

# South Dakota Public Assurance Alliance

## SAMPLE Media Policy

From time to time during the course of your service for the (City, County, etc.) you may receive unsolicited contact from representatives of the media including but not limited to newspaper reporters, television and radio reporters and news people, and others. The purpose of this policy is to inform you of the proper steps to follow when such contact occurs.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ has been designated as the only authorized spokesperson for (City, County, etc.) in the event of communications with the media. Therefore, if you receive contact from the media, advise them that you cannot comment and refer them to \_\_\_\_\_. His/her telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_ and email address is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In addition to referring members of the media to our designated contact person, notify your immediate supervisor immediately of any media contact.
3. Media representatives will understand that you cannot comment. They will appreciate a referral to someone who may or may not be able to answer their questions.
4. When an incident occurs that could give rise to a claim against you or others of your fellow employees, please notify everyone that they may receive contact from the media and that they must be aware of and follow this media policy – e.g. not comment on any occurrence and refer the media to the designated contact person.
5. Never give into what is a natural urge to be helpful if you are contacted by the media. You must follow this policy and the procedures described herein.
6. You should be friendly and not defensive or evasive when advising members of the media that you are not able to comment. As noted above, they will understand this position.
7. No comment means no comment. Do not explain or discuss any occurrence or event with the media unless you are authorized to do so as the designated spokesperson.
8. Keep in mind that whatever you say will be viewed as an official statement on behalf of your employer and your co-workers. This is yet another reason to follow the policy, make no comment, and direct the media representatives to the designated contact person.
9. If you are present during Executive Session of the (City Commission, City Council, County Commission, etc.) where litigation or claims are discussed, keep in mind that executive sessions are privileged, that no record is made of these discussions, and that anyone present is absolutely forbidden to discuss the content of conversations which occur during the course of executive session.

If you have any questions about the application of this policy, please contact your immediate supervisor.

**It is SDPAA's recommendation that this SAMPLE Media Policy be treated like other policies your entity may have in use (e.g. sexual harassment). It should be presented to all current and new employees who should sign off acknowledging that they have received the policy, read the policy, and understand the policy. It is also SDPAA's recommendation that you confer with your legal counsel prior to adopting a Media Policy.**