by the Council, all Board and Commission members and affected City staff.

- Inter and Intra-office memos/letters that are not in draft form and do not address a personnel or confidential legal matter. When in doubt, contact the City Law Director.

- Inter and Intra -office memos/letters that do not address a confidential legal matter, or are otherwise exempt under the Ohio Revised Code. When in doubt, contact the City Law Director.

- The original claim for damages filed with the City where the City is a party.

- **CLOSED RECORDS**
  City records regarding issues of individual privacy, confidential legal matters, or City litigation are exempt from public disclosure. Such records include:

  - Medical records of City employees are exempt from public disclosure. (Personnel records for the most part are public records and must be released to the public. Social security numbers may be redacted from personnel files.)

  - Actual proceedings of executive sessions. (The media will be told whether the Council will be discussing a litigation, personnel or land acquisition issue). In accordance with the Brown Act, the subject of executive sessions shall be noted on the agenda.

  - Confidential memos between the City Law Director and City officials/staff (attorney/client privilege).

- **DETERMINING WHETHER A RECORD MAY BE DISCLOSED**
  In situations where there is a discrepancy or uncertainty on the part of a City employee regarding release of an official record to a member of the media -- the City Manager should be contacted to make the final determination. Specific categories of records may be exempted by the Public Records Act.

Media Coverage of City Council

- **PURPOSE**
  To ensure timely and accurate media coverage of City Council actions.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  Every effort should be made to encourage accurate media coverage of City Council, Board and Commission actions and decisions including ongoing coverage of routine City Council, Council Committee, Board and Commission meetings and special sessions.

- **PUBLICATION OF AGENDA**
  The agendas for all City Council, Board and Commission meetings are furnished to The *Columbus Dispatch, Dublin Villager, Dublin News* and the *Delaware Gazette*. Preparation and placement of the agenda is the responsibility of the Clerk of Council.

- **DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA PACKETS TO MEDIA**
  City Council meeting packets are prepared by the Clerk of Council for the beat reporters of The *Columbus Dispatch, Dublin Villager, Dublin News* and the *Delaware Gazette*. They will also be distributed, upon request to any other media outlet.

  Staff reports, budget information, issue papers, etc. shall be made available to the media upon distribution to City Council.

- **AUDIOTAPE COVERAGE OF MEETINGS**
  Audiotape recordings of City Council and Board and Commission meetings is allowed provided it does not disrupt the proceedings in progress as determined by the Mayor or meeting chairperson.

- **THE OHIO SUNSHINE LAW**
  The Sunshine Law requires the City to provide a notice 24 hours in advance to those media contacts who have requested notification of City Council meetings. Such notification must also include the purpose or agenda for the meeting.

  Exemptions from the 24-hour meeting notice requirement include City Council meetings called to address an emergency situation such as work stoppage, disaster or other activities that, in the opinion of the majority of City Council, impair public health or safety.

  When meeting notification is required, it is the responsibility of the Clerk of Council to coordinate the distribution of the notice to the appropriate media.

- **MEDIA ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**
  Media representatives are encouraged to attend and report on actions taken at City Council/Council Committee meetings, work sessions and regularly scheduled Board and Commission meetings. Reasonable accommodations should be made to facilitate their coverage (i.e. a media table, access to outlets for laptops, space for TV cameras, etc.) provided this does not distract or disrupt the proceedings as determined by the Mayor or meeting chair.

- **VIDEOTAPE COVERAGE OF MEETINGS**
  Videotape recordings of City Council and Board and Commission meetings are allowed provided they do not disrupt the proceedings in progress as determined by the Mayor or meeting chairperson. Anyone wishing to videotape a City Council, Board or Commission meeting must notify the Clerk of Council or the Director of Community Relations for approval prior to the meeting. Should any staff member be aware that a videotape recording is being made, he or she must notify their department director. The department head will forward this information to the Director of Community Relations.

  Requests for recording Mayor's Court proceedings shall be in writing and made in advance of the proceeding. Upon a determination by the Mayor that such a recording will not distract participants or interfere with the achievement of a fair trial or hearing, the Mayor will grant written permission to allow such recording.

Correcting Information Released by the Media

- **PURPOSE**
  To correct inaccurate media reports on City business.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  The City of Dublin has the responsibility to clarify or correct any information released by the media that contains inaccuracies regarding a City-related issue. In meeting this responsibility, the City recognizes that the role of the media is to provide information to the public -- a goal that may result in the release of media stories that may not always reflect favorably on City policies or operations.

- **FACTUAL DISCREPANCIES**
  It is the responsibility of the department directors to contact the media when a story has been published or aired containing a factual error that significantly impacts the public's perception of the issue being discussed. Depending on the nature of the error, the request for correction could be made by written letter or an informal phone call.

  Directors should immediately notify the Director of Community Relations or Public Information Officers; Council members should immediately notify the City Manager if they believe incorrect information is being communicated by the press regarding a City program or issue.

  The Director of Community Relations can approach the media or assist in formulating an approach to media corrections.

- **EDITORIAL DISCREPANCIES**
  Department directors should contact the Director of Community Relations when a specific editorial comment or news story has been published or aired which does not adequately represent a balanced perspective of the issue being discussed. The City Manager and/or Director of Community Relations will determine if an official City rebuttal or response is appropriate.

- **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**
  When appropriately presented, letters to the editors of newspapers and electronic media can be effective tools in clarifying a misconception of City policies or programs or correcting inaccurate information which has been reported by the press.

  Those department directors who believe, as a public official, that a City rebuttal is warranted should discuss their concerns with the City Manager or Director of Community Relations. The Director of Community Relations will determine if a response is appropriate as well as who should prepare and sign the letter. The City Manager must review all letters to the editor sent by City employees in their official capacities.

- **RESPONDING TO MEDIA STORIES AS PRIVATE CITIZENS**
  The following guidelines should be followed for those employees who choose to contact, initiate or respond to City-related news stories as private citizens.

  - Letters may not be prepared on City time, distributed on City stationary, or mailed at City expense.

  - Telephone contact may not be made on City time using City telephones.

  - Use of City facilities or supplies is prohibited.

  - Responses or letters shall not include the employee's official title or intimate that the response is on behalf of the City.

  - Statements made to the press shall not disrupt public meetings or interfere with the City Manager or his designee in carrying out the day-to-day management responsibilities of the City.

- **EMPLOYEE GROUPS**
  The above guidelines also pertain to employees responding or initiating press contact as official representatives of City-sanctioned employee groups.

Press Conference

- **PURPOSE**
  A press conference can only be convened at the direction of the City Manager or Director of Community of Relations.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  On occasion, it may be appropriate to call a press conference to announce a major City decision or to respond to an issue of general interest to the media.

  Staff members who believe they have an item that warrants a press conference should contact the Director of Community Relations or appropriate Public Information Officer. The Public Information Officer will make the necessary arrangements and contacts.

Handling Emergencies, Problems or Sensitive Situations

- **Immediately report to the City Manager, department director and the Director of Community Relations any issue that could have a negative impact on the City's public image.**

  This includes errors, coverups, litigations, embarrassing incidents, mismanagements, disgruntled employees who complain to the media, important personnel actions such as firings or layoffs, or conflicts with other agencies or among key people.

- **Gather all relevant facts and background information and ask others to do the same**.

  Be prepared to discuss all aspects of the issue, including legal aspects. Anticipate community, public, political and staff reactions. Prepare a simple written statement about the problem and what you are doing about it. If the situation demands it, you then have a carefully prepared statement ready to give to an inquisitive reporter or other concerned citizens or group.

- **The Director of Community Relations or Public Information Officer will work with you in determining a plan of action in dealing with the media**.

  This plan will include:

  - Determining the best way to release any information, including when, by whom and where. The Director of Community Relations or Public Information Officer can help you by writing and issuing a news release, calling reporters, or, if necessary, arranging a news conference.

  - Designating one or more spokespersons on the issue and, if more than one, ensuring that they speak with "one voice."

  - Providing timely updates to the media for a "developing" situation. Be sure the spokespersons receive accurate, up-to-date information. If you have inaccurate, out-of-date information, the public loses confidence in the departments' ability to respond to problems. It is advisable to keep apprised of situations versus having the media "uncover" them. Once a departments or the City's credibility is lost, it can take years to regain.

  - Informing any other affected department or individuals of what happened and what the spokesperson is going to say.

- **Avoid direct confrontation with vocal or emotional opponents in front of reporters.**

  Resolve such differences privately whenever possible. Avoid being defensive or emotional in public. Stick to the facts of your position in a calm and courteous manner. Stress areas of agreement and your hope for working things out.

Providing Information to the Media

- **BASIC NEWS RELEASE**
  This one–to-two page document provides factual information about an upcoming meeting, action of City Council, Board or Commissions, new project or program, park opening or special event, money saving activity, honor received, etc. There are as many topics for news releases as there are City programs and activities.

- **FEATURE NEWS RELEASE**
  Used infrequently, featured news releases have lots of direct quotations and are almost a complete full-length article.

- **FACT SHEET**
  A bullet-type list of facts that is attached to a short news release providing background information to aid a reporter in writing a story. Developing a fact sheet ensures officials involved in an event or project are talking about the same thing.

- **PHOTOS WITH NEWS RELEASE**
  When available, photos are provided with news releases. The quality of photos must be excellent with very sharp focus. The names (and titles) of everyone in the photo must be included. Electronic files (TIFs, JPEGS, etc.) must be high resolution images of the highest quality.

- **PHOTO OPPORTUNITY ALERT**
  This lets newspaper and television photo and assignment editors know the time and place when something particularly visual is occurring, such as the opening of a new road, preparing for a special event, children participating in a new program, etc.

- **PRESS KIT OR PACKET OF INFORMATION**
  For major projects, such as groundbreakings, new partnerships, a special event or new City service, a press kit can be prepared with a news release, fact sheet, architect drawings, maps, charts or photographs to give complete information.

- **STORY IDEA**
  Sometimes reporters call the Division of Community Relations and ask for ideas for feature stories. When departments have an activity or program that they think the public would find interesting, they should alert the Director of Community Relations.

- **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)**
  A very short statement usually concerning an upcoming event, it will read without editing over the air at a radio station. PSA's are usually 30, 60 or 90 seconds in length and must include a telephone number for listeners to call and obtain more information.

Professional Publications

- **PURPOSE**
  The City encourages articles written on innovative City programs in professional publications.

- **GENERAL POLICY**
  The City encourages all employees to contribute articles to professional publications and journals, both as a means of enhancing personal development and highlighting City achievements.

- **PROFESSIONAL ARTICLES**
  Employees are encouraged to submit articles promoting City services/programs to the appropriate professional journals. Copies of all articles should be forwarded to the department director, Director of Community Relations or Public Information Officer for review and comment prior to submittal for publication. The name of the publication and the tentative publication date should also be noted.

- **ASSISTANCE BY THE DIVISION OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS**
  The Division of Community Relations is available to review and edit articles scheduled for publication in professional journals when a request is made within a reasonable time frame.

- **PUBLISHED ARTICLES**
  It is the responsibility of the department or division director to forward a copy of the published article to the appropriate Public Information Officer.