

GOVERNMENT OF YUKON Policy 1.3

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION MANUAL
VOLUME 1: CORPORATE POLICIES—GENERAL
TITLE: COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
EFFECTIVE: 1994 05 12; UPDATED: 2022 08 30**

1 SCOPE

1.1 Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of Cabinet meeting number 94-21, dated May 12, 1994 and revised on September 26, 2006 by DMRC meeting number 06-20, and updated and approved by DMRC meeting number 12-01 on January 24, 2012. The policy was last updated by DMRC meeting number 22-09 on August 29, 2022. Annual policy reviews will be conducted as required with additional updates undertaken through DMRC approval based on the recommendations of the Communications Management Committee (CMC).

1.2 Application

This policy applies to all departments, as defined in [Policy 1.1](#).

1.3 Purpose

1.3.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure effective Government of Yukon communications in spoken, printed and digital form, in accordance with the principles outlined in section 1.4.

1.3.2 For guidance on social media, see the Government of Yukon's [Guiding principles for the use of social media](#) attached to this policy.

1.4 Principles

1.4.1 The duty to inform

1.4.1.1 The Government of Yukon has a responsibility to inform citizens of its plans, programs, services and activities and to respond to questions about government decisions on matters of public interest.

1.4.1.2 The Government of Yukon may hold responsibility in managing territorial emergency communications and responding to critical incidents. This includes the responsibility to inform citizens when there is or has been a risk of actual or immediate harm, serious injury, or death resulting from critical incidents or emergencies.

1.4.2 The right to information

Citizens have a right to government information in accordance with the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) (ATIPPA).

1.4.3 A responsible public service

Communications is a critical component of all government activities and an integral part of planning and delivering programs and services. The Government of Yukon is committed to accessible, impartial, accurate, responsible and timely public communications.

All staff preparing government communications are also responsible for internal communications using available committees and tools and multi-department collaboration as appropriate to best serve the public interest.

A responsible public service ensures it is working together to take all reasonable steps to ensure cross-departmental coordination of communication activities, including during emergencies where no other guidance exists. All staff preparing communications are responsible for consulting and using existing policies and guidance on communication activities and seeking advice to navigate complex and competing legal requirements.

1.4.4 Public engagement in government decision-making

The Government of Yukon is committed to providing opportunities for Yukoners to provide ideas and feedback on issues that interests or affects them. The government is committed to following its public engagement principles: inclusivity, transparency, valuing the unique contribution of participants, accountability and acting with integrity, and a commitment to building skills.

1.4.5 Consistent communications

Communications with the public must be consistent, clear, adhere to government standards, its [style guide](#), promote government objectives and be supported by a strategic approach.

1.4.6 Accessible, respectful and inclusive language

The use of clear, respectful and inclusive language is required in all government materials in order to support public access to programs and services and understanding of government notifications, advisories, decisions and actions.

1.4.7 Visual identity

A comprehensive and consistent corporate brand and visual identity helps the public recognize and access government facilities, programs and services, policies and information. This is achieved through the application of the government's [Visual Identity and Brand Standards guide](#).

1.4.8 Emergency communications and critical incidents

Information that is accurate, timely and relevant is essential in times of crisis in order to protect the health, safety, security and property of Yukoners. All staff preparing Government of Yukon communications materials are responsible for ensuring they have notified and involved impacted departments and external agencies and partners.

Preparing communications to support an emergency response to critical incidents requires staff to balance the duty to inform with the need to respect constraints that may exist when matters are under investigation or before the courts. Decisions on how to manage critical incident

communications should be made in accordance with department direction, available corporate guidance, legal advice and advice from relevant government committees.

Communications staff may need to develop internal communications materials to ensure all necessary senior leaders and Cabinet are informed.

When the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) is activated and responding to emergencies, public information officers operate within the Incident Command Structure (ICS) hierarchy of the ECC and may provide life-safety communications materials and products directly to responding agencies, communities, local governments, the media or other bodies as required.

1.4.9 English and French languages

The Government of Yukon communicates in English and French according to its requirements under the [*Languages Act*](#) and its Policy on French-Language Services and Communications [Policy 1.7. Guidelines on French-Language Services and Communications](#) provides additional guidance.

1.5 Definitions

Communications materials – the products created to communicate, such as brochures, pamphlets, posters, letters, advertisements, news releases, media advisories, social media and websites.

Communications methods – planned, strategic tactics and approaches used to communicate government business. Examples of methods include advertising, marketing, media relations, social marketing and public engagement.

Communications strategy – a template-based document used to support strategic communications.

Critical incidents – any actual or alleged event or situation that creates a significant risk of substantial or serious harm to the physical or mental health, safety or wellbeing of an individual or group of individuals.

Inclusive – ensuring language is respectful and is not biased based on race, gender, culture, class, ability, age, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

Media relations – communicating and managing relationships with reporters in order to raise public awareness of the government’s mission, policies, programs and services.

Plain language – writing and speaking that can be easily understood.

Public engagement – a process that links public input into a decision using problem solving or discussions between decision-making bodies and the public.

Public relations – the practice of building and maintaining relationships with the public and other stakeholders.

Strategic communications – a considered, thorough, planned approach to achieving the desired long-term communications effect, for example by using the most suitable methods to reach and engage audiences and stakeholders at the appropriate time in a way that can be evaluated.

Wordmark – the standardized graphic representation of the name of the Government of Yukon, used for purposes of identification and branding.

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Cabinet and Cabinet committees

Cabinet and Cabinet Committees approve communications strategies attached to Cabinet or Cabinet Committee submissions.

2.2 Ministers

Ministers are the principal spokespeople of the Government of Yukon. They are supported in this role by Cabinet communications advisers, departmental communications staff and senior management. Ministers are responsible for announcing Cabinet-approved new or amended policies, programs and initiatives, and approving news releases announcing their departments' activities.

2.2.1 Cabinet communications

Cabinet communications manages media, public relations and strategic communications issues on behalf of the Premier and ministers. The team works with the Executive Council Office Communications unit, department communications units and with ministerial assistants to ensure a coordinated approach to communications.

2.3 Deputy Ministers and corporation presidents

Deputy Ministers of departments and presidents of Crown corporations or their delegates establish communications processes and procedures, provide direction on strategic communications objectives and appoint departmental spokespeople.

2.4 Departments

2.4.1 The Executive Council Office (ECO)

The ECO Communications unit works with communications personnel throughout the government to provide corporate communications advice and support.

ECO Communications develops communications policies, guidelines, procedures, training and templates. The unit's specific responsibilities include but are not limited to providing corporate information online, managing the news release process and analyzing Cabinet and Cabinet committee submission communications strategies.

2.4.2 Departments, Crown corporations and agencies

Departments, Crown corporations and agencies are responsible for:

- developing and carrying out communications initiatives that are consistent with government and departmental goals and corporate communications policies;
- obtaining legal advice where appropriate, and ensuring decision makers have access to legal advice;
- ensuring awareness of government programs, services, policies and accomplishments
- ensuring appropriate levels of internal and external awareness of any critical incidents, events or situations that may create a significant risk of serious harm to the health, safety or wellbeing of an individual or group of individuals;
- integrating a strategic communications approach into regular planning and operations;
- identifying and helping to prepare departmental spokespeople, who should undertake media training and work closely with their departmental communications staff;
- following corporate policies, procedures and guidelines;
- implementing the visual identity and using the wordmark appropriately; and
- ensuring departmental websites are client focused and adhere to the web standards and corporate template.

2.4.3 Queen's Printer

The Queen's Printer, housed within the Supply Services Branch, is the Official Publisher of the Government of Yukon, and administers the [*Public Printing Act*](#). Supply Services Branch – Acquisition Services and Planning also provides technical and production services to ensure printed materials meet government standards and specifications and contracts all government printed materials..

The eServices for Citizens Branch and the Executive Council Office Communications Unit maintains the design and reproduction standards for the Yukon government wordmark and Yukon's Coat of Arms with periodic updates to the Brand Standards guide.

2.4.4 Information and Communications Technology

The Information and Communications Technology division of Highways and Public Works provides technical support, project management, procurement assistance and website hosting to support web developers and departmental staff.

The Governance of Digital Services Delivery General Administration Manual policy 1.20 further defines authority and leadership in the delivery and coordination of user-centered digital services across government.

2.4.5 French Language Services Directorate (FLSD)

FLSD supports departments in complying with the Languages Act and is responsible for: translating communication materials; managing the Government of Yukon's French-language social media presence; and publishing French-language web content.

2.5 Government of Yukon employees

All staff preparing government communications materials are responsible for:

- ensuring departmental and corporate processes and approvals are followed; and
- ensuring consistency with government and departmental goals and corporate communications policies.

2.6 Communications Management Committee (CMC)

The Communications Management Committee is a subcommittee of the Deputy Ministers' Review Committee (DMRC).

The Executive Council Office Deputy Minister is responsible for CMC.

The Communications Management Committee:

- provides a forum for all management-level government communications staff to align communications practices, provide strategic direction and define priorities for the broader Communications Community, exchange information and discuss emerging and critical issues; and
- responds to requests from the DMRC to undertake special projects.

2.6.1 Communications Review Committee (CRC)

The Communications Review Committee is a CMC subcommittee and is responsible for:

- providing peer review of all communications strategies forming part of Cabinet and Cabinet committee submissions; and
- assessing whether communications strategies are appropriate and comprehensive, and making recommendations for improvements.