

**Kent Regional Service Commission**

**Communication Policy 21-01**

## Introduction

It is always important for an organization to set up a communication protocol. This makes it possible to better diffuse the organization's message and to ensure the coherence of the institutional message conveyed to the media and to our population. Furthermore, a well-established policy allows a better media accessibility by the organization, ensure its program visibility for the public and puts a responsibility on the employees and members of the board of directors to respect the guidelines indicated in this document.

The policy permits the Kent Regional Service Commission (the Commission) to establish and conduct guidelines in order to efficiently communicate internally and externally.

## Internal Communication

Internal communication within the Commission includes, but is not limited to, communication between staff, the Board of Directors (the Board) and the many Commission's committees. Internal communication will be respectful, open, and collaborative, while considering the confidential nature of specific subjects. The responsibility for ensuring that effective internal communication is part of the day-to-day operations of the Commission lies with all those who initiate or participate in communication on behalf of the Commission (for example: Executive Director with the Board, directors with their committees, the person in charge of communications with the staff, etc.).

The Commission has designed and implemented effective internal communication processes ([Appendix A](#)) which will improve the productivity and efficiency of its offices by applying four key principles:

- a) Use of plain language to provide clear, consistent, objective, and easy-to-understand messages.
- b) Continuous two-way communication to give staff and the Board regular opportunities to review and discuss the functioning of the Commission and to contribute to the achievement of objectives, the promotion of projects and the improvement of operations.
- c) Face-to-face communication as the preferred method by which directors communicate operational directions, issues, and relevant projects to their subordinates.
- d) Internal communications never stop. It is an ongoing interactive process. **When information is important, we should always say it more than once.**

## Communication With the Public

Communication with the general public will take place at all levels within the Commission. Those communicating to the general public on behalf of the Commission will do their utmost to ensure that the information they provide is accurate and, if in doubt, will refer the request to their supervisors, to the Executive Director, or to the Commission's Chair. At all times, communication with the public, whether orally, in writing, electronically, or in the form of promotional material, will be in accordance with the Communication Policy.

General written communications must always be in both official languages. Orally, an active offer in both official languages must always be made. For verbal or written communication in response to any person or entity, the language they chose will be the language used for subsequent communications.

Staff and members of the Board are encouraged to consult **Policy 17-02: Respectful Workplace Policy** to know the measures in place to protect them if they are victims of harassment.

## **Brand Image**

The logo and name of the Commission must be applied to all communication products, including any advertising, printed, audiovisual, and digital material (e.g., Commission web pages, newsletters, mobile applications, videos, social networks, etc.).

The Commission will carry out advertising and marketing campaigns, in the Kent region and at the provincial level, in support of its mandate and objectives. Prior to execution, all major advertising campaigns must demonstrate that they will be profitable and help achieve well defined and measurable goals. Focus groups, surveys or similar mechanisms will be used to test the effectiveness of these campaigns. Once implemented, all major campaigns will be monitored and once completed, formally evaluated for their effectiveness.

In accordance with the *Official Languages Act*, media purchases will include the purchase of advertising to serve the communities of both official languages. In the interest of maintaining a consistent brand image, no advertising material will be released until approved by the communications employee or Executive Director.

## **Digital Communication**

Electronic communication by means such as email, internet, websites, and social media provides opportunities for two-way interactive communication and greatly increases response time for distribution of information and to receive feedback. As a result, the Commission will raise awareness and promote its programs via social networks and mobile technologies. As part of its digital strategy, the Commission will monitor rapidly changing technologies and identify opportunities and priorities in this area.

It is important that employees and customers abide by the Code of Conduct: Social Media ([Appendix B](#)) so that anyone who uses these forms of communication does so in a responsible and respectful manner to promote and maintain professionalism within the Commission.

Staff and members of the Board are encouraged to consult **Policy 17-02: Respectful Workplace Policy** to know the measures in place to protect them if they are victims of harassment.

## **Media Relations**

### **Official Spokesperson**

All employees and the members of the Board must know which spokesperson can discuss with the media on all subjects.

- Spokesperson for the Kent Regional Service Commission
  - The Chair and Vice-Chair for all questions of political nature,

- The Executive Director for all administrative and operational questions,
- The Planning Director for all questions about regional planning,
- The Solid Waste Director for all questions about solid waste management,
- The Recreation Master Plan Implementation Coordinator for questions on initiatives in recreation, tourism and wellness supported by the Commission,
- Any other employee or member of the Board who oversees a project that obtains or requires media attention.

All requests for an interview with a member of the Board or an employee other than the spokesperson mentioned above must have the approval of the Executive Director.

#### Nature of the information diffused to the media

Regarding the nature of the information which is shared with the media, the Commissions' spokespersons must only share factual and veracious information. The spokesperson for the Board such as the Chair and Vice-Chair can emit opinions, reports, or evaluation in the name of the Commission's Board of Directors.

#### Information Accessibility

The Kent Regional Service Commission answers to the requests for information during its business hours. Monday to Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Under no circumstances will the personal telephone number of any member of staff, partner or member of the Board be communicated to the public without the specific authorization of the person.

#### Notice to media

A notice to the media is to some extent an invitation made to inform them of the standard of the organization's event. In a nutshell, a notice to the media is a short message without being too precise which normally arouses the interest of the media.

- The notice should answer the following questions:
  - Who?
  - What?
  - When?
  - Where?
  - Why?

It must include the name of the people attending the event and the name of a resource person to share more information with the media if necessary.

## Press Release

It is very useful to have a press release for the media, but also for the organization that emits the document. In general, the media uses press releases as additional information to write their article or interview. For the organization, it is a document which contains all the necessary information so that the journalists communicate the correct information in the media.

A press release should be short and to the point, leaving a short paragraph at the very end to introduce the organization and its connection to the initiative. It should include the name of one or more contacts to provide more information to the media if necessary. A press release can contain fact sheets, data, charts, quotes, expert statements, etc.

## Drafting and Revision of Notices and Press Releases

Unless absent or unable, notices to the media and press releases should be written by the communications employee for the Commission to maintain a consistent format. A template is available to all employees for writing these documents if another employee would be better placed to write them, due to their knowledge of the project. It is strongly suggested that notices and press releases be submitted to the Commission's communications employee for review.

Whenever possible, when the Commission is a partner on a project, employees or members of the Board working with our partners should ensure that any press releases or opinions issued regarding the said project are reviewed by the Commission before being sent, especially if the Commission logos are associated with it.

## Media review

An employee of the Commission should be responsible for compiling the articles and interviews (written, audio or video) in which the Commission is included or mentioned. Employees and Board members who find such an article should, if possible, forward it to this employee so that the media review is as complete as possible each year. If an employee or board member is aware that an article will be published, or an interview broadcasted, it is recommended they request a copy of the article or a link for audio or video clips from the journalists to include them in the media review.

## Board of Directors Meeting

The meetings of the Board are public and accessible to all. Said meetings can only go behind "closed doors" if the discussion is of private matter as indicated in the Article 10.2 (4) and 10.2 (5) of the *Municipalities Act*.

- The journalists must respect the following regulations:
  - Installation of the audio-video equipment 10 minutes prior the beginning of the meeting,
  - Limit movement of all equipment (not to disturb the course of the meeting),

- When possible, make interview requests and submit questions to board members, the Executive Director, or employees in advance,
- Respect the designated seating area,
- No questions asked during the meeting,
- No collecting of images of confidential documents.

THIS POLICY COMES INTO EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 2021.

POLICY 13-03 WILL BE REPEALED ON ADOPTION OF POLICY 21-01.

**Kent Regional Service Commission**

**Internal Communication—Procedure**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure efficient and timely communication of information relating to the environment and the proper functioning of the organization.

Various processes are used for internal communication within the Commission. The main topics of internal communication include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Changes to policies, objectives, and targets,
- Updates on projects or events,
- Changes to internal operations,
- Preparation for a staff meeting,
- Upcoming social activities, and
- Closing of offices and other exceptional situations.

In order to make the process as efficient as possible, the following methods are preferred:

- Use of clear language (avoid jargon and uncommon abbreviations),
- Keep it as concise as possible,
- Open and objective communication,
- Two-way dialogue, and
- Select an accessible and appropriate means of communication depending on the situation.

## **Procedures**

- A) The employee responsible for communications within the Commission is responsible for transmitting internal messages to other team members.
- B) The choice of the most appropriate mechanism (s) for internal communication is left to the discretion of the responsible employee. The mechanisms used by the Commission for internal communication include, but are not limited to:
  - Staff Meeting,
  - Emails,
  - Notice boards and posters,
  - Text messaging, and
  - In Out Board Announcements
- C) Frequency — The process is constant and provides the opportunity for all team members to add their messages to internal communications. The frequency can increase as needed.
  - Monthly electronic communication
  - Quarterly staff meeting



## **Kent Regional Service Commission**

### **Code of Conduct: Social Media**

## **Introduction**

The Kent Regional Service Commission is responsible for providing essential services to residents of the Kent region. Our social media is intended as a space for everyone to learn more about the services offered, our various programs, and to inform the public of any changes to them. We encourage all our subscribers to share their experiences with us and engage in discussions on our networks. To make sure everyone has a positive experience in our online community, we have defined a code of conduct.

**This Code of Conduct is addressed to and applies to anyone who writes a publication, posts a comment, or sends private messages to or on behalf of the Commission. This includes, but is not limited to, employees and members of the Commission, its partners as well as the general public.**

## **Protect Your Privacy and the Privacy of Others**

Please avoid posting personal information about yourself or anyone else. Posts including email addresses, phone numbers, personal or business addresses or any other personal information will be removed from our social media.

## **Respect Others in the Community**

We ask you to avoid using hateful, defamatory, obscene, or discriminatory language. Any comments or posts that harass others or that could be considered offensive will be hidden or removed. The responsible user can also be blocked or banned if the situation persists.

## **Intellectual Property**

We ask that you do not post creative content for which you do not have the legal right to share. All copyrighted text, images, logos or videos will be removed from our channels.

## **Stay Relevant**

We encourage lively discussions on our social media. We want to hear your point of view, but we ask that when you join a discussion, you stay on topic and not post any comments, links, videos or images unrelated to the current conversation. We may remove any off-topic posts or comments, especially if the same off-topic comment, link, or image is repeated multiple times.

## **Refrain from Posting Advertising and Promotion**

All links, images or comments that advertise or promote individuals, goods, services, businesses, or causes may be removed. Please do not create any posts or comments that serve as advertisements or promotional tools unless they are relevant to the conversation at hand.

## **Opinions**

Please remember that the opinions expressed by our subscribers on our social media are theirs and do not necessarily represent the views of the Commission, its employees, its members, or its partners. Likewise, the opinions expressed by any employee or member of the Commission on social media are theirs and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission.

It is, however, important to note that employees and members of the Commission may commit an offence if their publications tarnish the image of the Commission according to the Employees' Manual, Chapter XI, Article 18 (2), paragraph b), subparagraphs v) and viii):

**18(2), b)** *Commits a violation of the second level, any employee who:*

*v) profess insults or ungracious language towards work colleagues, superiors, or the KRSC, whether in their presence or not,*

*viii) acts in a way that damages the image of the KRSC, its employees or any members of the Commission.*

## **Your questions**

Social media are monitored between:

- 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. AST/ADT, Monday to Friday.
- 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. AST/ADT, Monday to Thursday | 8:15 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on Friday: during summer (approximately from the last week of June until Labor Day).
- Unsupervised during public holidays.
- Unsupervised from noon on December 24 until January 2 (or next business day).

We will do our best to respond promptly to queries submitted via social media, provided the query in question complies with this Code of Conduct. We may not always be able to answer your question via social media. If you have not received a response from us within 48 hours, we recommend that you contact us by phone at 1-506-743-1490 (Bouctouche), 1-506-523-1820 (Richibucto) or toll free at 1-855-588-1125.