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**Responsible Department:** Community Services and Recreation

**Effective Date:** January 15, 2025

**CAO Approval:** December 18, 2024

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**1. Legislative Requirements**

This policy is subject to any specific provision of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, Chapter M-26, as amended from time to time, or other relevant legislation or agreements.

**2. Principles and Priorities for External Municipal Communications**

Principles

- a. **Accessible and Clear Communication:** Communications will be accessible to diverse audiences, using plain language and appropriate tone for each medium. Programs will include a variety of channels to reach all community members, with extra efforts for marginalized groups. Emergency communications prioritize public safety and utilize designated channels for clarity and reliability.
- b. **Consistency and Coordination:** All public communications will reflect established municipal policies, and Council decisions, ensuring the Town speaks with a unified voice. Administration will support media inquiries for accuracy, and Town logos and branding will be used consistently.
- c. **Privacy, Accuracy, and Intellectual Property:** The Town will uphold privacy laws to protect personal information, ensure permissions for identifiable images, and respect intellectual property rights. Negative or inaccurate third-party information will be addressed to protect the Town's reputation.
- d. **Community Engagement and Feedback:** Two-way communication is encouraged, providing mechanisms for public feedback on programs and services, helping the Town better serve the community's needs.

Priorities

Municipal communication will be disseminated in order of the following priorities:

- a. Town of Diamond Valley
- b. Town of Diamond Valley Committees of Council
- c. Other Town related boards and organizations
- d. Partner municipalities



### Support for Third Party Communication Requests

The Town of Diamond Valley will not share or post information from third parties unless deemed to be in support of Town initiatives and priorities, **with the following exceptions:**

- Town entrance changeable copy signs
- Municipal website event calendar

## **3. Unacceptable Forms of Communication**

### Confidentiality

Town of Diamond Valley Council members, employees, and contractors must not communicate any confidential information.

### Prohibition of Harmful Communication

The Town will not permit any communication that promotes violence, harassment, discrimination, or bullying.

### Zero Tolerance for Abusive Interaction:

The Town of Diamond Valley enforces a zero-tolerance policy for abusive behavior across all social media and communication channels. Council members, employees, and contractors are neither expected to tolerate abusive interactions nor permitted to engage in communication that could be interpreted as abusive. The Town reserves the right to remove or block any abusive comments or interactions deemed harmful or disruptive to respectful discourse.

## **4. Legislation**

### *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)*

In all communications, spokespersons and departments must comply with all legislated requirements regarding access and disclosure of information as per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP), RSA 2000, c F-25.

### *Copyright Act*

Departments must comply with the *Copyright Act*, RSC 1985, c C-42 to ensure the ownership rights associated with works subject to copyright are fully respected in all communications. Departments must maintain a record of authorizations to use copyright material.

## **5. Visual Identity**

A clear, consistent visual identity enables the public to easily recognize and access the policies, programs, services, and initiatives of the Town of Diamond Valley. To reinforce a cohesive, unified



identity, all departments are required to adhere to the Town's brand standards in every application, across all media, for both external and internal communications.

## **6. Legal, Personnel and Election**

- Matters regarding pending litigation, or involving a significant exposure to litigation, are to be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer or designate.
- Matters regarding personnel-related information are to be directed to the CAO or designate, who then may re-direct the inquiry to the appropriate party.
- Matters regarding municipal election and campaign issues should be directed to the Returning Officer with the exception of election sign issues, which should be directed to Municipal Enforcement.

## **7. Guidelines for Informing the Public**

Information on the Town's policies, programs, services and initiatives should be available to the public in a variety of formats, subject to available resources. Effective communications provide essential information to the public, reducing the amount of staff resources needed to provide individual verbal or written responses.

### **Service should be timely, courteous and efficient.**

Information should be made available on the standard of service a department provides, including timelines for responses to mail and complaints. When information is unavailable, a prompt and clear explanation should be provided. Information in all formats should be provided in plain language and be identified as coming from the Town of Diamond Valley and be consistent with the brand standards.

Information should be made available for review with the most requested material posted on the website. Updates to services, immediate health and safety concerns, new policies, programs or initiatives will be made available to the public in a timely manner. Copies of materials will be available and may be subject to fees.

Internal records should be well organized and easily accessible by other staff to ensure professional and competent service can be provided at all times.

## **8. Crisis Communications**

In a crisis, coordinated communication is essential to maintain or restore public confidence. Departments must advise the CAO's Office as soon as they identify an event or situation occurring in or affecting their department that may attract widespread interest from the public. Department Leads will contact the CAO's Office and coordinate a response including designating a spokesperson after consultation with the CAO's Office and the appropriate department.

## **9. Emergency Communications**



In emergencies, the Town deviates from normal practices and uses specific and limited communications channels, messages and official spokespeople, as directed by Emergency Management, to avoid confusion, ensure accuracy of evolving information, and establish reliable sources of information for the Public.

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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

#### PROCEDURE Revision History

Policy Name	Revision Date	Revision Description	Approved by CAO	Effective Date
Admin-024 External Municipal Communication	NEW Diamond Valley Procedure	Replaces: (BD) Admin-037 (TV) MPR.A.0213 (TV) MP.A.12.13 (TV) MP.A.09.10		
Admin-024 External Municipal Communication	March 19, 2025	Addition of changeable copy signs and community event calendar options for non-profit organizations		