



Policy & Procedure Manual

Policy No.1.11 (Communications)

Communications

Purpose

1. To develop information channels to enhance the communication with internal and external customer and to ensure that information is provided effectively, efficiently and accurately;
2. To inform customers about SLRD business, programs, procedures, activities, policies and vision to increase knowledge and understanding in the work place and the Regional District;
3. To establish communication procedures which support the Regional District being a helpful, accessible, consistent, unintimidating human source of information and result in those being served always feeling welcomed;
4. To foster a consistent, professional image in all business dealings related to the Regional District.

External Communications

1. To set guidelines for communication with the media, outside agencies and the public to ensure accurate and complete information is provided regarding local government decisions and issues and to reduce the potential for factual discrepancy;
2. To deliver Regional District information through mediums which effectively attract the attention of those who need to know in clear, concise, readily understood language;
3. To maintain a constant flow of information to the public through various mediums;
4. To adopt a proactive approach to dealing with the media;
 - The chief spokesperson for the Regional District is the Board Chair. The Chair is the authorized spokesperson to speak with media on behalf of the Regional District related to decisions and outcomes arrived at by the Board. The

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Administrator or his delegate is authorized to speak with the media on policy matters or on matters affecting the administration of the Regional District;

- Directors will not act as spokespersons for the Regional District unless they have first consulted with the Board Chair and been authorized by the Board Chair;
 - Directors may speak externally about Board issues and topics discussed provided that confidential requirements are followed and that their statements do not undermine the corporation's reputation or the integrity of the Board's decision making process;
5. The Chair shall be authorized to write general letters of support for community events, activities, and undertakings throughout the Regional District. Copies of all such letters shall be retained within the Regional District's general filing and outgoing correspondence file.
 6. The Board authorizes the development of letterhead which is clearly headed "From the Desk of [insert name], Director for [insert jurisdiction] for a director's use for constituency purposes only. This letterhead is not to be used for conveying official Board position. All communication respecting Board policy and positions shall be in accordance with the Board's communication policy.

Board

1. Board Meetings

- A monthly schedule of Board Meetings will be placed on the local bulletin board of the Regional District;
- Board Agendas will also be posted on the Regional District's website;
- Board Meeting Agendas will be provided to the media and are available for public review at the Regional District Office and on the website;
- Reports prepared by staff shall not be made available to the public until after being delivered to the Board Members;

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- Agenda packages with reports will be made available to the public on Fridays prior to a Monday Board Meeting;
- It is acknowledged that the preparation of some reports will require consultation with members of the public (i.e. standing/select committees, applicants, stakeholders etc.) and that members of the public may be contacted with information regarding the report being placed on a Board Agenda, but the report will not be released to the public, in any case, until received by the Board Members
- Reports being received by the Regional Board at a closed meeting shall not be made available to any member of the public except with the authorization of the Board or through the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act process;
- Following the monthly Board Meeting the Administrator shall direct staff to prepare a press release summarizing the action taken by the Board which shall be reviewed by the Chair.
- When Regular Board Meetings are to be conducted outside of the normal location that the change be advertised in the local media.

Public Information

1. Statutory Advertising/Newspapers

- Provision of notices published as part of statutory requirements under the provisions of the *Local Government Act*, or any other government statute, will be the subject to prior Board approval (i.e. public hearing notices, election notices, etc.).

2. Information Advertising/Newspaper and Radio

- The Administrator and Department Heads are authorized to advertise routine and administrative and operational information. Advertisement of employment opportunities, watering restrictions, hazard awareness, recreation programs/registration guides and activity schedules are examples of this type of

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information;

3. Press Releases

- Press Releases are encouraged to promote Regional District activities, decisions, projects and services. Department Heads and Directors may submit drafts of Press Releases to the Administrator for verification before publishing. Press Releases are to be reviewed and approved by the Chair and Administrator and are to be sent from the Regional District Offices on official Regional District letterhead in order to be copied to media, Board, Department Heads, Regional District employees, bulletin boards and posted on the Regional District website. The contact person for Board matters is the Chair or appropriate Area Director; and the contact person for operational or administrative matters is the Administrator or a staff member as determined by the Administrator. (amended April 28 2003)

4. Public Service Announcements

- Public Service Announcements (PSA) will be used to convey timely or time sensitive information to the public. The Regional District will utilize free public service announcement opportunities where available and appropriate for the message/target audience.

5. Newsletter

- Newsletters will be used to keep the citizens of the Regional District up to date on activities pertaining to the Regional District. Administration will produce a semi-annual newsletter for delivery to rural citizens and to all municipal halls and libraries serviced by the Regional District as established during budget discussions. Content will be finalized by the Administrator through consultation with the Regional Board. Articles in the Newsletter will vary from issue to issue but will generally have a target approach to certain sectors of the region, depending on topics of interest.

6. Displays

- Regional District Displays will be encouraged to provide direct communication to

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specific community interest groups and individual and to promote specific community events. Displays will be located in highly visible locations (i.e. recreation centres, Regional District Offices, etc.).

7. Flyers and Brochures

- Staff are encouraged to consult with other departments preparing information material to develop a standard in design, content and tone to enable the development of the corporate identity. As well, departments will piggy-back on information distribution opportunities where possible.

Customer Service

1. Promotional Material

- Items produced by the Regional District promoting or marketing the Regional District for the purpose of attracting business, tourism, development, commercial enterprise or film industry interest will be approved by the Regional Board unless otherwise delegated.
- Advertisements provided by the Regional District for promotional material not produced by the Regional District will be approved by the Regional Board. A final proof of the advertisement will be provided to the Regional District for sign off by the Administrator or designate.
- Advertisements displaying the Regional District’s logo or proclaiming the Regional District’s support will be subject to approval by the Administrator or designate.

2. Website (www.slrd.bc.ca)

- The Regional District will maintain an updated user friendly website to provide the public with information regarding Board decisions, Board Meeting schedule, minutes and agendas, by-laws, activities/events, and ongoing local government business. Regional District staff will maintain the bulletin board on the Home Page of the website, providing the public with quick access to improve community issues. Press releases will also be available on the website.

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- All requests for posting information to the website will be coordinated through Administration.
- Information appearing on the Regional District website will not be used to promote an individual business or type of business over any other, but will always strive to promote the Regional District.
- Information appearing on the Regional District website will not be used to promote an individual political philosophy, but will strive to promote Regional District philosophies and goals as envisioned by the Regional District Board as a whole.

3. Email

- Email is to be used for business purposes and should be business like in format and tone. Full sentences, proper grammar, and punctuation are expected. Email received during the course of Regional District business becomes part of the Regional District record and is subject to scrutiny under the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act*. Email received by the Regional District will be identifiable through a sign off providing the correspondents full name address and telephone number. Un-signed email will be treated as anonymous.

4. Telephone

- Telephone calls made to the Regional District telephone number during regular office hours will always be answered promptly and courteously.
- Telephone calls to key department phone numbers during regular office hours will always be answered personally, promptly and courteously.
- Telephone callers calling the District for the purpose of statement of opinion or to make complaint will be told their opinions or complaints are to be submitted in writing and must include a return address in order to be considered by staff or the Regional Board.

5. Surveys

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- From time to time, the Regional District will conduct surveys or polls through the use of an outside agency specializing in conducting public opinion surveys and polls to garner public opinion regarding community issues, policy direction and customer satisfaction.

Handling Correspondence

1. Incoming Correspondence

- The administrator shall route all correspondence in accordance with the following guidelines:
- Correspondence addressed to “Chair” or a specific “Director”, unless of a personal nature, will be placed on the appropriate Board or Committee agenda, with a copy of the correspondence being placed in the Chair’s or Director’s mailbox, or emailed to the Director or Chair.
- Correspondence addressed to staff members shall only be referred to the Board or Committee agendas if they have relevance to a current policy matter or issue on the Board or Committee agenda.
- Correspondence that is unsigned, unaddressed, form letters, or journal information will not be actioned and placed on a reader file for viewing by staff and Board.
- When correspondence addressed to a Director marked “personal” or “confidential” is received, the Director will be notified, and asked whether they would prefer it to be opened and emailed to the Director, or placed in the Director’s mailbox unopened, with the date and time of receipt stamped on the envelope.
- All correspondence addressed to the Board will be placed on the agenda, or circulated via the Board mailboxes.
- Staff will empty Directors’ mailboxes weekly and forward the contents to each Director, except on agenda week, when correspondence will be left for the Directors in their mailboxes.
- Copies of all incoming correspondence (excluding advertisements, flyers and other materials soliciting SLRD business) shall be placed in an incoming correspondence file and be made available for Directors’ viewing.
- Notwithstanding the foregoing policies, the SLRD will not publish, in an Agenda or

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otherwise, material deemed by the Chair or the CAO to be libelous. Material so deemed to be libelous will be returned to the sender with an invitation to remove the libelous comments and resubmit the material.

[April 28, 2014]

2. Outgoing Correspondence

- All official correspondence of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District shall be sent out under the letterhead of the SLRD and shall be used for the purpose of obtaining or giving information or conveying the official position of the Regional Board established by resolution adopted at a regularly constituted meeting. All official correspondence under the signature of the Chair or Directors shall be reviewed by the Administrator or his designate before being sent out by SLRD staff with appropriate filing for archive purposes.
- All correspondence sent by the Regional District to a federal or provincial minister shall be sent out under the signature of the Chair.
- It shall be the policy of the Regional Board to have staff prepare official correspondence on behalf of the Board. Any Director of the Squamish- Lillooet Regional District sending correspondence as Director of the Board without the sanction of the Regional Board or Administrator shall be on the Director's personal letterhead, and not the letterhead of the SLRD.
- Use of SLRD letterhead by Directors shall be restricted to use for Regional Board decisions or subject to review by the Administrator.
- Correspondence arising from a Board meeting will be prepared within Five days following the meeting.
- Copies of all outgoing correspondence shall be placed in an outgoing correspondence file and be made available for Directors' viewing.

3. General

- Incoming and outgoing correspondence shall be copied to affected Electoral Area Directors.

[June 23, 2014]

Internal Staff Communications

- All Staff must be made aware of the communication at all levels. Staff are encouraged to promote communication within the organization. Meetings, from

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informal one-on-one to large groups will be the primary basis of communication at the local level. Internal communication will be augmented through the use of technology for those with computer access. Internal communication tools include:

- Regular staff meetings
- Internet
- Bulletin Board

Regional Board/Staff Communications

- Procedures for communication between Regional Board and staff are intended to increase the level of trust and working effectiveness existing between the Regional Board and staff.

Directors, individually, must use judgment in their contact with staff and recognize that they do not have authority to direct staff.

- Written communications from Board Members to staff will be copied to the Administrator who shall determine which staff member will deal with the inquiries. The expectation is that the Administrator will be kept advised of discussions by the Board member and staff.
- Staff are encouraged to provide reasonable amounts of factual (statutory, by-law, historical) information to the Regional Board through the Administrator. This serves to keep the Administrator informed about the use of department resources and information requests. If the request is time sensitive or lengthy, or goes beyond providing standard factual information, (i.e. opinions or perceptions, discussion notes, legal opinions, etc.), potentially political requests, or request for information which is not strictly factual and involves interpretation or opinion will be dealt with directly by the Administrator. Electoral Area Directors shall be advised of any issues that have the potential to be political, contentious, or have significant community impacts.

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- Following each Regional Board Meeting the Administrator shall meet with staff to go over action items dealt with by the Board and designate which staff member

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will be responsible for follow up.

- The Administrator will circulate the Outstanding Items list to the Board each month.
- The Administrator shall prepare a monthly report for the Regional Board highlighting the key monthly activities of departments within the organization.
- Technology use between staff/Board to be used whenever practical.

Information Tools

- Orientation packages will be provided for new employees and elected officials.
- To enhance customer service and internal referrals, organizational telephone and contact lists which briefly identify the service they provide will be prepared by the Administration Department.
- Regional Board project priority lists will be developed by the Regional Board annually and maintained by the Administrators office.
- A link to the websites of all member municipalities shall be maintained on the SLRD's website.

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