

ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY
HR Policies/Procedures

Re:	MEDIA RELATIONS PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES	Policy No.:	93.0
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Application:	All Employees	Adopted:	08/22/13
		Amended	12/19/13
			06/09/15

PURPOSE

To establish sound and progressive practices intended to protect the interests and reputation of the Authority, its employees and the Commissioners, especially during crisis situations.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Authority that the Secretary to the Authority is the authorized employee having permission to speak to the media and will act as spokesperson. The Secretary to the Authority may delegate the responsibility to act as spokesperson when another staff person or a representative from the Authority's public relations firm may be better suited to answer media inquiries and/or more readily available to speak to the media.

The Authority maintains a central information center and has designated a person to be responsible for the maintenance, coordination and release of public information. The Secretary to the Authority is the designated Records Management Officer (RMO) and Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Officer, and, therefore, to ensure information released to the news media and public is accurate and distributed in a timely manner, the Secretary is responsible for coordinating responses to media inquiries in conjunction with the Commissioners, Executive Director, Deputy Director, Legal Department and the Authority's public relations firm.

The Commissioners may direct another employee to act in the absence of the Secretary.

All news releases must be reviewed with the Board of Commissioners before issuance.

Each Commissioner has the prerogative of his/her choice if he/she wants to speak to the media. These communications should be shared with the Authority Secretary in order to log media inquiries.

No member of the news media is to be allowed entrance to the Authority's offices without first contacting the Secretary to the Authority or the Authority's public relations firm. This does not pertain to meetings of the Commissioners which are open to the media and the public.

Requests for interviews by members of the news media will be managed by the Authority Secretary in conjunction with officials from the Authority's public relations firm. Press releases, statements and other communications to the media from the Authority may be developed and distributed by the firm when so directed. Prior to distribution, these materials must be approved by the Secretary to the Authority, and/or Authority Commissioners.

Reporters and other members of the media are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Any actions that are determined to be otherwise will result in the media representative being asked to leave the premises.

PROCEDURE

1. All phone calls, emails or any other communications made to the Authority by officials from the news media should be referred to the Authority Secretary.
2. The Authority Secretary in turn will contact the appropriate staff member(s) and the Authority's public relations firm if necessary.
3. The Secretary to the Authority along with the public relations firm will determine when it is necessary to contact the Board of Commissioners, to determine and coordinate the most appropriate response after assessing each request.
4. All requests for interviews and information are to be handled on a timely basis.