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RIDOT 2018 Communications Policy

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation's (RIDOT) Office of Communications manages RIDOT's public information program including media relations, social media, customer service, ad campaigns, video production, events, and speech writing.

All media inquiries must be channeled through the Communications Office. If a RIDOT employee or contractor is approached by the media, it is the responsibility of the employee or contractor to not respond to media questions but to inform the inquiring party that the Communications Office will answer any questions. Employees must inform the Communications Office as soon as possible after receiving a media inquiry, when attending a public meeting or forum and media are present, and if a situation arises in which an employee speaks to the media without obtaining prior approval.

Access to RIDOT facilities by the media must be coordinated through the Communications Office. The Communications Office will not supply footage from any of the travel cameras to the media.

Generally, media interviews are done with the Director. In some instances, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Engineer, the Administrator of Project Management, Administrator of Transit or other designee approved by the Communications Office may be asked to do an interview. In some cases, the Communications Office will ask a project manager to respond to the media, but a representative of the Communications Office will sit in for the response. Either the Communications Director or the Chief Public Information Officer may respond to media inquiries.

For social media, usually one person in the Communications Office is tasked with monitoring social media. This person is empowered to respond to any factual inquiries on social media such as whether a particular road is closed. The Office of Customer Service is always empowered to respond to these types of inquiries as well. For nuanced or subjective responses, the Communications Director or Chief Public Information Office must approve the proposed response. The above guidelines apply to all locations and situations.

This policy remains in effect when receiving inquiries via e-mail, social media, or other electronic communications. Solicited or unsolicited distribution of information or documents to the media is prohibited, and may be subject to sanctions as outlined in the State of Rhode Island Acceptable Use Policy (http://www.doit.ri.gov/documents/policies/00-02_Acceptable_Use_Policy.pdf) and other policies and regulations.

Any person or persons who use profanity in social media will be blocked from social media venues. The same rules apply to constituents who contact customer service. The RIDOT Customer Service staff does not have to continue to respond to a caller who uses profanity, who harasses the Customer Service representative, or who threatens them in any way. It is the duty of the Customer Service staff to alert the Communications Director about any instances of this kind.

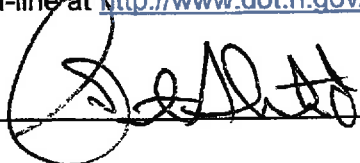
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All RIDOT staff are expected to respond to requests for information from the Communications Office to satisfy media inquiries in a timely and thorough manner. In a like manner, all RIDOT staff and contractors are expected to be an extension of the Customer Service team, to provide prompt response and service, and to treat people with whom they come in contact politely and with respect.

Printed materials produced by divisions of the department (Project management, Transit, Office of Highway Safety, etc.) that will be viewed by the public must conform to print, typeface and color standards posted online by the Communications Office. Before release, the Communications Office must sign off on these.

Outside vendors such as advertising or public relations firms, film companies or other private entities must coordinate and get approval for any messaging and or media interaction from the Communications Office. This is to maintain the integrity of the brand and to keep messaging consistent.

Media requests for information, documents, statistics and other materials are to be addressed as quickly as possible. However, requests for documents (not including RIDOT policies or documents created for the public) must complete an Access to Public Records Act (APRA) request. A copy of this form is available on-line at <http://www.dot.ri.gov/news/openrecordsrequest.php>.



Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E.
Director
Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Date: 4/26/18



Lisbeth Pettengill
Director of Communications
Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Date: 04.26.18