

# Communications Policy – Media Relations

DEVELOPED BY: City of Hamilton's Strategic Communications Team

APPROVED BY: Senior Management Team (SMT)

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 2012

## **INTRODUCTION:**

As an open and accountable organization, the City of Hamilton values the role that the media has to communicate City news and information to the public and to report on the public's views and opinions of the City of Hamilton.

Effective media relations are critical to the City of Hamilton. For this reason, the City of Hamilton is committed to developing and maintaining professional working relationships with the media to promote public awareness and understanding of Council decisions, City policies, issues facing the City, services and programs, and new and emerging initiatives.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure professionalism and consistency in how the City works with the media. The policy also includes specific procedures for the successful delivery of media relations services.

## **PURPOSE:**

To provide staff with general principles and protocol for dealing with the media on behalf of the City of Hamilton.

To ensure media enquiries are responded to in a timely manner, that is accurate and clear, and by the most appropriate City spokesperson.

To encourage appropriate and proactive media relations that provide residents, businesses, and visitors with timely, accurate, and newsworthy information about programs, services, and issues of public interest.

## **SCOPE:**

This Policy applies to all staff and divisions of the City of Hamilton. This Policy does not apply to members of City Council, their staff or to the City's agencies, boards, or commissions.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF MEDIA RELATIONS AT THE CITY:**

The City of Hamilton recognizes the vital role media has in City communications and the need to respond to media requests with promptness, courtesy, honesty, and respect. We welcome the opportunity to communicate accurately and clearly about City programs, services, and issues.

The City maintains positive working relationships with all forms of media (i.e. print, broadcast and electronic) that reach national, regional, local, neighbourhood, community, and ethnic audiences.

The City produces and distributes information to the media that has news value, and is timely, clear, accurate, and accessible.

The City maintains an open, transparent communications process that enables media to have access to City decision-makers and knowledgeable staff.

The City's media relations activities comply with municipal legislation, corporate policies and council directives.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Building and sustaining strong relationships with media is a key priority for the City of Hamilton. The media is an effective vehicle for communicating information about the organization and its goals; increasing public awareness and education regarding projects, initiatives, events, by-laws and policies; and fostering a positive image for the City and our community.

**INTEGRATION:**

The Media Relations Policy must be incorporated into and work along side a number of business practices and policies. Some examples include:

- Communications or Marketing Plans at the departmental, divisional, sectional, and corporate level.
- The City's media relations activities comply with all existing Council and corporate policies.
- The need for ongoing media relations training and Communications support, which are vital tools to the success of the City's media relations activities.

All staff should be aware that a wide range of our functions have an impact on residents and as such are newsworthy. Newsworthy items include:

- a change in the way the City delivers a service or in the level of service being provided;
- good news and exciting initiatives
- anything related to the City's budget or that will have an impact on citizens;
- a public occurrence at a City facility;
- business successes;
- crisis or emergency issues;
- community or public meetings or any community consultation;
- Committee or Council reports;
- staff presentations and responses at Committee or Council; and
- visits from other levels of government to the City of Hamilton.

**Definition of Media:**

The City of Hamilton defines media as any print, radio, television or online media outlet. This includes national, regional, local, neighbourhood, community and ethnic media outlets; Online media refers to websites that publish news, investigative reports, analysis, commentary, events and/or general information.

In order to help staff and media understand protocol and expectations, the Policy defines roles and responsibilities in key areas such as:

- Departments
- Official Departmental Spokespersons
- Strategic Communications Team
- Emergencies
- Media Relations Tools (media releases, press conferences, events etc.)
- Prioritization and Coordination of Responses
- Policy on Social Media (Appendix 2)

## **STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### ***Departments***

Each City department should identify and train appropriate representatives as spokespersons for their business areas.

Authorized spokespersons will provide accurate and timely information on programs, services, activities, initiatives, and issues that relate specifically to their business area. Spokespersons are also responsible for working with their department's communications officer/public affairs coordinator on any proactive media relations activities (i.e. media release), creation or changes to Social Media plans (for more details, please see Appendix '2': Social Media Policy) and media enquiries. For clarification of which types of issues spokespersons must involve their communications officer/public affairs coordinator, please refer to Strategic Communications Team Members (below).

### ***2. Official/Authorized Department Spokespersons include:***

City Manager shall be the spokesperson on major staff or administrative issues or initiatives.

Department's General Manager shall be the spokesperson on issues or programs that fall under the department that he/she serves.

Medical Officer of Health shall be the spokesperson on public health matters, the provincial Health Protection and Promotion Act (and other appropriate legislation) and provincially mandated guidelines.

City Clerk shall be the City spokesperson with regard to Council agendas and Council decisions of record.

Directors/managers shall be spokespeople on issues or programs for which they are considered to be the subject matter experts.

Other staff shall be the spokesperson on issues that they are acknowledged content experts subject to approval of the program manager, director or general manager as outlined in a list of authorized departmental spokespersons. The scope of media involvement is limited to specific areas of expertise only.

**All authorized/official spokespersons should complete the appropriate media training in consultation with their communications officer/public affairs coordinator.**

### ***3. Strategic Communications Team (SCT) Members:***

The City of Hamilton operates under a decentralized communications model. Most departments have a minimum of one communications officer/public affairs coordinator. These individuals belong to a corporately coordinated Strategic Communications Team. This group is coordinated by the Strategic Communications Program Manager. Members of the SCT primarily act as a media liaison, determine appropriate media spokespeople, work with the media's deadlines and can often provide factual and background information. Communication officers/public affairs coordinators can be designated spokespersons when the need arises. They are often spokespersons during municipal emergencies as a means of communicating important public messages.

Communications/public affairs staff will work with department spokespersons to help them coordinate and prepare for media enquiries, interviews, press conferences, as well as develop, review, and distribute proactive media relations tools. Your department's communications officer/public affairs coordinator should be consulted, prior to media interviews occurring, especially media enquiries that deal with significant, or possible contentious or controversial issues.

The intent of this protocol is to ensure that:

- the most appropriate spokesperson has participated in the interview;
- all relevant information has been provided to the interviewer, and;
- the Mayor, members of Council, City Manager, and/or other staff/officials are informed where and when appropriate.

### ***4. Non-spokespersons:***

City staff who are not designated spokespersons, and who are contacted by a news media representative shall:

- treat the reporter as a customer: be courteous and professional.
- explain that they are not a spokesperson for the City and respectfully decline the request for an interview or information. An appropriate response to the media would be, "I'm sorry, I don't have the full information regarding that issue. I will pass along your request to a Communications Officer who will respond to you as soon as possible."
- help provide timely responses to the media by collecting the following information to be forwarded along to your department's communications officer/public affairs coordinator and the appropriate director or manager:
  - ⇒ journalist's name and who they work for
  - ⇒ contact number
  - ⇒ deadline
  - ⇒ topic of the interview
- advise the reporter that the request will be forwarded to the appropriate spokesperson

## PROTOCOL

### *Emergencies:*

Communications/Public Affairs staff are available Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., and after hours in emergency and time sensitive urgent matters.

### *Coordination and Prioritization of Enquiries and Requests:*

City staff should encourage media to contact one of the communications officers/public affairs coordinators as a first point of contact, especially if they don't know the appropriate spokesperson. Staff will deal with enquiries in a timely manner; typically responding the same business day or requested deadline.

- Enquiries regarding issues of public health and safety will usually be dealt with first.
- Complex issues requiring staff research may take more than one business day to process; as much advanced notice as possible is appreciated.
- Non-emergency/non-urgent enquiries that are received outside regular business hours will be responded to on a case-by-case basis.

### *Response Protocols:*

- Staff should not be commenting on a Committee report until it is a public document (i.e. Clerks has made the report available on-line and made public and delivered to Members of Council)
- Staff may speak to media in advance of a Committee/Council presentation to provide clarity and background information.
- City staff cannot talk about any ongoing investigations or legal actions (pending or current charges or hearings) or any confidential personnel matters. Spokespersons can however provide information on our policies and processes.
- If you require any clarification and/or assistance relative to appropriate spokesperson(s) please contact your Communications Officer/Public Affairs Coordinator.

## PROACTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLS:

Recognizing the important role the media have in keeping residents and stakeholders informed about City programs, services, and initiatives, the City of Hamilton engages in extensive proactive media relations activities, such as issuing media releases, advisories, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), briefings etc.

### *Objectives*

The objectives of proactive media relations are to:

- create awareness about Council decisions or change in policies;
- provide public information about City programs, services, or public health issues;
- solicit input or engage the public in consultation;
- issue an invitation to an event or public activity;
- provide more detail or background information on a specific City initiative;
- provide opportunity to demonstrate technical information;
- provide information to correct errors previously reported by media; and/or
- inform and educate the public on emerging issues of importance to the City.

***Media Release or Advisory:***

Whenever a member of staff initiates a media release, for whatever purpose, a copy must be sent - before it is released - to the department's communications officer/public affairs coordinator. It will be reviewed and then distributed to all appropriate media by the communications/public affairs staff.

When initiating a release on behalf of the City and quoting any City staff or elected official, the release must be approved in writing by the person being quoted in advance of its release.

All staff and officials identified as a contact should be available for comment during the day in which the release is issued.

Communications officers/public affairs coordinator shall forward media releases, public meeting, public information centre (PIC) notices and advisories to the following officials and staff before sending (separately) to the media:

- Mayor and Members of Council where applicable and
- the General Manager of the respective department(s) and or SMT where applicable.

News releases should be posted to the City's website by a communications officer/public affairs coordinator or designate.

*A complete description of each of these tools can be found in Appendix 1.*

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Only approved/official media spokespeople are authorized to lead/manage/participate in Social Media outreach activities (Please refer to Appendix 2 for the complete Social Media Use Policy).

***News Gathering at City Facilities (Videotaping, Photographing and Sound Recording):***

Media should obtain where necessary any waiver from any individual (or their parent/guardian if under 18), in order to videotape, photograph and/or record patrons of City facilities.

***Exceptions:***

The media is not required to obtain waivers at public meetings or events where the media presence is obvious, routine and/or expected.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION:**

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

**ADMINISTRATION:**

This policy is chiefly administered by the City Manager's Office through the strategic communications program manager. Each City department, and their spokespersons are also responsible for administering this policy in their day-to-day interactions with the media.

**APPROVAL:**

Senior Management Team (SMT)

# Appendix 1 -Media Relations Tools

## 1. Media Releases

Media Releases are to be issued to the media when there is something newsworthy to announce, such as a major program change or a new City initiative. The message must have news value and must be written for journalists and must be part of an overall communications plan. As a guideline, staff must consider:

- i) whether the announcement is significant or unusual enough to attract an editor's attention;
- ii) whether the message has significant impact or not. In order to be newsworthy, a significant number of people must be affected by the message. If it is a specific group of stakeholders or too narrow an audience, then a general news release may not be appropriate and more targeted communications may be in order.

## 2. Media Advisories

Media advisories are used for two purposes. One is to alert members of the media to events or issues happening at the City that are straightforward, routine, or happen on a regular basis, but yet are newsworthy. For example, issues of public health such as heat alerts, street or facility closures, emergency alerts, or basic public information such as service level information, notices of public consultations, etc. The second is to alert members of the media about events happening at the City at a specific date, time, and place to which the media is invited. Examples include park openings, street unveilings, launches of programs, demonstrations, etc. Media advisories are also used to alert media to any other proactive media relations activity being initiated by the City such as a news conference or media availability session.

## 3. Media Events/Photo Opportunities

Occasionally, it is worthwhile to invite the media to an event or opportunity that will allow them to see a City initiative, service, program, or facility in action. Such events allow the City to provide hands-on demonstrations or examples directly to media and give them the opportunity to communicate directly with authorized spokespeople. Among the common examples of media events and photo opportunities are:

- demonstrations of City equipment such as fleet vehicles and specialized tools;
- ribbon-cutting or plaque-unveiling ceremonies to a launch new project or facility;
- awards presentations;
- flag-raising ceremonies;
- opportunities for members of the media to participate in an event such as a bicycle or fleet rodeo; or
- take part in fire evacuation procedures.

Generally, a media event is for members of the media and invited stakeholders only. It is not for members of the public.

## 4. News Conferences

News conferences are limited to major announcements by the City of Hamilton or when there is a great deal of information to present (i.e. during emergencies). News conferences allow the City to communicate directly to

several members of the media at the same time and allow media the opportunity to ask questions of authorized spokespersons directly. News conferences are arranged when it is appropriate for the City's messages to be conveyed by multiple spokespeople, as is the case during a critical incident facing the city, such as a labour disruption, significant public health issue ,or an emergency situation with broad impact.

#### 6. Letters to the Editor

Occasionally the City will consider preparing and sending a letter to the editor of a specific media outlet as a way to communicate the City's position or explain a City policy in response to a media story. Such letters must be brief and balanced, and must be written in such a way that the City's message(s) are not lost or misconstrued if the letter is edited prior to publication. Letters to the editor must be approved by your General Manager /designate and communications/public affairs representative.

#### 7. Correction Advisories

Occasionally, there may be a situation where important facts have not been accurately reported. Depending on the seriousness of the error, corrective action could range from a call to the reporter to a formal request for a printed or broadcast correction. Factual inaccuracies must be corrected so they are not repeated by other reporters. Your communications/public affairs representative can provide advice on how to best handle each situation.

# Appendix 2 - Social Media Use

## **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The City of Hamilton recognizes the importance of engaging the community through various means. In addition to traditional methods of community feedback the City needs to keep pace with technology and establish a clear process for approved staff to participate in strategic social media opportunities for approved business purposes. Participation in social media tools provides many benefits such as maintaining open dialogue, rapid sharing and receiving of information, and a convenient and often more accessible forum for two-way communication. The intention of this Policy is to establish a culture of openness, trust, and integrity in activities around social media.

The City of Hamilton also recognizes that employees may be participating in online communities for personal and/or approved business purposes. However, all employees must understand their roles, responsibilities, and legal obligations when participating in online communities, as it may have implications for the City. Employees should participate in a responsible and professional manner.

Employees are reminded that unless they have received specific written approval from their department's communications officer/public affairs coordinator, they cannot participate in social media on behalf of the City of Hamilton (i.e. Staff cannot use their personal Twitter accounts to discuss, promote, or respond to City-related matters).

## **POLICY PURPOSE/RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide staff with guidelines for participating in online communities for approved business purposes and for personal purposes if staff are in any way identifying themselves as City employees;
- protect the reputation of the City Of Hamilton;
- limit the liability of employees and the corporation;
- manage brand integrity and identity; and
- support and adhere to the following policies and legislated acts:
  - Computer and Technology Acceptable Use Policy;
  - Media Relations Policy, 2011 Updated version;
  - Employee Code of Conduct Policy;
  - Social Media Checklist (attached here in);
  - Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA);
  - Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA);
  - Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and
  - Any and all other applicable City of Hamilton policies.

## PURPOSE/RATIONALE:

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  - Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA);
  - Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA);
  - Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and
  - Any and all other applicable City of Hamilton policies.

## SCOPE:

This applies to staff participation in all social media tools regardless of whether the tools are established and maintained by the City of Hamilton or by an external organization or individual.

Staff who are approved to participate in social media must have received appropriate training (where necessary) and authorization from their communications officer/public affairs coordinator or approved designate. To receive approval for use of social media for City related work, communications officers/public affairs coordinators should be consulted and a business case needs to be presented with a rationale (including staffing considerations) prior to the establishment of a social media campaign or the creation of tools (i.e. Facebook, blog, Twitter etc.).

In addition, any requests for participation (providing comment) in external online discussions (i.e. blogs, twitter etc.) related to City business and acting in their capacity as a representative of the City must be treated just like a media request in a professional and timely manner, by an approved media spokespersons and following the same Media Relations procedures (see new 2012 Media Relations Policy).

To further clarify in the case of Twitter: staff should forward relevant and newsworthy City-related items to an appropriate and approved City twitter account for distribution (such as @CityofHamilton, @CityofHamOnt @HamiltonEcDev, @TourismHamilton etc.). It is inappropriate for city staff to discuss, promote, or respond to City-related matters from personal twitter accounts.

Departments who wish to make use of social media as defined here within are required to develop departmental protocols and procedures, where appropriate, regarding staff training and awareness, as well as any department specific guidelines.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

Web 2.0 is the term given to describe a second generation of the World Wide Web that is focused on the ability for people to collaborate and share information online.

Social media includes websites where people can post information, build community knowledge, discuss issues, and network. These online communities include, but are not limited to:

- Microblogs (i.e. Twitter);
- Blogs (or Weblogs);
- Message Boards;
- Chat Rooms;
- Online newspaper/magazine comment sections;
- Mailing lists or listservs;
- Photo/Video sites (i.e. YouTube; Flickr);
- Social News sites (i.e. Digg, Reddit);
- Facebook;
- LinkedIn; and
- Wikis.

These online communities may have different levels of access. Some are open to anyone and others restrict membership. Although postings, comments, and content on restricted access communities (password protected) may seem like a private conversation, the content may still be publicly accessible and available (i.e. nothing is ever off the record).

Approved Social Media Representatives can be defined as:

- Approved media spokespeople and
- Those who have been approved through their departmental communications officer or public affairs coordinator.

## **OVERVIEW:**

### **Professional use of social media**

#### ***Becoming authorized to comment:***

- Before engaging in social media as a representative of the City and/or your department, you must become authorized to comment.
- You may not comment as a representative of the City/department unless you are authorized to do so.
- To become authorized to comment in an official capacity, you are an approved media spokesperson or have delegated authority to speak on behalf of your department from your communications officer/public affairs coordinator.

#### ***Rules of engagement:***

Once authorized to comment as a City/department representative, you must:

- disclose you are an employee/contractor of the department, and only use your own identity, or an approved official account;
- disclose and comment only on information classified as public domain information;
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant departmental and City policies (i.e. Code of Conduct and privacy laws and legislation);
- ensure you are not the first to make an announcement (unless specifically given permission to do so);
- comment only on your area of expertise and authority;
- ensure comments are respectful of the community and audience; and
- adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment, and other applicable laws.

If you are authorized to comment, you must *not*:

- post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful or
- use or disclose any confidential or secure information make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the City Of Hamilton's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

### Personal Use of Social Media

The City of Hamilton recognizes that employees participate in online communities and social media in their personal lives. If an employee were to discuss matters related to the City of Hamilton, (where the employee is directly identified with the City of Hamilton), while participating in online communities and social media in their personal lives, employees will clearly note they are representing their personal views and not the views of the City of Hamilton. For example, if you note in your personal Twitter bio/description that you work at the City of Hamilton, you must include the following disclaimer in your description: Comments made are my own and not that of my employer. Otherwise your comments will be subject to the policy guidelines outlined below.

When participating in online communities for personal use, employees must adhere to the following policy guidelines listed below.

If staff makes any online submission that either:

- directly identifies an employee's professional relationship with City Of Hamilton, its employees, or elected officials; or
- is submitted while using equipment/network resources owned by the City Of Hamilton

***then employees are*** subject to all laws of Ontario and Canada, and particularly, the *Human Rights Code* and the City's Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy and Personal Harassment Prevention Policy, and personally responsible for the content of their submissions.

***At no time, will employees:***

- Reveal, disclose, or discuss:
  - City Of Hamilton matters which have confidentiality requirements;
  - identifiable and/or personal information about another employee or citizen that is not publicly known or without their explicit consent; and/or
  - information gained from companies, or other third parties as contracted with the City of Hamilton to provide goods, programs, and/or services.
  
- Use, modify, or post:
  - materials that are owned/copyrighted by the City of Hamilton, including images, screenshots, video, or information, unless approved by your communication officer/public affairs coordinator;
  - materials licensed to the City of Hamilton by a third party, including purchased images, and consultant reports.
  
- Comment on behalf of the City Of Hamilton, unless designated by Council or by communications/public affairs staff member to do so.

Staff in some positions, including managers, communication officers, directors, general managers may be viewed as spokespersons of the City *even when they are speaking from a personal perspective using personal social media accounts*. Employees in these or other positions should use judgment when commenting on city-related matters, including matters that involve another department of the City.

Any employee who becomes aware of an accidental or intentional privacy breach must report it to their supervisor in a timely fashion. Supervisors will contact their respective communications/public affairs staff and Human Resources for direction.

**GENERAL GUIDANCE:**

Respect copyright and fair use laws.

Protect confidential information:

- Understand that online content is not private.
- City employees must realize what they post will be around for a long time, and could be shared by others.
- Avoid identifying, discussing or posting multimedia of others – including clients, partners, vendors, or co-workers - unless you give credit to the content owner.

Be respectful and aware:

- Respect your audience and your co-workers.
- Make sure your communications are in good taste and be sensitive when providing links to content.
- Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content.

Protect the brand:

- Only those authorized by the City of Hamilton or an approved agency may use brand marks or logos in communications.
- Do not include the City logo or program logos in personal blogs or postings.

**BREACH OF POLICY:**

A breach of this policy by an employee is a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

**SUB-APPENDICES:**

While the guidelines outlined in the following appendices deal specifically with Facebook and YouTube they can and should be used as guidelines for all online participation.

A. **Guidelines for using Facebook for Business Purposes:** processes to follow for setting up a Facebook site.

B. **Guidelines for using YouTube for Business Purposes:** processes to follow for loading a video onto YouTube or other external video sharing web site.

C. **Social Media Usage Checklist:** answers to provide to your communications officer/public affairs coordinator to determine the business case for using social media (Facebook, wikis, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) for business purposes.

## Guidelines for using Facebook for Business Purposes

### About Facebook

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) - Facebook is a social networking service that lets you connect with friends, co-workers, and others who share similar interests or who have common backgrounds. Users create profiles including photos and lists of personal interests, exchange private or public messages, and join various groups. The website is free to users, but generates revenue from advertising.

### Guidelines

Refer to the Social Media Policy for guidelines for usage of social media for business projects.

Please refer to the *"Social Media Usage Checklist"*. All staff are required to complete this checklist and meet with their communications officer/public affairs coordinator prior to commencing a project which incorporates Facebook. Communications staff should review any major content added to your Facebook page.

### Do not:

- Disclose information, including textual or visual material that is confidential or has been disclosed to the City of Hamilton by a third party;
- Post anything to Facebook that would not be disclosed to journalists or external sources; and
- Refer or cite City Of Hamilton employees without their approval.

### Do:

- Update the information on Facebook as often as possible. If the campaign ends or the page becomes outdated, ensure the page is deleted/inactive.
- Work with communications/public affairs staff to determine if a response is necessary if a negative comment is posted, and how to best approach it.
- Implement the "Wall" application and not "Reviews" application when setting up your page. Reviews cannot be edited or deleted.
- A general policy statement outlining the monitoring of Facebook pages for business purposes should be included. For example: "We welcome your opinions, and encourage open discussion about the topics we post. If we become aware of messages that contain advertising, are off-topic, use offensive or inappropriate language, are intended to defame, infringe someone's rights, or are a violation of law, we reserve the right to remove them."

### Please Remember...

Facebook pages require a high level of commitment and time to review and update. Be aware that you are responsible for the maintenance of your independent sites.

It is also important to recognize a large portion of activity on Facebook occurs in the evening hours and on weekends. You may wish to place a disclaimer on your page that notes: This page is primarily reviewed during regular business hours, between 8:30am – 4:30 pm: Monday – Friday.

### Facebook Links

Terms of Use: <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php?ref=pf>

Facebook Copyright Policy: <http://www.facebook.com/copyright.php>

Advertising Guidelines: <http://www.facebook.com/ads/?ref=pf>

## Guidelines for using YouTube for Business Purposes

### About YouTube

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) - YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload, view, and share video clips. YouTube is free to users. Unregistered users can watch videos but you must be registered in order to upload videos. YouTube displays a wide variety of user-generated video content such as movie clips, TV clips, music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging, educational videos, and short original films. Most of the content is uploaded by the public, although some media organizations have begun using YouTube as well.

YouTube accepts videos uploaded in most formats, including .WMV, .AVI, .MOV, MPEG, .MP4, DivX, .FLV, and .OGG.

### Guidelines

Refer to the policy Social Media Policy for guidelines for usage of social media for business projects.

Please refer to the *"Social Media Usage Checklist"*. All staff are required to complete this checklist and meet with Communications staff prior to commencing a project which incorporates YouTube. Videos may be reviewed by Communications staff and if they do not follow the guidelines in this Policy they will need to be edited or removed.

Copyright information standards apply to video. Request permission to use images, text, music, or likeness in a video.

### Do not:

- Disclose information, including textual or visual material that is confidential or has been disclosed to the City of Hamilton by a third party;
- Post anything that would not be disclosed to journalists or external sources; and/or
- Refer or cite City of Hamilton employees without their approval.

### Do:

- Work with communications/public affairs staff to determine the best use of this medium; and
- Ensure that videos representing the City of Hamilton are of professional quality and meet the City's Identity, Standards, Style, and Protocol Guide requirements.

### Notes

Create videos specific to the YouTube application. Using videos created for other marketing purposes may not appeal to the YouTube audience. YouTube pages require a level of commitment to reviewing posted comments. Be aware that you are responsible for the maintenance of your independent sites. Ideally videos should be under 3 minutes, with a target for 60-90 seconds for best result.

It is recommended that you turn off comments on YouTube for a channel or individual videos. Please review your settings with your communications officer/public affairs coordinator or designate.

### YouTube Links

Terms of Use - <http://ca.youtube.com/t/terms>

Privacy Policy - <http://ca.youtube.com/t/privacy>

Help Resources - <http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube/bin/static.py?page=start.cs&hl=en-US>

### Social Media Usage Checklist

Web 2.0 technologies have created new and exciting methods to reach our target audiences. Many new social media tools are available for use. Before deciding to implement a social media project consider and answer the following questions and then meet with your communications officer/public affairs coordinator. *Note:* Once something is put online, it is very hard, if not impossible, to remove it. Be sure to double check all posts or submissions before they go live.

#### Questions:

- Have you sought the required department approvals, (communications/public affairs staff, manager and/or director)?
- Which Social Media tool are you planning on using? What is the goal of using this technology?
- What are your communication objectives? Are they different than what is already being communicated on [www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca) or other methods?
- Could you utilize current social media tools (i.e. current City-led Facebook pages or Twitter accounts) to get your messages out?
- Who is your target audience? Who are your key influencers? Do they regularly use this medium and do you have information/research to support?
- Do you know if any other organizations have created a similar project? Have you consulted on lessons learned? Who or what are your benchmarks?
- Will any other programs within the City Of Hamilton be affected by your social media content?
- Who will be the staff lead on this project? Who will respond to and track the comments and content being added on a daily basis?
- What happens at the completion of your campaign/event? Is there an expiration date on the site?
- Do you have any previous experience using this type of social media?
- Have you discussed your project with Information Services?
- What and how are you going to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of your social media tool?
- If you are working with an external vendor, are they familiar with social media? Have considerations been made to maintain the site after the relationship is terminated?
- Have you addressed any ownership of intellectual property issues (i.e. trademarks, copyright, brand, logo use)? Permission to use other's material is usually required.
- Do you have the resources to properly manage social media application and interact with the online community? (i.e. How frequently will the site be checked? How frequently will the site be updated?)