

PDC

PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Administrative Policy

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Approved By: Donald F. Mazziotti, Executive Director	Supersedes: No. 02.04 02.09, 03.06, 03.07

PDC recognizes that the key to building positive and lasting partnerships with the community requires effective two-way communication.

In order to provide the **highest quality customer service** to the Portland City Council, PDC Board of Commissioners, strategic partners, the media and the general public, it is important that communications by PDC staff are carried out with appropriate protocol and responsiveness.

A. Principles.

1. PDC partners and stakeholders are entitled to timely and accurate information about Commission decisions, projects, programs and initiatives; and to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect.
2. PDC will take the initiative to ensure clear and complete information is available to the public regarding decisions and decision-making processes.
3. Communications will be designed and carried out in ways that are clear and easy to understand, paying special attention to the audience affected by an issue or decision.
4. Input and feedback from stakeholders and the public will be sought and considered openly and honestly and without bias.

B. **General.** All staff members are encouraged to freely communicate with elected officials, colleagues, customers, members of the public and organizations according to these guidelines.

1. Provide **high quality customer service** by responding to external and internal inquiries or requests in a timely and courteous manner.
 - a) Voice-mail and e-mail messages requiring a response should be responded to on the same business day if possible; or at least by the end of the next business day.
 - **Note:** *in some cases the information requested may not be available in this timeframe, so keep the customer informed of when it can be expected.*
 - b) Voice mail announcements should follow one of the approved scripts contained in the [Communications Handbook](#) and in all cases provide the caller with instructions on how to contact a “live” person during regular business hours.
 - c) When absent from the office for any extended time (e.g., all day) leave an appropriate “extended absence” voice mail announcement and “out of office”

- e-mail message that explains your absence and provides directions on contacting alternative staff for assistance.
- d) The manner of communications should be appropriate to the circumstance.
 - e) The style and tone of all communications should be professional and respectful to all parties involved, including the general public. In other words, do not use jargon, slang, profane, vulgar or offensive language; or make personally disparaging remarks.
2. Make certain that information conveyed is accurate, complete and consistent.
 3. If you are the first PDC staff person contacted by a customer, you “own” that customer and are responsible for seeing that they receive the information or assistance they need; OR
 4. Personally determining who – within PDC or other City Bureau – can provide the customer with what they need and connecting the customer with that individual.
 - **NOTE:** *no more than ONE handoff is our goal.*
 5. Verify information with a manager, director or Public Affairs staff as appropriate to assure complete and consistent disclosure to all inquiries.
 6. Periodically review PDC communications policies.
 7. At all times adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice and professional competence.
 8. Keep supervisors and managers informed of significant communications on active or controversial matters to enable the best possible service.
 9. Be aware that all documented communications are public records to be maintained in accordance with PDC records managements policies and procedures
- C. **Directors and Managers** have a special responsibility to:
1. Keep subordinate staff informed of key developments, initiatives and decisions affecting their work, working conditions or the organization.
 2. Foster and champion open and honest two-way communications with and between staff at all levels and across all departments; and partners and stakeholders
 3. Provide regular and continuous feedback and guidance to subordinates on individual performance and professional development.
 4. At least quarterly, review this policy with all subordinates and assess staff's performance in meeting the principles and objectives of this policy.
 5. Demonstrate, by example, **high quality customer service.**
- D. **Confidential Matters.** Items of a confidential or litigious nature should not be disclosed either internally or externally without proper authorization, including but not limited to the following:
1. Personal information about PDC clients, employees, Commissioners, or advisory committee members (e.g., phone numbers, addresses, salaries, medical conditions, etc.).

2. Personal or proprietary information about individuals or entities contained in applications or proposals.
3. Information about ongoing negotiations for real property acquisition or disposition, or financial assistance.
4. Any active or pending litigation or legal proceeding.

NOTE: Requests for any of the above information should be referred to the Legal Department per the [Public Records Access Policy](#).

E. City Council

1. **The Executive Director** is responsible for:
 - a) Keeping the Mayor and members of the City Council informed of Commission programs, projects and initiatives.
 - b) Informing the Council of PDC positions and policies on relevant issues.
 - c) Obtaining direction from the Council on programs, projects and initiatives.
 - d) Committing the Commission to undertake new projects or initiatives requiring staff resources or financial expenditures.
 - e) Reviewing and approving the distribution of reports or other material prepared by or for PDC regarding the status of on-going projects specifically intended for the Mayor or any member of the City Council (as opposed to such reports prepared for public distribution to citizen advisory committees or at public meetings).
2. **All staff** are responsible for:
 - a) Responding in a timely manner to questions from City Council members or their staff regarding matters of fact, or project history and status; and in doing so,
 - (i) making certain the information conveyed is accurate and timely; and
 - (ii) reporting the information provided to his or her manager and director so they are aware of the communication and can assure complete responses.
 - b) Referring to the Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director communications from City Council Members, or their staff, which involve or relate to:
 - (i) Commission or administrative policies.
 - (ii) Personnel matters or issues.
 - (iii) A request for the expenditure of PDC resources including staff time.

F. PDC Board of Commissioners

1. In order to fulfill their responsibilities, **PDC Commissioners** may:
 - a) Access, through the Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director, to any information or records of the Commission.
 - b) Directly communicate with internal or external auditors, at any time.

- c) Directly contact staff to get project status reports, public information or other factual information related to an ongoing project or program.
2. **The Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, and Executive Assistant to the Commission** are responsible for:
 - a) Keeping the Board informed of Commission programs, projects and initiatives.
 - b) Directing requests for information from PDC Commissioners to appropriate staff for timely response.
 - c) Reviewing and approving the distribution of reports or other material prepared by, or for, PDC specifically for the Board of Commissioners (as opposed to reports prepared for public distribution to citizen advisory committees or at public meetings) regarding the status of on-going projects
 3. **All staff** are responsible for:
 - a) Responding in a timely manner to questions from Commissioners; and in doing so,
 - (i) making certain the information conveyed is accurate and timely; and
 - (ii) reporting to the Executive and Deputy Executive Director, supervisors or directors, and the Public Affairs Manager the information provided to a Commissioner so that they are aware of the communication and can provide whatever additional information or support is appropriate.
 - b) Consulting with the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director or Executive Assistant to the Commission before initiating any contact with a Commissioner other than responding to a request for information.
- G. **Media.** Managing media relations is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Director and staff.
1. All inquiries by media representatives are to be directed to the Public Affairs Department for coordination of a response; except that immediately following public meetings, staff should feel free to provide media representatives in attendance with clarifying information or details about matters presented at the meeting. [SEE: [Communications Handbook](#) for additional guidance.]
 2. All press releases or other contact with media seeking publicity or coverage of a project activity or event is the responsibility of Public Affairs. [SEE: [Communications Handbook](#) for additional guidance.]
- H. **Publications and Documents.** In the normal course of business, PDC produces a variety of printed materials for distribution to stakeholders and/or the general public.
1. In order to maintain consistency of information, present an appropriate image and level of quality, and assure the most cost-effective means of printing and distribution, Public Affairs is responsible for reviewing and assisting in the production of all formal internal and external publications and documents (e.g., Newsletters, Plans, Reports, Brochures, Fact Sheets, Process Manuals).
 2. Staff desiring to produce such materials should consult with Public Affairs early in the project to discuss ideas, timing, budget, etc.; and refer to the [Communications Handbook](#) for additional guidance on developing the materials.

3. In order to initiate work on a project, staff must submit a [Graphics Work Request Form](#) (located on IRA) to Public Affairs. Public Affairs staff will develop a work plan for producing and distributing the material, and will generally be responsible for all production phases of the publication.
- I. **Graphic Standards.** The Public Affairs Director is authorized to establish and maintain graphics standards for all visual or printed communications or materials produced or authorized by PDC.
- a) All staff are responsible for following these standards.
 - b) Public Affairs will maintain these standards in a [PDC Graphics Standards Guide](#).
- J. **Websites.**
1. Public Affairs is responsible for approval and management of the design and content of both the internal and external PDC websites.
 2. Staff members are responsible for preparing and providing Public Affairs with updated content pertinent to their specific area of responsibility or project.
- K. **Signs.** The installation of PDC project sponsorship signs at construction sites is encouraged, and should normally be a condition of all agreements in which PDC is providing funding to a development project.
1. Project managers are responsible for identifying the need and timing for signs.
 2. Public Affairs is responsible for the design and production of all signs.
- L. **Public Displays.** Public Affairs is responsible for the design and production of all exhibits or displays that are used to promote PDC activities, projects or programs.
- M. **Business Correspondence.**
1. The Executive Assistant to the Executive Director is responsible for developing and publishing guidelines regarding the use and formatting of various types of business correspondence. [SEE: [Correspondence Style Guide](#) on IRA]
 2. All staff are responsible for following these standards for all PDC business correspondence.
- N. **Electronic Communications.** Communication via modern electronic technology has become an essential and useful resource for use in conducting PDC business. PDC employees are provided tools such as electronic mail ("e-mail") and calendar management ("Outlook") for use in conducting PDC business on PDC-owned equipment. All equipment is business equipment owned by PDC and all communications and activity conducted on that equipment is PDC property.
1. All electronic communications, including any attachment, is a public record (ORS 192) and is subject to inspection and disclosure, and scheduled retention and disposition.
 2. An employee should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality for anything they create, store, send or receive on PDC-owned computer equipment.
 3. PDC retains the right to monitor employee use of its equipment in any way deemed necessary to assure compliance with PDC policies and procedures; with or without notice.

4. No employee shall read electronic communications received by another employee when there is no business purpose for doing so.
 5. No employee shall send electronic communications under another employee's name without authorization.
 6. No employee shall change any portion of a previously sent electronic communications message without authorization.
 7. Electronic communications shall not be used for personal gain, outside business activities, political activity, fundraising, or charitable activity not sponsored by PDC.
 8. Electronic communications shall not be used to promote discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, political affiliation, religion, disability or sexual preference; promote sexual harassment; or promote a personal, political or religious business or belief.
 9. Send 'broadcast messages' sparingly, and only with authorization. A broadcast message to all PDC staff should be approved by a Department Director. A broadcast message to all DEPARTMENT staff should be approved by a supervisor.
 10. SEE: [E-Mail Standards and Etiquette](#) for more information on the proper use of e-mail.
- O. **Training.** All employees will receive training on this policy upon initial employment and periodically thereafter.