

**TITLE II  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

**CHAPTER 19 MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**19.01 GENERAL PROVISION – PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Media Relations Policy and Procedure is to assist the Flower Mound Town Council, Board and Commission members, and staff in utilizing the Town’s designated Public Information Officers (PIO) to assist in media relations and emergency response information distribution.

**19.02 MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY**

Governmental entities typically have more direct contact with the news media than other organizations. Interaction with the media impacts how citizens, the business community, and other stakeholders and external organizations perceive the Town. The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform strategy governing written and verbal communication with the news media that provides consistent, accurate, and timely information regarding Town initiatives, projects, programs, and facilities. Following the Media Relations Policy and Procedure will ensure employees maximize media coverage and effectively communicate community goals, enhance customer service, and ensure the public is accurately informed.

**19.03 GENERAL POLICIES**

- A. Specific positions in the Community Affairs Division, Police Department, and Fire Department are designated PIOs authorized to represent the Town in the media.
- B. The Flower Mound Police Department (FMPD) has designated four Duty Chief/PIO positions. The FMPD maintains a twenty-four-hour a day on-call schedule providing PIO coverage and media response for all FMPD issues. To centralize media contact, the FMPD will maintain a single on-call phone to be carried by the designated on-call PIO. In addition, FMPD-related media inquiries may also be directed to the designated PIO by Flower Mound’s 9-1-1 Communications Center.
- C. The Flower Mound Fire Department (FMFD) has designated a supervisory PIO position and a secondary PIO position. The FMFD will maintain a twenty-four-hour a day on-call schedule providing PIO coverage and media response for all FMFD issues. FMFD-related media inquiries will be directed to the designated FMFD PIO by Flower Mound’s 9-1-1 Communications Center.

- D. Flower Mound's Community Affairs Division (FMCAD) will staff a designated supervisory PIO position as well as a secondary PIO position. The FMCAD will maintain a twenty-four-hour a day on-call schedule providing PIO coverage and media response for all non-Fire Department and non-Police Department related Town issues. Non-Fire Department and non-Police Department media inquiries may be directed to the designated FMCAD PIO by Flower Mound's Emergency Response Dispatchers.
- E. All of Flower Mound's designated PIOs will be cross-trained on a variety of Town issues and will offer inter-departmental media relations coverage and assistance when required or requested (i.e. large-scale media events, unfilled PIO positions, or an extended leave of absence).
- F. The Town will incorporate a hybrid methodology of media relations combining "One Voice" and "Field Expert" strategies that evaluate individual media inquiries and allow personnel to respond accordingly. When utilizing the "Field Expert" method, additional Town personnel identified by a designated PIO may be authorized to represent the Town in the media.
- G. All official Town of Flower Mound documents created specifically for distribution to the media, including press releases, media notifications, and Tip Sheets, require approval of the appropriate designated PIO prior to distribution.
- H. A designated PIO or a departmental/divisional director will coordinate all requests for interviews. Should the departmental/divisional director be contacted directly, they are asked to inform the appropriate designated PIO of the media interview prior to conducting the interview.
- I. A designated PIO from the FMPD, FMFD, and the FMCAD will remain on-call at all times and will be available to assist any staff member with media interaction or facilitate an interview upon request.
- J. When possible, a designated PIO should be notified of upcoming print or broadcast media stories regarding any subject in which the Town is involved.
- K. Employees being interviewed about the field in which they are trained are perceived as more credible than a "PIO" speaking on the same topic. Depending on the comfort level of all involved parties, employees may choose to work directly with the media or with a designated PIO, with departmental/divisional director approval.
- L. In accordance with local and state-wide emergency response mutual aid agreements, designated PIOs from other entities may be utilized to assist with media relations efforts and designated Flower Mound PIOs may be utilized to represent other entities in the media when necessary.

**19.04      TOWN COUNCIL, BOARD, OR COMMISSION MEMBER INTERVIEW REQUESTS/ MEDIA COVERAGE NOTIFICATION AND PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES**

**A. Town Council and Board or Commission Member Media Interview Requests**

When a media representative contacts staff and requests to interview a specific Town Council, Board, or Commission member, staff will contact the requested party directly, offer to facilitate the interview, and provide any necessary information. If the media representative requests to interview a Town Council, Board, or Commission member, but does not specify a particular person, staff will contact members of that body in order of executive titles and seniority.

In regards to the Town Council, the Mayor will be contacted first, the Mayor Pro-Tem would be contacted second, and the Deputy Mayor Pro-Tem would then be contacted if the previous Town Council members were not available. If all three executive positions are unavailable, staff will then begin to contact Town Council members in order of seniority until the interview request is satisfied.

**B. Town Council and Staff Media Coverage Notification**

The Town Council, Executive Staff, and other relevant staff members will receive an email from an on-call PIO regarding breaking news of an emergency nature, a significant crime incident, a fatality accident, or an issue of significant and immediate Town-wide interest. An immediate email notification will also be issued in the event a current Town Council member participates in a television or radio broadcast interview of a news nature. Every reasonable effort will be made to distribute the email notification prior to the anticipated TV or radio broadcast, print distribution, or digital posting of the coverage or a current Town Council member interview. Weekly notification regarding routine media coverage of Flower Mound programs, projects, and initiatives, or interviews that do not involve a current Town Council member, will be provided to the Town Council and Executive Staff on Fridays via the Weekly Briefing and on the media clip archive.

**C. Press Releases**

All press releases which contain information that would warrant coverage in print or broadcast media will be approved by the Town Manager. Media releases considered simply informational in nature regarding a Town event, program, facility, etc., can be released with departmental/divisional approval.

**19.05      MEDIA / PUBLIC EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

Occasionally, incidents occur in Town that directly affect all, or significant segments of, the community. Preparing to accurately respond to public and/or media inquiries regarding the incident in a timely manner is crucial. This policy provides a

procedure for communication with the public and/or media during times of emergency incidents. For the purposes of this policy, an incident is defined as an occurrence that affects a large number of residents or attracts significant media attention. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Water main break
- Closure of a major roadway
- Floods, tornadoes, or other natural disasters
- Evacuation efforts
- Emergency situations that attract media attention

A. Incident Notification

It is the responsibility of the Town employee who is first made aware of a major incident to report the situation to their immediate supervisor or a departmental/divisional director. The departmental/divisional director should immediately notify a designated PIO if the incident is attracting media attention or has the potential to affect a large number of residents, and efficiently distributing information to a mass audience would minimize the community-wide impact.

B. Information Gathering

For the purpose of informing the public or media, the departmental/divisional director is responsible for providing all pertinent facts surrounding the incident including the nature of the emergency, the potential number of people it will affect, and an initial assessment of injuries or damage. In addition, an estimate on the duration of the emergency, the geographic region that is immediately being affected, and a resolution timeframe and course of action may be required. After the information is obtained by the departmental/divisional director, he or she shall immediately contact a designated PIO in the relevant department as outlined in Section 19.03 of this Policy and Procedure.

C. A designated PIO located at the incident site or command center will review the information and, based on the circumstances of the incident, relay it to the media through the appropriate means. Methods of communication may include, but are not limited to, press releases, media calls, press briefings, Web site postings, and/or broadcast on the Town's cable channel.

D. Should the incident occur after standard business hours, the departmental/divisional director should make contact with the appropriate on-call designated Fire Department, Police Department, or Community Affairs PIO. If that representative is not immediately available, the department head may contact the Police Department and Fire Department 9-1-1 Communications Center for assistance in contacting a designated PIO.

- E. The departmental/divisional director will remain in contact with the responding designated PIO as defined above until the incident has been corrected and citizens are no longer directly affected.

## **19.06      GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- A. As a municipal employee, it is important to consider confidentiality requirements when working directly with the media. Media representatives inquiring about sensitive topics such as personnel or legal issues should be immediately referred to a designated PIO or departmental/divisional director.

- B. The following guidelines help make media contact a more positive and beneficial experience.

- Three guidelines to successful media relations are:
  1. Be available
  2. Be informative
  3. Be honest
- Reporters vary greatly in their level of experience and expertise. The person conducting the interview may be an inexperienced reporter who is still learning the trade or a seasoned journalist. Every interaction with a reporter will be different and no situation or media representative should be underestimated or overestimated.
- Answer all questions accurately and concisely. Reporters often must fit their information into a compressed space or airtime.
- Reporters are typically on a tight deadline. It often benefits the employee, and ultimately the Town, to respect a reporter's deadline and attempt to promptly return phone calls and provide information.
- Reporters are often asked to report on topics about which they know little. They are likely not trained in the area in which you work, whether it is law enforcement techniques, engineering standards, bond elections, or any other municipal-related topic.
- Know your message prior to the interview and bridge to it often. Use related questions to emphasize the important points you would like to make.
- If you do not know an answer to a question, be honest and tell the reporter that you need to obtain that information. Write down the

question, offer to get back to the reporter with the accurate information, and ensure you follow-up.

- Complimenting good, accurate, and fair stories can go a long way in establishing productive media relationships with the reporters who cover the Town on a regular basis.
- Be aware of leading questions. Do not let a reporter put words into your mouth. Do not speak just to fill up silence. Reporters will sometimes remain silent, hoping you will say more.
- There is no such thing as "off the record." Do not for any reason make off the record, off-the-cuff, or sarcastic remarks before, during, or after an interview. Tape recorders and cameras are often left on to capture these remarks. If you do not want to read it in print or hear it on a news broadcast, do not say it.
- Treat all reporters equally all the time. National broadcast media should be given the same information as the reporter who works for the local newspaper who you see everyday.
- Never leak information or tell a reporter something in confidence.
- Do not be afraid to end an interview on your terms.
- Never guess, project, suppose, or expound.

---

The Town of Flower Mound Media Relations Policy and Procedure is hereby approved this 22nd day of February, 2012.

*Signed (original located in HR Master File)*  
Harlan Jefferson, Town Manager

# Emergency Incident Information Report

This form is designed to be a guide when collecting information for release to the media/public during an emergency incident. Using this form will assist the responsible personnel in obtaining the appropriate information in a timely manner, in potentially stressful, and/or complex situations. Please keep a copy in all Town vehicles and in other appropriate places where it is easily accessible.

1. Incident: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Location: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Town Departments On Scene: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Injuries: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Damage Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Current Situation: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Current Hazards to General Public: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Potential Hazards to General Public: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Number of Personnel on Scene: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Estimated Time to Alleviate Problem: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Cause: \_\_\_\_\_
13. How Reported: \_\_\_\_\_
14. My Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Affairs Office:**

<b>Michael Ryan – Director of Community Affairs</b>	(Office)	972.874.6078
	(Mobile)	214.493.2983
<b>Molly Fox – Community Affairs Specialist</b>	(Office)	972.874.6073
	(Mobile)	214.223.0534

## Advertising Information Form

Please fill out this form with as much detail as possible when requesting an advertisement from the Community Affairs Division. This form should be turned at least two weeks before the advertisement is scheduled to run.

1. Exact Name of the Event/Program \_\_\_\_\_  
(Correct Spelling?)

2. Date in which you would like the ad to run: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Date/Time of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Location: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Sponsoring Department: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Advertising Publication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

9. Approximate Size: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Contact Person and Information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please Describe How You Would Like to Ad to Look:

---

---

---

10. Please list any special images you will be providing the Community Affairs Office:

---

---

---



## Community Affairs Special Events Checklist

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- Invitations
- Room Set-up (A/V Needs, Podium, etc..)
- Food: \_\_\_\_\_
- Departmental Contact: \_\_\_\_\_
- Posters
- FMTV Posting
- Web Page
- Print Media
- TV/Radio
- Town Council
- Town Employees
- Our Town/Under the Oak Tree Advances
- Speaker Coordination (speaking needs, hotel, travel, special menu)
- Rental
- Thank you gifts

APPENDIX C

- Staff Requirements**
- Packet Preparation**
- Contact Outside Supporting Agencies (i.e. DAR, VFW, etc.)**
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_