



Commission

Media Relations Policy & Guidelines

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Purpose

- To promote public awareness and understanding of Commission decisions, policies, issues facing the London Transit Commission (LTC), services and programs and new and emerging initiatives.
- To provide employees with an understanding of the policies surrounding public statements and media relations and establish procedures for designated employees to use in providing timely and effective responses to inquiries from the media.
- To promote the Commission's reputation and ensure consistency and professionalism in how the LTC and its designated employees communicate with the media.
- To ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between providing consistent and equitable access to public Commission proceedings and the effective and efficient conduct of these proceedings.

Application

The media are defined as:

- Local, provincial or national print outlets (e.g.: daily, weekly and community and student newspapers);
- Radio and television;
- News websites;
- Wire services (e.g.: Canada News Wire (CNW), Canadian Press (CP)); and
- Staff or authorized representatives of local Internet information providers (web authors, bloggers, webcasters etc).

General Information

As an open, accountable and transparent organization, the LTC values the role that media plays in communicating Commission news and information to the public, to help inform the public on issues and to report on the public's views and opinions about the LTC. The Commission is committed to developing and maintaining professional working relationships with the media.

Cross Reference

- London Transit Commission Privacy Policy
- Emergency/Crisis Communication Procedures
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)
- Municipal Act
- London Transit's Administrative Policy on Information Technology

Guiding Principles

- The Commission recognizes the media plays a vital role in LTC's communication activities and encourages accurate media coverage of programs, services and events.
- The Commission fosters positive working relationships with all media, including local, regional and national, in print, broadcast and electronic formats.
- The Commission has a responsibility to provide accurate information and respond to media requests with promptness, courtesy, honesty and respect and welcomes the opportunity to communicate information about the LTC.
- The Commission maintains an open, transparent communications process that enables journalists to have access to the Chair and/or the General Manager.

Spokespeople

The two principle spokespeople for the Commission are the Chair and the General Manager.

The respective spokesperson should advise the other as soon as is reasonably possible if they have given or are going to give a media interview.

When appropriate, the Commission Chair or General Manager may designate a media spokesperson to respond to a media inquiry to ensure that information is disseminated quickly and accurately to all interested media.

Employees

Individual employees may speak to the media as a private citizen; however they are not authorized to speak on behalf of the Commission. For employees who choose to contact, initiate or respond to news stories as private citizens, the following applies:

- Letters may not be prepared on Commission time, be distributed on Commission stationery or mailed at Commission expense;
- Telephone or email contact may not be made using Commission equipment; and
- Responses or letters shall not include the employee's official title or intimate that the response is made on behalf of the Commission

Media Inquiries

All media inquiries are to be referred immediately to the General Manager's office.

Personnel and Litigation Matters

Generally, the business conducted by the Commission is public, and therefore is public information, subject to MFIPPA legislation. Inquiries regarding such matters (litigation and personnel issues) are exceptions and any inquiries on such are to be referred to the General Manager. For greater clarity, such matters include those referenced in Section 239 of the Municipal Act.

Proactive Media Relations

Recognizing the important role the media have in keeping residents and stakeholders informed about Commission programs, services and initiatives, the LTC engages in proactive media relations activities. Proactive media contact is to be initiated through the General Manager and includes the issuance of media releases and media advisories and personal contacts with reporters and editors for coverage.

In the case of an unexpected or major service interruption (Conventional and/or Specialized), the appropriate media bulletin will be used by using the LTC template. This bulletin is only to advise media of the service interruption, in order for the message to get out as soon as possible to the travelling public, and should contain only basic information relative to the service being interrupted. The General Manager will then follow up with a media release containing more detailed information, if warranted.

Media Plans

There are some situations dealing with media when a media plan is required. Among the examples are when the announcement or media event:

- Is particularly newsworthy and is anticipated to generate significant media interest.
- Involves a number of high-profile spokespeople, each with a speaking opportunity.
- Involves components such as speeches, unveilings or walk-about that require timelines for each.
- Is located off-site and requires special attention to detail about meeting media needs.
- When the timing of the announcement is critical.

The media plans will be prepared by the respective area of the Commission's operation in consultation with the General Manager's office.

Crisis or Emergency Issues

During a crisis or major emergency (e.g. extreme weather), the protocol for working with the media is referenced in the respective emergency policy and LTC's Emergency Communications Plan (crisis communication procedures). The Plan designates the General Manager as the main point of contact for the media. The Directors may be appointed by the General Manager as designate.

Media Inaccuracies

The Commission has the obligation to ensure media reports regarding LTC matters are reported factually and accurately, and to correct or clarify the public record when significant inaccuracies occur. The obligation includes ensuring media reports are fair, objective, balanced and contextual; and that direct quotes are accurate and attributable. The General Manager's office will review media reports and will work with the media outlet in an effort to correct or clarify inaccuracies. If others (Commission members/employees) see or hear inaccurate information, they are to advise the General Manager's office immediately.

Media and Media Access to Public Meetings

Media representatives are welcome to attend and report on all public meetings, including Commission and Accessible Public Transit Service Advisory Committee (APTSAC) meetings.

The Commission will make every effort to accommodate media representatives in the Main Boardroom or other meeting rooms unless the space is needed for staff or delegations. In such cases, alternate seating arrangements will be made.

During meetings, all media representatives are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Media may conduct interviews prior to, during breaks or at the end of meetings in an appropriate location. In any event, the conducting of interviews are not to disrupt the meeting.
- Media will otherwise take a passive role, are not entitled to participate to any degree greater than any member of the public in attendance, and must conduct themselves in a way that is not intrusive or disruptive of the meeting.
- Audio and video recordings of public meetings are allowed using any device provided they are muted and do not disrupt the proceedings in progress.
- Recordings shall take place only from an area that does not unduly obstruct the audience's or participants' view.
- If the Commission determines that an individual is not conducting themselves as described above, permission to record meetings may be discontinued on either a temporary or ongoing basis by the Commission.
- Laptop computers and handheld devices, such as BlackBerrys, are permitted in the meeting rooms provided that the equipment:
 - is completely muted and operated in a manner which does not interfere with the audience's or participants' ability to hear or view the meeting proceedings;
 - does not interfere with the Commission's corporate systems;
 - does not compromise confidential materials or discussions; and
 - does not occupy space otherwise required for a meeting participant or audience member

Media are not permitted to attend "In Camera" sessions or its working group meetings due to the confidential nature of the sessions. Media must remove themselves and all media equipment and personal effects shall be removed from the meeting room during an In Camera session.

Media visits to LTC facilities (including in service buses) are to be pre-arranged with the General Manager in advance of any photo or film shoot.

Connection by the media of their computer equipment and that of any other privately owned computer to LTC information services or network infrastructure is prohibited, with the only exception being to access LTC's public web pages via the Internet.

Media Access to Commission Employees, Facilities and Work Locations

Media are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the following guidelines when visiting LTC facilities and work locations (a work location includes buses and service vehicles):

- No media may enter any LTC facility or work location which is not normally accessible to the general public, without providing satisfactory identification and receiving clearance from the General Manager's office.
- Photo shoots, film shoots, audio or video recordings or interviewing of Commission employees or the public at any LTC facility or work location must be pre-arranged through, and is subject to the discretion of, the General Manager's office.
- No media shall photograph, or record audio or video of any employee or the public at LTC facilities or work locations if, for personal or other reasons, he or she does not consent to appear in a photograph, audio or video recording.
- No media shall conduct themselves in a manner which is disruptive or otherwise poses a safety or security risk at LTC facilities or work locations.

Compliance with Policy

The General Manager or his/her designate will address any issues of non-compliance with this policy. They may speak directly to the individual and/or his/her manager or supervisor to discuss any issues and remediation.