



**CITY OF LITTLETON
MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY**

I. GOAL:

The City of Littleton seeks to work cooperatively with the media to disseminate information of public interest and concern in an accurate, complete and timely manner.

II. POLICY:

- (1) To achieve the city's goal, the Director of Communications is designated as the City Public Information Officer or City PIO and shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy. When the City PIO is unavailable, he or she shall designate one of the authorized city spokespersons as the Acting City PIO.
- (2) The press should be treated like a customer of the city and all city employees or officials who engage with the press shall do so in a courteous, polite and professional manner. Any media inquiries received by city staff will be referred immediately to their Department Director who, in turn, will immediately forward the contact to the City PIO for response.
- (3) Inquiries from the news media are given a high priority by the City of Littleton and should be responded to as quickly and efficiently as possible. Every effort should be made to meet media deadlines and to ensure that all information released is accurate and complete.
- (4) When contacted by the City PIO for information needed to respond to a media inquiry, all Department Directors shall immediately provide the City PIO the most accurate and complete information available for the response.
- (5) If the City PIO determines that the city's goal can best be achieved by having someone with more background or expertise speak for the city on a particular topic, he or she may designate one of the authorized spokespersons to assist with, or give the city's response.

- (6) To assure that the city's elected officials have accurate, complete and timely information to fulfill their responsibilities to represent the public in city affairs, they shall be informed by email of the substance of significant media inquiries and of the city's official response. They shall be notified of all official city press releases.

III. CITY SPOKESPERSONS:

Authorized city spokespersons that the City PIO, in his or her judgment, may designate for a particular response are:

- The City Manager, Mayor, and City Council members
- The Deputy City Manager
- The City Attorney
- All Department Directors
- The Public Relations Specialist
- The Police PIO
- The Webmaster
- Senior LFR Command
- City employees with expertise on a specific issue

IV. RECORDS REQUESTS:

- (1) Media requests for records will be handled in accordance with this policy, to the extent it is consistent with the Colorado Open Records Act §24-72-201 and Colorado Criminal Justice Records Act §24-72-301.
- (2) The City PIO will be notified of all media records requests.
- (3) He or she will then forward the request to the City Clerk who is the official custodian of all city records.
- (4) The City Clerk will be responsible to see that media records requests are handled in an accurate, complete and timely manner.
- (5) Media requests for records, other than criminal justice records, shall be made in writing on the Open Records Request form and delivered to the City Clerk. A

copy of all records provided to the media in response to the request shall be attached to the completed form and archived by the City Clerk.

- (6) The records produced in response to media requests shall be readily available for public viewing upon request.

V. PRIVILEGED AND PRIVATE INFORMATION:

- (1) The vast majority of the records and affairs of the City of Littleton are public information which citizens, including the press, have the right to know. All public information should be provided to the press upon request without unnecessary delay.
- (2) Some matters, however, like ongoing investigations, information regarding litigation or the threat of litigation, personnel issues, real estate transactions, medical and mental health matters, private data regarding citizens, documents in draft form, to name a few, are governed by privileges and laws intended to advance important public policy goals.
- (3) When a media request for an interview or for records appears to involve a subject matter that may be privileged or private, the City PIO, Police PIO or City Clerk should consult with the City Attorney. The City Attorney will review the request without delay and promptly provide counsel to staff.

VI. PERSONAL POINTS OF VIEW:

- (1) It is recognized that all employees have the right to express their personal points of view regarding matters of general public concern.
- (2) However, personal points of view may conflict with the city's official policy.
- (3) Therefore, city employees who write letters to the editor may not use official city stationary. If an employee chooses to identify himself or herself as a city employee in a letter or email to the editor, he or she must state that the views set forth in the letter do not represent the views of the city but are the employee's personal opinions.
- (4) A similar disclaimer must be given if an employee addresses a public meeting, participates in a radio talk show, or is interviewed for radio or television, unless the employee has been designated by the City PIO as a spokesperson for the city.

VII. CITY-INITIATED INFORMATION:

- (1) Proactive media contact on behalf of the city is processed through the City PIO—this includes press releases, media advisories and personal contacts with reporters and editors for coverage.
- (2) Departments seeking publicity for events or activities, or needing to collaborate with the media to communicate important information to the public, will coordinate with the City PIO.

VIII. PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES:

- (1) Because the Littleton Police Department (LPD) operates 24/7 and its work generates a high volume of media calls, it shall designate an officer or officers as LPD Public Information Officers or LPD PIO's and follow specific guidelines when releasing information.
- (2) When the City PIO is notified by a city staff member of a media call regarding a police investigation or general criminal activity, the City PIO will immediately work with the LPD PIO for the appropriate response.
- (3) All information released to the media by the LPD PIO should be reviewed by the City PIO who will forward the information by email to elected officials.
- (4) Media inquiries concerning matters of police personnel, general police policies and procedures, or in any way reflecting upon the competency or integrity of police personnel or police administration will be routed to and handled directly by the City PIO as provided in this policy.
- (5) The LPD shall respond to media requests for records concerning investigations by requiring reporters to complete an LPD Case Report Request.
- (6) In law enforcement situations, on-scene requests for media interviews will be referred to the LPD PIO. The City PIO may write and distribute press releases based on information provided by the on-scene LPD PIO.
- (7) In fire and EMS situations, on-scene requests for media interviews will be referred to the Littleton Fire Rescue Incident Commander. If the situation is within the Littleton city limits, the Incident Commander will notify the City PIO

if an interview was conducted. The City PIO may write and distribute press releases based on information provided by the on-scene Incident Commander.

- (8) In combined law enforcement/fire/EMS situations, only one person will speak on behalf of the city as determined by the City PIO.

IX. CRISIS OR EMERGENCY ISSUES:

During a crisis or major emergency (i.e. flooding, tornado, mass casualty incident, etc.), the procedure for communicating with the media is highlighted in the City's Crisis Communications Plan. The plan designates the City PIO as the main point of contact for the media. The City PIO will be assisted by alternates, including the LPD PIO, to prepare and disseminate emergency public information.