



County Executive Office

MEDIA CONTACT, PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (PRA) and PUBLIC EVENT NOTIFICATION

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Revised November 2, 2015

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Media Contact, PRA and Public Event Notification Policy & Procedure is to provide direction to agencies and departments on implementing uniform practices for communicating with Board offices and CEO Communications regarding contact with the media, distribution of news releases, public events where media may interact with County employees and PRA requests from media or others. Standardizing notifications of these contacts will assist the Board offices and CEO in staying updated on relevant issues and events that impact constituents.

II. POLICY

Using an email list called Media Advisories (located in Global Outlook), agencies and departments are to notify and communicate with Board offices, CEO executive management and CEO Communications in the following circumstances:

- Whenever contacted by a member of the media – print, broadcast or online.
- Whenever anyone, either a member of the media or an individual, submits a request for documents under the Public Records Act.
- Whenever distributing a news release, photo opportunities, etc. to the media.
- Whenever department employees are quoted for use in a media story.
- Whenever scheduling a County event or event where County staff will interact with media and/or the public or where a County official will speak.

CEO Communications is always available as a resource to agencies and departments on any question, concern or issue regarding notifications to the Board, as well as inquiries and PRAs.

III. PROCEDURE

A) MEDIA CONTACT NOTIFICATION: After being contacted by a member of the media, send a notification email **on the same day**, following these steps:

- 1) If the query includes a Board member or a member of a Board office staff, notify that Supervisor and his/her Chief of Staff as soon as possible. Indicate whether you are preparing a response and provide a copy of the intended response and the intended timing of response. Confirm receipt of information by District office. After responding to the reporter, send a notification to members of the Board, all five Board office chiefs of staff and County PIO. **DO NOT SEND INFORMATION REGARDING BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR STAFFS TO THE ENTIRE "MEDIA ADVISORIES" LIST.**

2) For all other media inquiries, use the Media Advisories email address – MA@ocgov.com – in the TO: line; use the CC: line to include other relevant personnel who may be connected to the issue or should know about it.

3) In the Subject: line, type Media Contact Notification, followed by a colon. Then put the name of the media organization and a “headline” about the issue.

Example – Media Contact: OC Register on new child welfare mandates

4) In the body of the email, copy and paste the Media Contact Notification Template found at the end of this document. It guides you to provide specific information: brief summary, new or follow-up, staff contacted, date/time of contact, media/reporter and their phone/ email, bulleted summary of the request/questions asked, information provided, sources to be quoted (if any), anticipated publication date/air time, any additional background, internal distribution and name of person filing the notification.

5) If your agency/department protocol calls for attaching a PDF or Word document of the notification content, follow that protocol. Attachments of the content are NOT required by BOS nor CEO Communications.

6) Whenever possible, notifications should be sent BEFORE interviews are conducted by print or broadcast.

B) PRA REQUEST: Send California Public Records Act (PRA) notifications on the same day they are received. Follow these steps:

1) If the query includes a Board member or a member of a Board office staff, notify that Supervisor and his/her Chief of Staff as soon as possible with a copy to County Counsel. In consultation with County Counsel, gather requested information and provide District office a copy of the intended response and the timing of response. Confirm that the District office received the notification. If the PRA includes requests for emails from a Board member or a member of a Board Office, CEO will coordinate email searches through OCIT and direct that all materials be provided directly to County Counsel. County Counsel will coordinate review and appropriate redaction with Board offices. Once that is complete, Counsel will provide the documents determined to be responsive and releasable to PIO. After responding to the reporter, send a notification to members of the Board, all five Board office chiefs of staff and County PIO. **DO NOT SEND INFORMATION REGARDING BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR STAFFS TO THE ENTIRE “MEDIA ADVISORIES” LIST.**

2) For all other PRA requests, use the Media Advisories email address – MA@ocgov.com – in the TO: line; use the CC: line to include other relevant personnel who may be connected to the issue or should know about it.

3) In the Subject: line, type PRA Request, followed by a colon; then type the name of the person or media organization making the request and a “headline” about the issue.

Example: PRA Request: Joe Smith OC Register on County Reimbursement Policy

4) In the body of the email, briefly describe who made the request, the records being sought and your response to the request. If known, provide context for why the person is asking for the documents.

5) Provide information on how the PRA is being addressed by including the steps you have taken or will take.

Example: We are seeking guidance from County Counsel and are in the process of determining if there are responsive records.

6) Once the PRA has been resolved and the records are released, send a follow-up notification.

C) NEWS RELEASE: Send a Media Contact Notification email the same day you distribute a news release, photo opportunity or other materials to the media. Follow these steps:

1) Use the Media Advisories email address – MA@ocgov.com – in the TO: line; use the CC: line to include other relevant personnel who may be connected to the issue or should know about it.

2) In the Subject: line, identify the email as “News Release,” followed by a colon; and then list the “headline” from the release.

Example: News Release: New Security Measures Planned for Board Meetings.

3) In the body of the email, paste the first paragraph or two of the release.

4) Paste the URL to the posted release. If it is not posted, attach as a PDF or Word doc.

D) PUBLIC EVENT: When your agency/department hosts a public event that will involve the use of County resources and/or staff, and County officials will be speaking, as soon as the date is secured send a notification email to the CEO and Board offices. Follow these steps:

1) Type individual email addresses of the CEO and Board offices in the TO: line. There is no email address group list used for public event notifications.

2) In the “Subject line,” identify the email as “Public Event,” followed by a colon; then list the Supervisorial District where the event will be held and a “headline” describing the event.

3) In the body of the email, briefly describe the event. Include the time, place

and date; why it is being held; who is being invited and whether County staff will be speaking.

4) Attach to the email any community fliers or invitations prepared and any other information planned for distribution.

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