

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Series: Organization

Part 110: Office of the Secretary

Chapter 5: Office of Communications

Originating Office: Office of Communications

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5.1 Office of Communications. The Office of Communications (OCO) establishes the public information policies of the Department and exercises technical and general supervision over all public information, public affairs activities, and public affairs personnel of the bureaus and offices of the Department. The OCO is responsible for all official internal communications from the Office of the Secretary to Interior employees. It is also responsible to the Secretary for developing good working relations with the news media to facilitate the flow of timely, accurate, and consistent information from the Department to the general public; and for working with the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget to ensure timely, accurate, and consistent internal communications from the Office of the Secretary to Interior employees. The OCO also advises the Secretariat on matters affecting such areas.

5.2 Functions. The Office of Communications:

A. Manages, develops, and implements employee and news media information strategies, projects, and products for internal and external dissemination of policy and program information on behalf of the Secretary.

B. Prepares, edits, and issues news releases on Departmental policies and program issues; develops speech texts, reports, briefing documents, articles, web-based and social media products, and similar materials for the Secretary; develops web-based, social media, and print publications as well as audio and visual materials it determines necessary in order for the Department to be responsive to a broad range of public and employee inquiries.

C. Guides preparation of and reviews for quality, usability, newsworthiness, consistency, and substantive accuracy of all news releases, articles, speeches, web-based and new media products, audio-visual materials, and print publications produced by bureaus and offices; and is the central point for issuance of news releases relating to activities of each bureau or office.

D. Manages and oversees all internal/external information products and processes and media relations activities of the various bureaus and offices.

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E. Performs initial reviews of personnel action requests affecting public information/affairs positions.

F. Plans and coordinates all news media briefings and news conferences for the Secretary and the Secretariat; informs officials of media activity on issues; and produces and publishes special internal communications to employees, supervisory, and policy level officials.

G. Assists news media by responding to their inquiries and providing other information they may require or find useful. (These are principally externally oriented public information/public affairs activities. The principal vehicles used for disseminating public information/news are web-based Internet and new media products, video and audio messages, telephone communications, and teleconferencing.)

H. Oversees and supervises development and dissemination of official Office of the Secretary messaging, including announcements, memoranda, and notifications. (These are principally internally oriented employee communication activities that include communication products and dissemination protocols, processes, and systems.)

5.3 Organization. The OCO is headed by a Director who reports to the Secretary. The Director is the principal spokesperson for the Department and is responsible for DOI's conduct, establishment, and implementation of internal/external public information policies. The Director is the Department's primary source at the national level for the dissemination of official employee communications and public information to all media, civic and other organizations, and the general public. The organizational [chart](#) for OCO is attached.

A. Deputy Director. The Deputy Director carries out policy determinations of the Director, represents the Director at major meetings, works closely with the White House on Administration initiatives and special high priority projects, and assists the Director in coordinating the operations of the Office.

B. Press Secretary. The Press Secretary is the principal spokesperson for the Secretary and works closely with national and regional media to inform them and the public of Department and Administration initiatives. The Press Secretary assures that the Department's official statements, news releases, and other informational materials for employee and public consumption adhere to Departmental policy and guidelines. Responsibilities also include coordinating and assisting bureaus and offices in their media operations.

C. Deputy Press Secretary. The Deputy Press Secretary assists the Press Secretary in carrying out the responsibilities in paragraph B above.

D. Director of New Media. The Director of New Media is responsible for developing strategies, policies and implementation protocols and procedures for the new media program, utilizing technologies such as the Internet and Intranet, social networking, blogs, and other appropriate forms of electronic communication. Responsibilities also include working with the

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Office of the Chief Information Officer and vendors to implement new media strategies and technologies; overseeing the Department's website; serving as senior editor for web content and developing content for bureau websites; overseeing development of the Office of the Secretary Intranet; advising and providing guidance to bureaus and offices in implementing information initiatives using new media strategies and technologies; and coordinating reviews on new media matters, to assure adherence to OCO guidelines.

E. Director of Internal Communications. The Director of Internal Communications is responsible for establishing and implementing Department-wide employee communications strategies, policies, and products on behalf of the Office of the Secretary; and working closely with the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget and other organizations that communicate with employees on high priority internal initiatives and projects. Responsibility also includes serving as the lead manager for the DOI Intranet (oneINTERIOR) (that includes developing, maintaining, and enforcing web policies, content, and standardized navigation); and working with bureaus and offices to coordinate intranet operations and content.