



ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

Office of the City Administrator

Number	503
Sections	1-7
Effective Date	4/21/08
Responsible Department	Administration
Review Date	4/21/13

SUBJECT: Press Policy

1. **Purpose:** This Administrative Regulation is to establish a procedure for communicating with the public through the mass media, including print and electronic media. It is established to ensure press access to proper sources of information and to assist the department in presenting information to the public.
2. **Authority:** Huntington Beach City Charter Section 401.
3. **Application:** This Regulation applies to all departments and personnel.
4. **Definitions:**
 - 4.1. Written communications include news releases, fax transmissions containing release of news, photographs, charts, graphs, video or film presentations of information, announcements, and all other graphic and written materials about the city and its operations intended for public distribution through the mass media.
 - 4.2. Immediate communications include communications by telephone or in person by members of the mass media.
 - 4.3. Mass media includes newspapers, magazines, special publications, advertising, radio, television, cable television, and all employees of such media who can and will make news available to the public through print or electronic means.
5. **Policy:**
 - 5.1. The Public Information Office has direct responsibility for information released to the press that is written, graphic or electronic in form.
 - 5.1.1. The departmental spokespersons will have responsibility for releasing information to the press when requested to do so by telephone or in face-to-face meetings with reporters.
 - 5.1.2. The City Administrator may designate the Public Information Officer or any other officer to be the city's exclusive spokesperson on any issue the administrator feels could best be handled by a single spokesperson.

- 5.1.3. Police and Fire Departments may issue press releases concerning the news events with which they are concerned and all departments may issue news releases in cases of emergencies, subject to the organization and regulations governing operations in the Emergency Operations Center.
 - 5.2. The Public Information Office is available to assist departments in press relations including putting information into proper form for distribution to the mass media through the customary methods including press conferences, if required.
 - 5.3. Release of information which involves multi-departments, the city council, city policy matters, etc., shall be submitted to the Public Information Office for review and release to the press.
 - 5.4. Timeliness is one of the key elements of news so departments requiring services of the PIO should notify the office of possible news events or need for news release at the earliest possible moment to ensure proper press coverage.
- 6. Responsibilities:**
- 6.1. Each Department Head shall designate at least one employee to act as liaison to the Public Information Office for the purpose of making information on the operations of the department available to the public through the press. The liaison shall be responsible for the accuracy of news releases and conformance with departmental policies. Department Heads, including elected officials, may designate themselves as department spokespersons.
 - 6.2. In the case of telephone or in-person contacts with the press, department employees shall refer the caller to the department employees designated by the Department Head as press liaison, or to the Public Information Officer.
 - 6.3. The liaison (or liaisons) is to present factual information in response to questions to the press, if the liaison has such information, and promptly inform the Public Information Office of the contact so that follow-up information may be presented to the press, if necessary.
 - 6.4. The Public Information Officer will establish a list of contacts in the various media serving the city with the assistance of the various departments, determine the needs and requirements of each publication or electronic medium for the purpose of making information available to the public through the media.
 - 6.5. The Public Information Office will research information presented by the departmental liaison to ensure accuracy and conformance with city policies, prepare the information in the forms needed by the various media, and distribute the information to the media with due regard for deadlines to ensure even service to the press.
 - 6.6. Departmental liaisons will make every effort to get information to the Public Information Office so that photographs can be made available to the press outlets which use such material.
 - 6.7. The Public Information Officer will send copies of news releases, photographs, etc., to the originating department and will furnish clippings from the various media to the department as the clippings become available.

- 7. Distribution of Forms:** Forms to facilitate the organization of facts to be presented to the public will be distributed to each department by the Public Information Office. In addition, forms for requesting photography and video services will be distributed to the departmental liaison.



Paul Emery, Interim City Administrator