

TO: ALL COUNTY PERSONNEL

**FROM: ROBERT WEISMAN
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

PREPARED BY: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: NEWS RELEASES AND MEDIA CONTACT

PPM #: CW-O-011

ISSUE DATE

May 1, 2013

EFFECTIVE DATE

May 1, 2013

PURPOSE:

To ensure accuracy, consistency, and equal distribution of County government information released to the media by county departments, offices and agencies with direct line of authority to the county administrator.

UPDATES:

Future updates to this PPM will be the responsibility of the Manager of Media and Public Information under the authority of the Director of Public Affairs.

AUTHORITY:

- Palm Beach County Code, Chapter 2, Administration – Article II. Sec. 2-20

POLICY:

1. For information that is of an emergency or controversial nature, the information shall be reported immediately in person or by phone to the applicable department director, the County Public Affairs Department, and the County Administrator (who will inform the Board of County Commissioners). In all such cases, all statements and releases to the media will be issued by the County Administrator, the Public Affairs Department, and/or the department director after conferring with the County Administrator or Administrator's designee.
2. For general information involving verified, noncontroversial matters, any department may prepare news releases or notify the media. Releases must be issued on standard County news release forms (distributed by Public Affairs). A copy of each release must be submitted to the Public Affairs Department following release for filing. If requested, the Public Affairs

Department will write, edit and/or distribute news releases for any County department. Public Affairs will post the news release to the County web site unless told otherwise by the requesting department.

3. If a County employee makes a statement as a representative of the County regarding County issues or policies to the media, the employee shall immediately inform their department director. If a department staff person is contacted by the media for an interview or statement, the staff person will advise their department director. Each department director may establish policies as to who can speak to the media.

PROCEDURES:

EMERGENCY/CONTROVERSIAL NEWS RELEASES

The County Administrator, department director or designee will advise the Public Affairs Director or designee by phone or in person of the information to be released, giving the name and phone number of the department representative to be contacted for further information.

After conferring with the County Administrator or designee, the Public Affairs Department will prepare a news release and submit a draft to the County Administrator and department director or their designees for approval. Once approval is received, the Public Affairs Department will immediately send out the news release by FAX or email to the local television stations, radio stations, and newspapers, and will post to the County's Web site.

A copy of the information released will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, Assistant County Administrators, the County Attorney, the Public Affairs Department Director and the County information desks.

GENERAL NEWS RELEASES

All media releases issued by departments under the Board of County Commissioners will be printed on standard County news release forms. Date of proposed release by media and departmental contact person and phone number for further information should be shown on news release.

A copy of each news release prepared by a department shall be submitted to the Public Affairs Department following release. If the department wants the Public Affairs staff to review the release and make appropriate revisions before release and/or to send the release out to the media, the department should so specify in an email with the news release. Following review, Public Affairs staff will call or email the contact person on the release and suggest appropriate changes. A copy of the final release should be sent to the Public Affairs Department for their file.

RELEASES TO BE PREPARED BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

All requests for the Public Affairs Department to prepare news releases that are not urgent must be delivered to the Public Affairs Department in order to allow sufficient time for preparation before requested release date. To facilitate writing of the release, all pertinent information, including the date for release and the name and phone number of a contact person shall be submitted with the request.

A draft copy of the news release will be submitted to the office requesting the release. If changes are required, the corrected copy, initialed by the department director or designee, should be returned to the Public Affairs Department. If no further changes are required, the department director or designee shall initial the draft as "OK" and return to the Public Affairs Department or email approval with final copy attached.

The release will be sent to the media sources listed with the County Public Affairs Department. Copies will be sent to the contact person, Board of County Commissioners, Administration, and the County information desks.

Copies of all news releases and a list of media to which each was sent will be retained in the County News Release File which is maintained by the Public Affairs Department.

INFORMATION RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC VIA SOCIAL NETWORKING

Information released via social networking is subject to the policies and procedures above, in addition to PPM CW-R-013.



ROBERT WEISMAN
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Supersession History:

1. PPM# CW-O-011, "Press Release Procedures," issued July 1, 1988
2. PPM # CW-O-011, issued 10/22/2007
3. PPM# CW-O-011, issued 4/16/2013