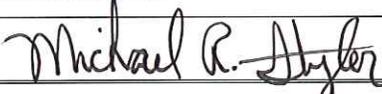


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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistent and unified communication within the Department of Natural Resources and its seven divisions when working with the media, particularly during reactive opportunities when media contacts employees without prior knowledge.

It is not designed to restrict staff from responding during prescheduled events or opportunities.

II. POLICY

While exceptions can be made for the senior leadership of the department and each division, all reactive media requests – whether coming directly or indirectly from a media outlet or representative – should be submitted to the division public information officer (PIO), regional or park supervisor/manager, incident commander or regional conservation outreach manager (DWR only) for consideration and approval. Department media inquiries should be submitted to the department communication director.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Division and Department Issues –

1. Division issues are identified as issues that remain confined or managed solely within one division with very little impact to other divisions. The vast majority of media relations and outreach will take place at this level, through the division PIOs or regional conservation outreach managers (DWR only).
2. Department issues are those that directly impact multiple divisions. These issues require additional coordination among PIOs and division leadership when considering proactive and reactive communication efforts. Oftentimes these issues will be controversial or political. Other department level topics could be identified by DNR's executive director.
3. In the event that an issue is classified as a department issue, the leadership of each involved division will be notified by the department. Coordination and strategic planning of department issues will be managed by the department communication director, or assigned to one division PIO for management. All media inquiries should be referred to him/her for cross division consideration.

B. Media Definition –

1. Media is defined as any newspaper, television, radio, magazine, trade publication, newsletter, periodical, online newsletter, blog or social media channel like Facebook and Twitter. Media does not include the personal social media site of an employee. However, staff should remember that they are viewed as representatives of the state and should use discretion when posting to their private sites.

C. Media Inquiry Procedure – *Before responding to a reporter's request, please first receive permission from your division PIO, regional or park supervisor/manager, incident commander, conservation outreach manager (DWR only) or the department communication director. The*



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following steps should be taken when contacted by a reporter, or media representative (producers, editors, news directors, etc.):

1. Express gratitude for the opportunity to be consulted on behalf of DNR or your division.
2. Politely explain that DNR's media policy requires you to contact your division PIO, regional conservation outreach manager or supervisor before you speak on behalf of the division.
3. Ask for their contact information and any deadlines DNR should be aware of. This will allow us to be considerate of their timeline. Inform the journalist that you, your supervisor or PIO, will respond promptly.
4. Forward the journalist's information and summary of the request to your PIO, conservation outreach manager and/or your supervisor immediately. If the information is emailed, follow up with a phone call – especially if the inquiry is urgent.
5. If a journalist or representative informs you that he or she has already spoken with your PIO, or another member of your division's leadership team, and received approval on your behalf, kindly tell them that you need to confirm. Call for confirmation.

D. Law Enforcement Responsibility for Release of Information -

All information concerning law enforcement operations and administrative matters including the Department of Natural Resources policies shall only be made by the executive director, department deputy director, division director, division deputy director unless delegated to another employee.

1. All employees will obtain permission from their supervisor before making any releases except as authorized.
2. Employees will only release factual information directly relating to any incident immediately within their area of responsibility. All other queries will be referred to their supervisor.

E. Law Enforcement Scope and Content of Release –

1. Information concerning the division will flow to the media in an accurate, timely, and efficient manner. However, sensitive information will be withheld - such as that which might compromise all or part of an investigation.
2. All information released in an official capacity will reflect the position of the Department of Natural Resources and it will be factual and not conjectural or speculative. If the answer to a question is not known, or information too sketchy to give a response, the employee will respond by releasing only factual information.
3. Employees will not release any information regarding arrestee's background or circumstances of the arrest if it would be prejudicial, or where the release would not serve a legitimate law enforcement purpose. Such information includes:
 - a. Observation about an arrestee's character;



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- b. Statements, admissions and confessions, or alibis attributable to an arrest;
- c. Reference to investigative procedures and/or results (e.g., fingerprints, polygraph examinations, ballistics or laboratory tests) unless authorized by the investigating officer or supervisor;
- d. Statements concerning the identity, credibility or testimony of perspective witnesses; and
- e. Statements concerning evidence or argument in the case, whether or not it is anticipated that such evidence or argument would be used at trial.

F. Law Enforcement Photographing/Video Taping –

- 1. Employees will not prevent the media or private persons from taking photographs or video taping of incidents if they have a lawful right to be in their location. But media and public may be restricted from areas which have been secured to preserve evidence or where their presence jeopardizes the operation or public safety.
- 2. The photographing or video taping of persons in officer's custody will neither be encouraged or discouraged.

G. Sensitive Issues/Emergency situations –

News releases dealing with sensitive issues or emergency situations shall be reviewed by division public information officers, Department of Natural Resources public affairs office, or the executive director's office prior to release.

H. Proactive Outreach –

- 1. All employees are encouraged to contact their supervisor or PIO with positive, innovative or proactive media ideas that may be of interest to the public. Likewise, if you become aware of a negative issue that could be made public, please provide your division PIO, supervisor or conservation outreach manager with advance notice.

I. Social Media –

- 1. Social media is considered mainstream media and is viewed by many as a credible source of news. DNR views and treats information exchanged through social media the same way it views traditional media. Excluding the personal social media platforms of each employee, DNR and division employees are asked to not engage in any social media publishing and/or discussions on outside organizational social media sites on behalf of the department or their divisions without prior authorization.
- 2. Social media includes blogs, social networks (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter), wikis, file-sharing, user-generated video and audio, virtual worlds and reader comments on online forums, including websites of traditional media, etc. Please reference existing division and Department of Technology Services guidelines for more information about the use of social media.

