

B O R O U G H O F
NEW PROVIDENCE
SETTLED IN 1720

Borough of New Providence Policy

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| Department: Administration | Issue Date: 07-147-2017 | SOP # 102-17-001 | Resolution # (If applicable) 2018- |
| Title: Social Media/Public Information Guidelines | | Approved by: Mayor and Council | |

I. PURPOSE/GOALS

The purpose of this policy is to define the Borough's procedures regarding the initiation, approval and distribution of all news releases and other public information and to address issues surrounding social media. This policy applies to all employees, elected officials and volunteers.

The Borough strives to provide accurate information and promote understanding and acceptance of Borough activities through all public information efforts. These efforts are at times disrupted ~~through by~~ inaccurate information ~~being~~ shared through unofficial social media sites ~~which that~~ the public believe are ~~an~~ appropriate sources of information.

The goal of this policy is to assure that accurate, non-political and factual information is shared via the official sites and sources of the Borough of New Providence. These media include: Borough's Website and Facebook pages, Community Calendar, Quarterly Newsletter, Local Cable Access Channels, ~~and~~ the Electronic Bulletin Board, as well as print and other news media.

II. DISCUSSION

The Public Information Officer is vital in the coordination and dissemination of official public information for all aspects of the Borough of New Providence operations. It is understood and recognized that all employees, elected and appointed officials, and our volunteer committees represent and reflect the values of the Borough of New Providence. As such, it is imperative that any and all release of information be coordinated through the Public Information Officer or Borough Administrator to assure ~~that~~ those values are reflected in the information being shared. Employees are reminded to review the New Providence Personnel Manual for an in-depth discussion of employee's responsibilities as they relate to Internet Use and Social Media. Any questions or concerns that may arise concerning public information content or methodology shall be directed to the Public Information Officer.

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III. PRESS RELEASES

- a. The release of official information from the Borough of New Providence shall be coordinated through the Public Information Officer. Except for our emergency services – Police – Fire and Rescue - only the Public Information Officer is authorized to provide press releases to media outlets.
- b. Department Heads wishing to share official information through a press release ~~s~~ shall coordinate the release of the information through the Public Information Officer.

- c. Advisory Committee Chairs or Liaisons wishing to publicize an approved borough event or other information about their committee shall coordinate the release of that information through the Public Information Officer.

IV. ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARD

- a. The purpose of the Community Bulletin Board is to promote programs of community interest of New Providence Non-profit organizations, municipal, county or school events. Messages from the following individual/groups/entities are not permitted.
 - 1. Private persons or entities;
 - 2. Businesses;
 - 3. Political organizations;
 - 4. Religious organizations;
- b. Requests for posting shall be directed to the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the Borough of New Providence, who may be contacted via the Borough's web-site.
- c. Requests should be submitted at least 2 weeks before the preferred dates of display.
- d. No posting shall be granted for a period exceeding 14 days.
- e. The PIO has sole discretion with the scheduling of messages. While every effort will be made to accommodate requests, there may be times where message display times will need to be modified due to the number of messages requested for those periods.
- f. The content of the message will be reviewed by the Public Information Officer (PIO). If the PIO deems the message to be inappropriate, the PIO will confer with the applicant to alter the message or to deny the request.

V. QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS AND ANNUAL CALENDAR

- a. The Public Information Officer is ~~solely~~ responsible to create and distribute the quarterly newsletters and annual calendar. The information contained in these publications are generally provided by department heads and other borough officials and advise of events and other items of overall interest to the community.

VI. SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEB-SITE PROCEDURES

- a. Mayor and Council of the Borough of New Providence created advisory committees for the purpose of receiving guidance and assistance with various activities within the Borough. These include, but are not limited to; The New Providence Public Art Committee, Sustainability Committee, Beautification Committee, and the Diversity Committee, ~~Emergency Management Committee and the Historic Preservation Committee.~~ Many of these committees wish to enhance their communication ~~ability~~ with the community and desire to create social media pages/accounts, which may include Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- b. In addition, there are a number of Borough Department's hosting social media, including the New Providence Police Department/Emergency Management and New Providence Recreation.
- ~~c.~~ The purpose of this section is to provide accurate information through a consolidated information source, creating a more robust presence for the Borough through the elimination and/or consolidation of individual social media pages. All information will be shared via the Borough's Facebook Page, ~~Newprov.nj.com.~~
- ~~d.~~ Designated employees will be assigned as administrators of the Newprovni Facebook page
- ~~e.~~ and are authorized to post information related to their department's activities.

d-e. ROLE OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER – (PIO)

- 1. The Public Information Officer for the Borough of New Providence shall oversee all social media for the Borough of New Providence.

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2. Advisory Committees and/or borough officials wishing to post to social media shall provide the Public Information Officer – in a format prescribed by the PIO - with the necessary information, which will be posted by the Public Information Officer.
3. The Public Information Officer and Borough Administrator shall determine which Borough Departments will have rights to post directly to social media.
4. Information about them may include activities of the committee, including recent projects, future meeting dates and location and upcoming projects of interest to the community.
- 5.4. The Public Information Officer shall assure:
 - a. Religious or political content is prohibited.
 - b. Policy positions on matters related to the committee shall be consistent with the policy position of the governing body.

VII. COMMUNITY FORUMS AND OTHER NON-OFFICIAL SITES

- a. Within ~~the~~ “community” of New Providence, there are a number of social media sites that could appear to be official sites of the Borough of New Providence. While these sites may have a purpose from a social interaction perspective, too many times inaccurate information is provided by well-intended individuals. As it is impossible for borough officials/employees to monitor and respond to every comment on these sites, the following is recommended:
 1. Do not respond and-or post official information on those sites, as doing so suggests that the site is an official source of borough information. (Should we add: Be aware that only the official borough Facebook pages – Newprovnj, Recreation, Police, and NP Alliance are archived to meet record keeping requirements. Any personal posts made to community pages are the sole responsibility of the posting individual – the borough assumes no liability should the personal post be questioned or legally challenged.)
 2. Confirm that the information is available on the Borough’s Web-site and Facebook page and then (if necessary) respond to the post that the information is available on the Borough’s Web-site and Facebook Page.
 3. If you are browsing these sites and you see a common theme or issue that is raised, you are encouraged to contact and review the matter with the Public Information Officer.
 - a. If appropriate, factual information about the issue or concern will be posted on the Borough’s web-site and Facebook page.

VIII. USE OF PERSONAL FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS RELATING TO BOROUGH BUSINESS

- a. Borough business should not be posted on personal Facebook pages. All official Facebook posts related to borough business are posted to the Newprovnj Facebook page only by those authorized to do so.
- b. Employees, appointed and elected officials and volunteers should be sensitive to their personal posts on Facebook and recognize that although you are posting on your personal page, many residents will be familiar with you in your role with the Borough. (Should we add: Be aware that only the official borough Facebook pages – Newprovnj, Recreation, Police, and NP Alliance are archived to meet record keeping requirements. Any personal posts made to personal pages are the sole responsibility of the posting individual – the borough assumes no liability should the personal post be questioned or legally challenged.)
- c. In your official capacity it is inappropriate to provide any posts or comments relating to public safety issues, especially during natural disaster or large scale incidents or events. For example, a well-intentioned post suggesting that residents call the dispatch center to report certain events could be inaccurate, overloading the call taking capability of the center.
- d. In your official capacity it is never inappropriate to endorse or recommend to the public a particular vendor, business or professional service. Since many know you as an employee, appointed or elected official or volunteer, your recommendations of a local business on your personal page could be viewed as an official endorsement.

1. Further, if you are endorsing one business, you are likely slighting another.

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e. Employees should consult the New Providence Personnel Manual for specific guidance on this subject.

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IX. AUTHORIZED USE OF THE CODE-RED SYSTEM

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a. The purpose of this SOP is to establish guidelines for the administration and use of the Emergency Communications Network, Inc. CodeRED services. This service is an internet based high speed telephone, text and email service.

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b. System Control

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1. Operation control and administration will be the responsibility of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator.
2. Only those employees who are trained in the proper use of CodeRED and have access codes are authorized employees and can launch it. All messages shall receive prior approval from either the OEM Coordinator or the Borough Administrator, who will determine if a request meets the systems purpose.
3. A request can be made from any emergency response department in the Borough.
4. All messages shall come from a Borough Department and not name individual employees or representatives.
5. The OEM Coordinator will provide the Dispatch Center with a list of authorized employees.

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c. System Purpose

1. CodeRED services may be used for the following but is not limited to:

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- a. Missing children and endangered adults.
- b. Providing urgent information regarding public safety with the intent to protect lives and/or property of the citizens and/or visitors of New Providence.
- c. Neighborhood watch information.
- d. Road Closures.
- e. Crime alerts specific to a geographic area.
- f. Evacuations/information concerning critical incidents.
- g. Escaped prisoners.
- h. Weather related information
- i. Water related issues.
- j. Any incident in which broadcasting the message would keep citizens from calling the Dispatch Center to request information.

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2. Emergency messages

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- a. Must be approved by the OEM Coordinator or Borough Administrator.
- b. Can be launched at any time.

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3. Non-emergency "general" messages

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- a. Must be approved by OEM Coordinator or Borough Administrator.

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a. _____ b. Can be launched between the hours of 9 am and 9 pm.

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Original Issue Date: 07-17-2017
Reviewed 12-19-2017
Revised 02-12-2018