

# POLICY



## Town of Dudley Communications Policy

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### 1. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

#### **Communications Policy Objective**

The Town of Dudley believes that the key to the successful operations of a municipal organization is communication, both internal and external. The objective of this Communications Policy is to provide the organization with a guide to fulfilling the Town's mission through the proper dissemination of information. If you have questions that this guide does not cover, please contact the Town Administrator's Office at (508) 949-8001.

The Communications Policy includes the following (discussed in detail below):

- Media Policy
- Social Media Policy
- External Link Policy

#### **Internal Communications**

Department heads are in charge of communications within their departments. However, please utilize the Town's logo on all documents and ensure that the document is written in a professional manner. The Town Administrator's Office will review any document upon request.

#### **External Communications**

##### **Official Spokesperson**

The Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, or designated Member of The Board of Selectmen, is always the official government spokesperson for the Town of Dudley.

The Town Administrator is designated and empowered by the Board of Selectmen as the Chief Public Information Officer (PIO) and daily spokesperson for the Town of Dudley.

Under the direction of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator can designate a Public Information Coordinator to carry out daily social media activities and coordinate media relations.

For daily public safety operations, at the direction of the Town Administrator, the following designated spokespersons are assigned:

Fire Department:	Fire Chief or senior ranking officer as designated by fire chief.
Police Department:	Police Chief or senior ranking officer as designated by police chief.
Highway Department:	Highway Superintendent or Highway Commissioner (Selectmen)

When the Police or Fire Chief designates a spokesperson, it will be the responsibility of the Chief Officer to brief the spokesperson relative to this policy and encourage attendance at any related training to this policy.

The Town Administrator and independently elected Town Treasurer/Collector and Town Clerk will serve as the official spokesperson(s) for their respective offices.

### **Cultural Identity**

All departments will identify as the Town of Dudley. Exceptions will be made for specific purposes, such as to meet grant-funding requirements. This includes advertisements, fliers, press releases, newsletters, etc. If your department has a specific need for utilizing the department's name for branding, please consult with the Town Administrator.

Example: "This meeting is sponsored by the Dudley Recreational Committee" should be "This meeting is sponsored by the Town of Dudley." This applies to all departments.

### **Press Releases and Press Statements**

- Emergency releases will be addressed under **Emergency Notifications**.
- Public Safety releases are also addressed under **Public Safety**.

The Town of Dudley will utilize press releases to announce Town programs, services, events, etc. The Town will also utilize releases as a way to inform the public of certain topics. Designated Public Information Officers (PIO) will prepare, for review and distribution, all press releases to local, regional, and national media.

All persons except the Fire Chief, Police Chief, Town Clerk, and Treasurer/Collector must submit all press releases to be reviewed by the Town Administrator prior to distribution or release. A record of the review will be maintained and can easily be accomplished by using Town email to send a draft and reply with approval.

The Town of Dudley utilizes press releases to add clarity to a particular issue, topic or media story. Press releases will be issued by designated Public Information Officers under the guidance of the Town Administrator and/or Board of Selectmen.

When requesting a press release, please email the designated department PIO, or Town Administrator's Office, and submit the information to be released in detail. Please allow for an adequate amount of time prior to the need for the release; at least one week prior to the targeted media's submission deadline.

### **Media Inquiries/Interviews**

All media requests for interviews for departments and staff will be handled through the Town Administrator's Office. If your department is contacted by a member of the press on a routine topic for your department, please contact your supervisor or department head for a protocol to respond and afterwards, follow up with the Town Administrator's Office.

On non-routine topics, please refer the reporter to the Town Administrator's Office, and a designee will work with your department on a response. Departments should consult with the Town Administrator's Office if they have questions regarding the release of sensitive or controversial information. In instances regarding the legality of releasing information, the department and the Town Administrator's Office will consult the Town Attorney. For additional guidance, please refer to the Town's Media Policy.

## **Editorial Board Meetings and Op-Ed Columns**

At any time, Town of Dudley officials may meet with an editorial board of a publication to provide additional insight into a topic directly involving the Town. The Town Administrator's Office will assist with the logistics of setting up such a meeting. Town staff that are approached or who desire to write an editorial or opinion piece as a representative of Town Hall shall seek approval from the Town Administrator and work with the Town Administrator's Office. This ensures that the message stays consistent with the Town's views and mission. This section does not extend to independently elected officials.

## **Emergency Notifications**

Fire and police responses to emergencies in the community will be reported directly to the media by a designated department spokesperson (PIO) with the approval of the Fire or Police Chief.

Reports relative to an incident will be limited to activities that fall within the scope of the reporting Chief. Police Department releases concerning traffic advisories, investigations and other routine community relations activities may also be reported directly to the media. Any releases deemed to be of concern to the community will also be sent to the Town Administrator (PIO), including the Board of Selectmen.

Emergency Management releases concerning local hazard mitigation, evacuations, recovery operations and disaster planning will be reported directly to the media by a designated department spokesperson with the approval of the Fire Chief/EMD. Any releases deemed to be of concern to the community must be shared with the Police and Highway and Town Administrator (PIO), including the Board of Selectmen.

## **Website**

The Town of Dudley website will serve as a resource for residents, visitors, and businesses. The site will convey the Town's message while providing current and vital information. The website will be managed by the Web Administrator. However, each department will be responsible for ensuring that the information on their web page is current and accurate. Each department should review their web content on a regular basis. A calendar of events and meetings of community interest will be maintained on the site. All departments are required to provide the Town Administrator's Office with meeting schedules, calendars, event notifications, and community outreach and interest programs for publication on the site.

## **Presentations/Publications**

The Town creates and distributes a variety of communication documents including, but not limited to, press releases, media advisories, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, annual reports, staff reports, newsletters, advertisements, posters, postcards, flyers, etc.

All presentations, publications, and items purchased with Town funds should bear the Town of Dudley logo and website address. Externally distributed publications must be reviewed by the Town Administrator or designee to guarantee that all publications representing the Town reflect a consistent message and image and to ensure that branding guidelines have been met.

Internally distributed publications must also bear the Town of Dudley logo and should be reviewed by the department head, or their designee, prior to distribution.

## **Use of Town Logo**

The Town of Dudley logo shall be used on all Town publications, external communications, fliers, invitations, programs, posters, paraphernalia, and any item requiring a symbol of identity. When designing a publication or an item with the logo, please consult with the Town Administrator's Office.

Internal requests for camera-ready copies of the logo or the symbol should be made through the Town Administrator's Office. Scanned or modified copies of the logo or the symbol are prohibited. External

organizations requesting the Town logo should be referred to the Town Administrator's Office. The Town does not output the logo to external organizations but will work with those who have an established partnership with the Town or are hosting an event in which the Town serves as a sponsor. Use of the Town logo from non-partner organizations and copying images from the Town's website for personal or commercial use is strictly prohibited. If you see the Town's logo displayed in such a manner, please notify the Town Administrator's Office.

### **Citizen Inquiries**

Departments should respond to citizen inquiries in a courteous and timely manner. This includes inquiries received by e-mail, telephone, web, or U.S. mail. Please notify the Town Administrator and your department director of inquiries of a sensitive nature.

### **Public Records Requests**

All requests for public records should be forwarded to both the Town Clerk and Town Administrator's Office for an official response. Records requests for the Police Department shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police.

### **Advertising**

The Town Administrator, or their designee, will approve in advance all paid advertising (print, broadcast, Internet, billboard, radio, etc.) This does not include paid advertising utilized for hiring purposes or advertising that meets a state statute. The Town will only advertise Town programs, services, or events in which the Town serves as a partner or a sponsor. This does not include non-profit, charitable events as approved by a vote of the Board of Selectmen, local recreational or sporting activities, where a local academic or non-profit civic club or organization is involved, or sporting events where cheering for a state, regional or national team may be a source of local pride and comradery.

### **Photo Usage**

The Town does not provide photo credit in its publications or postings. The Town will not post photos for which there is a noted copyright. If no copyright is noted, none will be assumed.

### **Email**

To facilitate compliance with public records law, the Town requires all employees to use a Town of Dudley email address for all work-related correspondence. Town email should only be used to conduct Town business and should not be used for personal communication.

All members of the following boards/commissions/committees must use a Town of Dudley email address: Board of Selectmen; Finance, Appropriation, and Advisory Committee; Capital Improvement Planning Committee; Planning Board; Conservation Commission; Water/Sewer Commissioners. For all other boards/commissions/committees, the chairman can request a Town of Dudley email address, which will be assigned at the discretion of the Town Administrator.