
CITY OF KETTERING — ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

8/06

Policy No. 602: Public Information

A. General Guidelines

1. Employees are expected to be candid and cooperative toward all reporters or citizens seeking information in areas in which an employee has expertise and authority. If citizens or reporters seek information in areas where an employee has limited expertise or they are not certain of their own authority, the employee should assist the citizen or reporter in making contact with the appropriate staff person, supervisor, Department Director, Assistant City Manager or the City Manager.
2. When providing information, an employee should never slant information or attempt to suppress bad news. Such efforts only serve to undermine public confidence. However, it is advisable to insist that the facts be reported in their true perspective along with any compensating factors that might exist.
3. On occasion it might be necessary to withhold information temporarily, such as in land acquisition, disciplinary cases, court cases where public statements might compromise the City's position, when the City is preparing a policy statement, or when news items must be timed with particular events. In these instances, reporters or other inquirers are not to be simply told "no comment," but are to be provided a reasonable explanation of why information is not being released at that time.
4. In the case of auto accidents involving municipal vehicles or alleged acts of negligence that might involve liability for the City, all remarks in regard to such an incident shall be examined by the Law Department prior to their dissemination to the news media to eliminate any unwarranted admissions of liability against the City.
5. All personnel in the City government have the right to freely express themselves on matters under their jurisdiction. They also have the responsibility to express their opinions in a professional manner in order to not inappropriately bring discredit upon the City, its staff or elected officials. Employees are to understand that they must take full responsibility for any and all comments that they make to the news media that have not first been cleared by their supervisor. Employees are to show consideration of Council's responsibility as the policy-making body for the City.

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6. With particularly complex or controversial matters, it is always appropriate to notify the City Manager to see to it that he/she has the needed background information for the public comments he/she or City Council may have to make.
7. Whenever an employee has reason to believe that the news media will have a story on a matter of substantial importance, he/she should notify his/her supervisor so that the City Manager may be appropriately informed.
8. All employees and supervisors should reference the City Manager's Executive Order No. 6: Public Information Policy.

B. Release of Information

1. All employees should carefully evaluate the circumstances and exercise good judgment prior to releasing information to the media or to a citizen. Some general guidelines regarding the release of information should be considered, such as:
 - a. Specific and/or personal information on individual employees should not be released (i.e., names, addresses, phone numbers, personnel records, salary, etc.). Requests for such information should be referred to the Human Resource Department to assure compliance with applicable public information laws and other related civil rights laws and regulations.
 - b. Information, which may be detrimental to an individual, should not, in most circumstances, be released without the employee's knowledge and authorization, unless otherwise required by law;
 - c. Special projects or sensitive assignments may involve confidential aspects; check with your supervisor for clarification of such issues;
 - d. Information regarding an applicant's or employee's medical or psychological condition, history or treatment, and/or disabling condition, is confidential. Any such inquiry, or release of information, should be directed to the Human Resource Department.

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2. Any employee who questions whether or not a specific category of information is available for public dissemination is advised to seek the advice of their supervisor. In the supervisor's absence, it is wise to err on the side of caution -- information which has been denied can always be released at a later time should such action be warranted. However, once information that is not public has been released it cannot be recalled without difficulty.
3. Questions regarding the Public Records Act, Privacy Act, Sunshine Law and related laws should be directed to the Law Department.

C. Media Relations

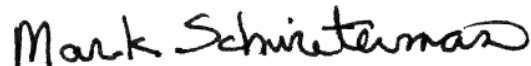
1. The City's Community Information Manager is the City's resident expert in Press Relations and should be consulted regularly on all such matters.
2. If an employee has any questions about the propriety of releasing information to the public, they must check with their supervisor before releasing the information. An employee who does not check with their supervisor prior to releasing information assumes full responsibility for the accuracy of such information and the consequences for releasing inaccurate or justifiably confidential information.

The City Manager hereby delegates the appropriate responsibility and authority to administer this Policy to the City's Assistant City Managers and Department Directors.

Approved:

9/18/06

Date

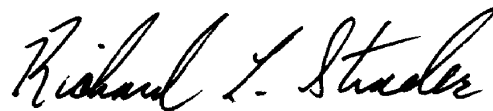


Mark Schwieterman
City Manager

Issued:

10/27/06

Date



Richard L. Strader
Director of Human Resources