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| PORT OF OLYMPIAHarbor Patrol |  |
| MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS | Policy 5.0 |
| PURPOSE: To establish a clear statement for effective media relations. | Adopted: 10/01/2015  Revised: |

Effective communications with the media are critical to POHP's ability to carry out its mission and promote continued public support for the Port. Effective media relations best serve the Port of Olympia Harbor Patrol by:

* Informing the public of what we can do for them
* Promoting the POHP’s achievements, activities and events of significance
* Expanding the general visibility of the POHP
* Ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public regarding incidents and issues of a controversial and/or sensitive nature.

#### policy

The Communications and Public Affairs Manager of Port of Olympia serves as the official Port spokesperson and conveys the official Port position on issues of general Port-wide impact or significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature. Inquiries from the media about such issues should be referred to the Port’s Communications and Public Affairs Manager.

Depending on the specific circumstances, the Harbor Director will serve as spokesperson on a relevant issue.

In cases of critical significance to the Port, the Communications and Public Affairs Manager will work with other Port officials to develop a "position paper" to detail the known facts of the situation and summarize the Port's position.

In the event of a crisis or emergency situation, the Communications and Public Affairs Manager will handle all contacts with the media, and will coordinate the information flow from the Port to the public. In such situations, all POHP Officer and Members should refer calls from the media to the Harbor Director and/or the Communications and Public Affairs Manager.

#### General Procedures For Dealing With The Media

Members of the POHP are free to respond to requests from the media regarding their general duties and activities. In such cases, the appropriate Harbor Director should be notified as soon as possible to inform him/her of the contact. Such notification can be particularly important if follow-up inquiries are made with other Port personnel to ensure a coordinated, consistent Port response. Media inquiries should be referred to the Communications and Public Affairs Manager if they involve issues with Port-wide significance and/or are of a controversial or sensitive nature.

Since positive media solicitation is an integral element of the Port's overall communications program, any ideas for articles or pieces that would positively portray the POHP, its work or its community should also be directed to the Harbor Director. In a similar manner the Communications and Public Affairs Manager and Harbor Director should be notified about negative occurrences that are likely to rise to the level of a news story.

Guidelines for communicating with the media when the issue is non-controversial and limited to the POHP member's area of expertise:

* Obtain the name of the person calling, the media organization and, if available, the anticipated time of release of information in print or broadcast. This information should be included when the notification is made to the Harbor Director.
* The best approach with the media is to be prompt, helpful and honest. All contacts from the media should be returned as soon as possible, in deference to reporters' deadlines. At the most, a call should be returned within a half-day. If that is not possible, the Harbor Director or the Communications and Public Affairs Manager should be asked to handle the call.
* Make sure you understand each question from the media before answering. If you cannot answer the question, or are uncomfortable providing a response, take the reporter's number and advise him/her that someone who can provide the information will contact him/her as soon as possible. Then follow-up by contacting the Harbor Director or the Communications and Public Affairs Manager.
* Do not offer speculations or gossip. Do not answer a reporter's question with "no comment." Do not be condescending or underestimate the reporter's intelligence, but make sure the reporter understands your responses. Provide your phone number and/or e-mail address for follow-up questions.
* Remember that in responding to the media, you can be seen as representing and speaking for the Port and/or the POHP. Personal opinions should be clearly and carefully identified as such.
* Issues that should not be discussed with reporters are 1) legal issues, 2) personnel issues, 3) questions that involve Port integrity, such as ethics or issues that may result in harm to others, or 4) a Port crisis or emergency. Refer all such inquiries to the Harbor Director or the Communications and Public Affairs Manager.
* Any media inquiries regarding POHP staff should be referred to the Harbor Director or the Communications and Public Affairs Manager. Only public information may be provided without the Member’s written approval. Public information is the following: verification of membership, name of job title/position, membership status, and rank.

#### Port of Olympia Emergency / Crisis

Crisis communications have a lasting impact on organizational reputation and public support. How well we convey our message to the public greatly depends on what is reported to the news media. This is especially true in a crisis, during which the news media is the primary means of communication to our constituencies. Because of the emotions that usually accompany crises, images formed from crisis reporting are especially important in shaping long-lasting public impressions of the institution.

In the event of a major crisis related to the Port of Olympia, it is essential that an effective communications plan be put into effect to disseminate timely, accurate information and to ensure that inquiries are routed to the appropriate sources.

The Communications and Public Affairs Manager is responsible for the development and dissemination of all Port communications in the event of an emergency; and likewise the Harbor Director for matters specific to POHP. This includes internal communications with Port staff, as well as communications with the media. The priority will be on maintaining timely and open communications with the media, providing complete and accurate information that has been confirmed about the emergency situation and the Port's response to the crisis at hand. Communications with the media will be frequent throughout the duration of the emergency situation. The Port of Olympia Web site will be utilized as a key medium for updating our community and the public on the details of the emergency situation and actions we are taking to address all related issues.

In a Port of Olympia emergency, staff and members have a right not to speak with the media. The media has access only to the public areas, which are identified as the Port Administrative Offices. Any situations where individuals feel a reporter has abused their rights should be reported to the Communications and Public Affairs Manager.

#### Contact Information: POHP Media Specialists

* Bruce Marshall; Harbor Director
* Jennie Foglia-Jones, Communications, Marketing & Outreach Manager