



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to put into practice the goals and objectives as identified in the 2017 Municipality's Communications Plan.

The primary goal of the Municipal Communications Policy is as follows:

- Communicate in an efficient and professional manner
- Be open, transparent and accountable
- Value public input and two-way communication
- Share information in a proactive and timely manner
- Communicate in plain language, using diverse and accessible formats
- Consistent customer service approach in line with goals of communications strategy

2. DEFINITIONS

Municipality is the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

Municipal Representative is an employee, elected official, contractor or consultant who acts on behalf of the Municipality.

Social media means forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. Social media platforms include, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Spokespeople are identified employees or member of Council who make official comments to the media on behalf of the Municipality. Identified spokespersons are the Chief Administrative Officer and Mayor.

3. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all municipal representatives.

This policy applies to internal and external communications for all Municipal Representatives when communications activities relate to the business or operations of the Municipality.

Policies regarding the use of social media are outlined in the separate Social Media Policy.

The use of technology and Municipal property must comply with all other relevant

municipal policies, procedures and guidelines, as well as provincial and federal legislation.

This policy shall be administered in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act* (MFIPPA) and any other relevant legislation.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

a. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):

- The policy shall be administered by the CAO

b. Communications Officer (with support from Communications Liaisons and Department Heads):

- Monitors the policy and communications plan, coordinates or provides training to municipal representatives, and suggests revisions for Council's consideration;
- Reviews policy on a regular basis, or at the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer;
- Ensures consistent messaging and imaging for all communications-related activities.

c. Municipal Representatives:

- Ensures that municipal-related communications activities are in accordance with this policy and other related policies, procedures, guidelines, and legislation

5. GOVERNING RULES AND GUIDELINES

a. Guidelines

- Communications activities shall follow the overall goals and objectives set out in the Communications Plan (Appendix 1).
- All communications-related materials should be branded as Mississippi Mills and where ever possible link back to the main Mississippi Mills website (www.mississippimills.ca) and/or social media pages.
- Formal Council communications (such as agendas and minutes) shall follow the notice provision as outlined in the Procedural By-law.
- Identified spokespeople shall express only factual information and not personal opinions when asked to comment about a municipal matter.
- Communications Liaisons and the Communications Officer will work together to create a proactive communications environment.
- The website shall be updated on a regular basis with relevant content and in a uniform format.
- When possible, communications materials should follow the standards established set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA).

- All communications activities must adhere to relevant policies and by-law such as, but not limited to: Accessible Customer Service Policy, Council and Employee Codes of Conduct.

b. Records Management and Retention

Documents and records generated as a result of this policy will be maintained in accordance with the Municipality's Records Retention By-law.

c. Contravention of the Policy

Municipal Representatives are expressly forbidden to contravene the guidelines and standards such as:

- Publishing material that is discriminatory, harassing, abusive, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, applicable Code of Conduct and Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Policy.
- Misrepresenting the Municipality's programs or policies in their communications.
- Disclose confidential information pertaining to the business or operations of the Municipality, including items discussed in closed session meetings.
- Disclose personal information about any individual, municipal employee, elected or appointed official, client, customer, vendor, supplier etc. without their written consent.
- Promote, endorse, or allow the marketing of non-municipal businesses, products, or any other non-municipal related opportunities, with the exception of economic development/retention activities and the official role of elected officials as per the *Municipal Act*.
- Communicate or engage in any conversations about the Municipality in a destructive manner.
- Represent personal opinions opposed to those of the Municipality.

6. COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with this policy may result in discipline up to and including dismissal.