

City of Miami



Administrative Policy Manual

APM 01-11: Media Relations Policy

Purpose To establish a policy regarding media relations, including all interaction with the media and response to media requests for information. Media Relations is defined as communication with or information provided to all media in any form, especially information that has the potential to generate numerous inquiries or ongoing interest from the media or public.

Policy It is the policy of the City of Miami to respond to news media questions or inquiries effectively, accurately and quickly to inform its residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Office of Communications is responsible for the City's media relations, with the exception of incidents involving police, fire or public safety emergency services. The Office of Communications will serve as the sole liaison with the media, either by responding to requests for information or facilitating contact with the appropriate department managers or personnel for response. Specific guidelines for responding to media requests follow.

**City
Spokespersons**

Unless otherwise authorized, the City's spokespersons are:

- City Manager, Deputy and/or Assistant City Managers;
 - Police Department and Fire Department Public Information Officers or the respective Chiefs
 - The City Manager has sole authority to issue exceptions regarding spokespersons.
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Media Inquiries Except for media inquiries related to public safety issues involving police, fire or emergency services, all City employees must notify the Office of Communications and the employee's Department Director about all television, radio, newspaper or other media inquiries they receive and provide the Office of Communications with the reporter's name, phone number, subject of the inquiry, deadline, and other relevant information. The Office of Communications will contact the City Manager's Office and coordinate a response including designating a spokesperson after consultation with the



City Manager's Office.

City-Initiated Information

Media contact shall be initiated only by the Office of Communications. This includes contacting reporters and editors, and issuing press releases and media advisories. Departments seeking publicity for events or activities should contact the Office of Communications as early as possible.

City employees or Departments shall not initiate news media contacts or arrange news conferences and the like without prior approval from the City Manager and in consultation with the Office of Communication.

Media Initiated Information

In those instances where the media inquiries involve talk shows, radio, television, or web appearances; all responses shall receive advance approval from the City Manager, with the exception of designated spokespersons such as Director of Communications, Public Information Officers, Chief of Police and Chief of Fire.

Personal Points of View

It is recognized that all employees have the right to their personal points of view regarding any issue. However, personal points of view may conflict with the City's official policy. Therefore, City employees who write letters to the editor of any newspaper may not use official City stationary. If an employee chooses to identify himself or herself as a City employee in any personal letter or email to the editor or any other media, he or she must include language which states that the views set forth in the letter do not represent the views of the City, but rather, are the employee's personally held opinions. Similar disclaimers must be given if an employee addresses a public meeting, participates in a radio talk show, or is interviewed for a radio or television program unless the employee is officially representing the City.

Employees who represent the City in any of the above forums must identify themselves as an official spokesperson for the City after obtaining prior approval from the City Manager and in consultation with the Office of Communication.

Public Safety Issues

Because the Police and Fire Departments operate during off-business hours and weekends and their work generates a high volume of media calls, those departments have designated sworn personnel as media spokespersons and follow specific guidelines when releasing information. Any media calls to other City employees regarding incidents involving police, fire or emergency services should be referred immediately to the Police Department or Fire Department, as appropriate. All information released to the media by the Police and Fire Departments should be provided immediately to the City Manager's Office and the Office of Communications; and, when appropriate, those offices should be contacted at the time of major incidents.

Crisis or

During a crisis or a major emergency (i.e. hurricane), the City Emergency

**Emergency
Issues**

Manager (EM) in coordination with the City Manager will determine whether and when to activate the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Thereafter, the City's Public Information Officer (PIO) will coordinate press statements/releases with the City Manager and the EOC and will be responsible for disseminating information to the public and media.

Policy Number: **APM 01-11**

Date: March 22, 2018

Issued By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emilio T. Gonzalez".

Emilio T. Gonzalez
City Manager/Designee

REVISIONS

<u>REVISED SECTION</u>	<u>DATE OF REVISION</u>
Created	01/2011
Revised	07/2011
Revised	03/2018