

TOWN OF LAKE COWICHAN

COUNCIL POLICY



DATE APPROVED:

APPROVED BY:

SUBJECT: Corporate Response Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Corporate Response Policy is to provide a guiding document to support corporate communications practices, that complement or ensure appropriate standards that meet the requirements of the community. Public Engagement can be an ongoing process involving communication and interaction between the Town of Lake Cowichan and its residents. Public engagement facilitates information exchange and discussion. Effective and open communication fosters a positive public profile.

Our residents, businesses, visitors, and others have different needs, and it is the intent of the policy to make information more accessible in order to meet these needs. There is an overall desire to improve communications with the general public.

2. SCOPE

New residential community development has greatly increased the need for enhanced communications within the Town and between the Town and the public. Effective communications, both internal and external, is important for effective and efficient municipal operations and relations. This policy applies to electronic, printed, and verbal communications.

3. MODES OF COMMUNICATION

The following may be used to disseminate council activities:

- Advertisements, public notices, website and social media, emails, press releases;
- Letters to address various issues including communication with senior levels of government;
- Issues to address information requests, complaints, or other concerns through emails;
- Non-routine or routine telephone inquiries;
- In-person inquiries; and
- Face to face meetings to resolve contentious issues.

4. GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSES

- Respect privacy rights of residents and employees;
- Provide information in a clear and responsive manner;
- Ensure that all departments work collaboratively to respond to public concerns; and
- Strive to improve the way that the Town communicates with its various target audiences; and use the best communication tool to achieve that.

5. RESPONSE TIMES FOR RESPONSES

Departments have a duty to respond to inquiries made of them as quickly as possible and in no case should a response be made later than 7 days from the receipt of the inquiry. A quicker response would be warranted in the case of an emergency. Sometimes a department may require more than 7 days to provide an appropriate response. In any case, the inquirer should then be notified before the expiry of the 7 days that more time is needed to research an issue before a response can be provided. The enquirer must be given an approximate indication of when the required response would be forthcoming.

“Days” are defined as non-holiday weekdays, during regular business hours. The 7 days to respond exclude Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. If a request is received outside of regular business hours of regular (e.g., 4:30 pm) for the Town, then the time limit for a response starts on the next day.

In no instance should an inquiry be responded to which is beyond the scope of the ability of the department to supply and the response should indicate such.

Notwithstanding the foregoing every attempt should be made to respond sooner when inquiries are forwarded to the Town.

Joseph A. Fernandez
Chief Administrative Officer