Media Policy

Date Approved: September 30, 2006	**Approved by:** General Manager PFR
	Source: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
	Category: Administration; Public Relations
	Sub-cat: Administration; General; Public Relations

Policy Statement

The Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation's media policy aims to:

· Ensure media enquiries are responded to in a timely, transparent, accurate and honest fashion

· Safeguard the Division's reputation

· Position the Division in a credible manner

· Provide an opportunity for consistent messaging

· Maximize opportunities to promote the Division and its initiatives

· Ensure materials (print or electronic) provided to the media meet a high professional standard and conform to corporate protocols and guidelines

· Provide consistency and integration with corporate direction

Designated Spokespersons

- The official spokesperson for the Division is the General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation
- The General Manager may designate an appropriate senior-level or communications staff person to respond to a specific media enquiry, or to function as the designated spokesperson on a particular project or issue. These instances are to be coordinated in advance with the communications lead in the General Manager's Office
- Staff members who have been designated to speak on a particular issue or project may respond to enquiries within their area of specialty. Other questions, particularly those pertaining to the Division as a whole, should be deferred
- All contacts with the media should be noted and reported to the GM's communications lead, or the PFR media hotline at 416-560-8726
- Those staff persons who interact with the media on a regular basis, given their position or area of expertise, will be provided with appropriate media training.

Responding to Media Enquiries and Interest

- PFR always strives to respond to media enquiries quickly, openly and accurately. Members of the media should always be dealt with professionally, respectfully and promptly
- PFR staff members who are contacted by a member of the media must contact the communications lead in the GM's office or the PFR media hotline, to arrange to be officially designated as a spokesperson or to ensure a prompt referral to the appropriate staff person
- On occasion, members of the media may turn up unexpectedly at a facility. In this instance, PFR staff is required to contact the media hotline at 416-560-8726 (staffed 24/7) for direction.

Initiating Media Contact and Distribution of Media Materials

- Only the communications lead in the General Manager's Office, or SDFA communications staff may initiate contact with the media or distribute written or photographic materials to any member of the media on behalf of the Division. This includes media advisories, releases, fact sheets and backgrounders
- PFR staff is encouraged to advise the communications lead in the General Manager's Office of initiatives or issues that may be newsworthy well in advance, so an appropriate media communications strategy can be developed to promote projects, or to proactively manage a difficult issue
- Staff members who hold voluntary positions in other organizations and associations can contact the media in those capacities. Such contact should not take place while at work or on-duty, and the staff should always identify themselves as private citizens or officers of the association/organization, not as City staff. PFR staff is advised to refer to the City's Conflict of Interest policy regarding outside activities
- In regard to events or activities which the Division co-sponsors, media activities and materials must be vetted through the communications lead in the GM's office or the SDFA Communications Unit.

Dealing with Emergency Situations

- If an emergency situation arises at a PFR location, staff should first follow the emergency procedures laid out in the Emergency Response Plan, then contact the PFR media hotline at 416-560-8726
- PFR staff members on the scene may not speak with the media unless they have been officially designated as a divisional spokesperson
- In situations involving the police, staff should refer enquiries to the most senior police official on site, and contact the PFR media hotline immediately.

Photography and Model Release Forms

- Staff should refer to the Model Release Policy for detailed information pertaining to photography and model release forms
- Requests to film, video tape, photograph or record PFR participants or patrons are to be referred to the PFR media hotline
- For news photographers or camera crews that are present covering an event which is open to the public, model release forms do not apply.

Related Documents

- *Model Release Policy*
- *Model Release Form*