

ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY
HR Policies/Procedures

**Re: MEDIA RELATIONS
PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES**

Policy No. 93

Application: ALL EMPLOYEES

Adopted: 08/22/2013

Amended: 12/19/2013

06/09/2015

09/05/2019

10/20/2022¹

09/20/2023

PURPOSE

To establish sound and progressive practices for prompt, transparent, and accurate information about the Authority, its employees, Commissioners, activities, and occurrences in its operation, especially in 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 function as spokesperson for the Authority. The Secretary to the Authority may delegate the responsibility to function 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.

PROCEDURE

Section 1 Secretary to the Authority as Designated Contact.

1.1 Release of Public Information.

- (a) The Authority maintains a central information center and has designated a person to be responsible for the maintenance, coordination, and release of public information.

¹ This Media Relations Procedures & Guidelines replaces H.R. Policy No. 93.0 (Media Relations Procedures and Guidelines).

- (b) 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, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, the General Counsel, and the Authority's public relations firm.
- (c) The Commissioners may direct another employee to act in the absence of the Secretary.

1.2 News Releases.

- (a) All news releases must be reviewed with the Board of Commissioners before issuance.
- (b) 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's Secretary to log all media inquiries.

1.3 Media Access to Authority Facilities and Employees.

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

- (e) 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.

Section 2 Communications Made to the Authority.

2.1 Procedure.

- (a) All phone calls, emails or any other communications made to the Authority by officials from the news media should be referred to the Authority's Secretary.
- (b) The Authority's Secretary in turn will contact the appropriate staff member(s) and the Authority's public relations firm if necessary.
- (c) 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.
- (d) All requests for interviews and information shall be handled on a timely basis.