



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NO. 2018-67

SUBJECT: DILG COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) upholds the people's right to information and adheres to the government's policies on transparency and accountability. With its duty to inform, the Department believes in the indispensable role of the media in enlisting public support and keeping the public updated of the DILG's policies, programs, projects, activities, and other information of public interest while strengthening the agency's communication with its stakeholders through the media.

I. PURPOSE

1. To institute Department guidelines and procedures for dealing with the media and in the conduct of media related-activities
2. To establish sets of protocols for initiating and conducting media-related activities and responding to inquiries and requests from the members of the media
3. To define roles and responsibilities of concerned offices and personnel on matters of media relations as well as public relations of the Department

II. POLICY

1. The Department shall work and coordinate with the media as an essential partner to increase public awareness and understanding of the DILG's policies, programs, projects, activities, and other related information.
2. The Department shall establish harmonious and symbiotic relations with members of the media and media organizations at all levels.
3. The Department shall undertake and conduct media-related activities to facilitate efficient information dissemination and promotion of the DILG's programs, projects, and activities while responding to the media and the public's demand for information.

4. The Department shall adhere to the provisions of Republic Act. No. 6713 or the “Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees” in conducting media-related activities and responding to requests from members of the media.
5. The Department shall only deal with legitimate and DILG-accredited media practitioners in the conduct of media-related activities and in providing access to DILG premises.
6. The Department shall not tolerate any unscrupulous and/or illegal acts in working with the media for public information and communication.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Ambush Interview** – refers to a type of interview wherein members of the media interview an official without prior notice or request.
2. **Communication Plan** – refers to a proposal containing the Department's communication objectives, programs and projects, logistical requirements and monitoring and evaluation processes.
3. **Crisis** – refers to state of affairs characterized by an existing problem or developing issue adversely affecting the Department’s operations, reputation, or relation with the public which require immediate action.
4. **Crisis Communication** – refers to the activities or actions made in the light of a crisis to mitigate or prevent further damage to the agency’s reputation and relation with the public.
5. **Media** – refers to individuals and organizations engaged in the profession of journalism through print, broadcast, and other channels of mass communication.
6. **Media Center** – refers to the official station and work area for DILG-accredited media practitioners within the Department premises.
7. **Media Inquiry** – refers to verbal or written inquiry or request for information made by any media practitioner or organization on certain matters for the development of a news or story.
8. **Media Interview** – refers to a set-up or request where the media or reporter asks a Department official or representative for answers about certain topics of concern.
9. **Media Materials** – refers collectively to information, education, and communication materials produced, in electronic and in print forms, for dissemination through the media and all available media platforms.

10. **Media-Related Activities** – refers to activities that utilize media as communication and information channel to promote or publicize a statement or program of the Department.
11. **Media Relations** – refers to how an agency deals and interacts with members of the media and how the latter responds to them, including maintaining a harmonious rapport between the agency and the media.
12. **Press Briefing** – an informal meeting between officials and a limited number of media practitioners aimed at apprising the latter of developing issues and/or potential media stories.
13. **Press Conference** – an organized meeting with the media where topics of interest are presented and discussed for the general public's information and where agency officials answer questions from the media.
14. **Spokesperson** – the head of agency or an official designated by the top management to face the media and answer media inquiries and interviews.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. DILG Spokesperson
 - a. As head of agency, the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government (SILG) shall speak in behalf of the Department. He may, however, designate, verbally or in writing, a DILG official with a rank not lower than Assistant Secretary to act as the Official Spokesperson to speak on his behalf, whenever necessary.
 - b. The SILG and the Official Spokesperson may likewise designate officials or technical officers from the different bureaus, services, project management offices, and other concerned units knowledgeable of the issues or topics at hand to support the SILG or the Spokesperson in providing information for the media, depending on the point of inquiry or circumstance as specified in "Annex A: Hierarchy of Talking Heads Based on Issues."
 - c. The Official Spokesperson and technical officers shall undergo media management training as may be organized regularly by the Public Affairs and Communication Service (PACS).
 - d. The Official Spokesperson and technical officers shall closely coordinate with PACS and keep themselves abreast of current and developing issues involving the Department.
2. Public Affairs and Communication Service (PACS)
 - a. PACS, as the Department's communication arm, shall be the overall manager of media-related activities and all matters pertaining to media relations of the

DILG. It shall be under the direct supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Communication.

b. PACS shall be the Department's central coordinating unit for all media-related activities and as such perform the following functions and responsibilities:

- Serve as the primary technical resource for media relations;
- Provide technical support to operating units of the Department on media-related activities;
- Ensure adherence to communication standards and journalism ethics in all media-related activities;
- Ensure unity of message and information of all Department spokespersons about the emerging issues concerning the DILG at all times;
- Assist the Official Spokesperson in the performance of his or her tasks;
- Coordinate with the SILG and Official Spokesperson for policy development and program directions on media relations;
- Coordinate with public information or communication units of DILG attached agencies and its counterparts in other government agencies on media-related matters;
- Coordinate with the DILG's Regional Communication Committees, through their Regional Information Officers (RIOs), on media-related matters whenever necessary;
- Maintain and update a directory of all available national and regional media contacts;
- Accredite all media practitioners who seek to cover DILG activities and events
- Supervise the DILG Press Corps and regulate their activities within the Department premises;
- Manage and oversee the operations of the Media Center and designate a media coordinator therefor; and
- Ensure adherence of DILG-accredited media practitioners and all concerned to this policy.

3. DILG Regional Offices

- a. The Regional Director shall be the spokesperson at the regional level. He or she may likewise designate, verbally or in writing, other regional officials as spokespersons, whenever necessary.
- b. Regional Offices shall provide regular updates on issues with impact on the national level to the Office of the Secretary and the Official Spokesperson, copy furnished PACS, to facilitate Department-wide coordination of information.
- c. Regional Offices, through the Regional Information Officers (RIOs), shall provide photo and/or video and issue press release and/or report on the SILG's regional visit in their respective areas to the Office of the Secretary, copy furnished PACS, for documentation purposes.

- d. Regional Offices shall have an updated local media directory in their respective regions.

4. DILG Provincial Offices

- a. The Provincial Director shall be the spokesperson in his or her area of jurisdiction, with the guidance of his or her Regional Director.

V. PROCEDURES

1. Media Inquiry

- a. Inquiries from the media, especially regarding sensitive and controversial issues, shall be given immediate attention and shall be promptly and accurately addressed as soon as possible.
- b. All media inquiries received by the Department shall be immediately referred to PACS for the Central Office, to the Regional Director or Regional Information Officer (RIO) for regional offices, and to the Provincial Director for provincial and field offices with the guidance of the Regional Director.
- c. Any media inquiry of national significance received at the regional and/or field offices which requires the SILG's attention shall be promptly reported to the Office of the Secretary and the Official Spokesperson, copy furnished PACS.
- d. As a general rule, the receiving personnel of a media inquiry for the Department shall obtain the name, media organization, contact number, subject of inquiry, and deadline of the requesting member of the media which shall be forwarded to PACS.
- e. Offices concerned in a media inquiry shall promptly respond to requests for information from PACS or Department spokespersons.
- f. For Central Office, PACS shall record all received media inquiries, including the office(s) concerned and actions taken for reference.

2. Production of Media Materials

- a. The Department shall undertake proactive media-related activities such as, but not limited to, the issuance of press materials for quad-media (print, radio, TV, online) through PACS and Regional Communication Committees.
- b. All Department offices shall, as much as practicable, coordinate with PACS for technical support, particularly in the preparation of media materials as well as information, education, and communication (IEC) materials.
- c. Expenses for the production and/or placement of media materials shall be borne by the requesting unit.

3. Release of Media Materials

- a. All media materials at the Central Office shall be cleared with the SILG or the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Communication prior to actual release. Such materials shall be released through PACS.
- b. Media materials at the regions shall have prior approval of the regional director or his authorized representative. PACS shall be furnished a copy of all regional media materials for possible national release and for uploading to the DILG website.
- c. Releasing of information and/or media materials shall, as much as possible, be in sync with the varying deadlines of the media news desks to efficiently facilitate prompt reception and use of the Department's releases by the media entities thereby providing wider audience reach.
- d. All press materials released to the media shall be monitored and evaluated, and orderly filed for future reference.
- e. Public information shall be released to the media promptly, objectively, and without partiality.

4. Media Interviews

- a. Media interviews, whether media-requested or DILG-initiated, with any DILG official shall be made known to PACS in case of the Central Office, or to the RIO, in case of a regional office. Such notification shall be made ahead of the interview for purposes of proper technical and resource coordination.
- b. Any clarification from the media arising from such interviews shall be properly coordinated with PACS or with the RIO for purposes of setting the record right and straight and thus avoiding misquotations.

5. Press Conference/Press Briefing

- a. Press conference and/or press briefing shall be judiciously conducted and utilized as the need arises for efficient media coverage of a Department activity, event, or discussion of issues at hand.
- b. PACS, for Central Office and RIOs, for Regional Offices, shall be the primary organizers and coordinators of press conferences and press briefings of the Department.
- c. Protocol on seat and table arrangements shall be observed during the conduct of a press conference or press briefing, as specified in "Annex B: DILG Press Conference Seat and Table Arrangements."

6. Crisis Communication

- a. The SILG, in coordination with PACS, official spokesperson, and concerned office(s) and/or Department personnel, shall immediately issue a press statement during crisis situation.
- b. A Crisis Communication Team may be organized to work on the crisis at hand and conduct damage control activities through the media.
- c. PACS shall document all crisis communication works and activities conducted for future reference.

VI. MEDIA RELATIONS

1. Developing and Maintaining Good Relations with the Media

- a. The DILG shall pursue a strategic goal of developing a proactive media relations and ensure the continuous cooperation of the media with the Department's communication agenda.
- b. In case of conflict with any member of the media, the Department, through PACS, shall exert efforts to achieve a principled settlement of issues.

2. DILG Media Accreditation

- a. The Department shall accredit, through PACS, the members of the media assigned to cover the DILG regularly for purposes of access to DILG premises or facilities, right to participate in media-related activities of the Department, and affiliation with the Department's official press corps.
- b. Department accreditation of the members of the media shall be limited to the following:
 - For print media (i.e. newspapers, magazines and other publications), the media practitioner must be affiliated with a daily publication with nationwide reach and has been operating for at least three (3) years;
 - For broadcast media (i.e. radio and television networks), the media practitioner must be affiliated with a news organization with an established nationwide presence of at least three (3) years;
 - For online media (i.e. e-news writers), the media practitioner must be affiliated with an established media network that operates a daily publication or programming; and
 - For international or foreign media, the media practitioner must be affiliated with a media network that has established a nationwide presence for at least (5) years.

- c. For accreditation, members of the media assigned to cover the Department or gather information for news purposes about the DILG shall be required to submit to PACS or RIO the following:
 - Endorsement letter from his or her editor or station manager. In the case of print media, only reporters of daily newspapers or publications shall be granted accreditation;
 - Letter of intent, in the case of freelance reporters/writers;
 - Media personnel information form to be provided by PACS;
 - Accreditation from the International Press Center (IPC), in the case of foreign media practitioners.
- d. Accreditation of all members of the media shall be signed by the Director of PACS. All accredited media shall be allowed access to the DILG Media Center at the Central Office and to other specified venues for press conferences and media interviews. PACS and RIOs shall have the responsibility of coordinating media presence within the DILG premises.
- e. Failure by any member of the media to present authorized identification and accreditation may be used as a ground for restricting his or her access to DILG premises.
- f. PACS shall always have the right to restrict media access to Department premises, issue or revoke accreditation of any DILG Press Corps member, prohibit the use of Department labels and properties by media groups, and enforce other measures it deems necessary in ensuring the proper behaviour of members of the press based at the DILG and operating within the Department.

3. The DILG Press Corps

- a. The Department shall have an official Press Corps based at the Central Office to better coordinate and facilitate communication and information dissemination among media networks on matters concerning the agency.
- b. The DILG Press Corps shall be composed of accredited members of the media assigned to cover news about the Department.
- c. The DILG Press Corps shall have its own officers who shall be elected by its members in a poll to be organized and supervised by PACS.
- d. The DILG Press Corps shall be under the supervision of PACS in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Communication and the Office of the Secretary.

VII. EFFECTIVITY

This circular shall take effect immediately and shall supersede all previous issuances inconsistent herewith.

For strict compliance.


EDUARDO M. AÑO
Officer-in-Charge



HIERARCHY OF TALKING HEADS BASED ON ISSUES

ISSUES	TALKING HEADS (IN ORDER)	LEVEL OF MEDIA EXPOSURE
Any issue that has a national impact (i.e. major man-made and natural disasters; major accomplishments and significant updates on DILG's priority thrusts; major threats against security as well as peace and order, etc.)	SILG/Spokesperson, Undersecretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Directors, Heads of Project Management Offices (PMOs)	Media entities with national scope
Any issue that has no national implication but has an impact to the whole region [i.e. judicial decisions rendered against local chief executives for crimes committed; major programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) of the Department being implemented or supervised by the DILG regional office, etc.]	Regional Director, Assistant Regional Director, Division Chief, RIO	Media in the local beat
Any issue in the local setting that has direct effect to LGUs (i.e. impact of DILG PPAs to the LGU level; updates on natural and man-made disasters within the local, etc.)	Provincial Director, City/Municipal Local Government Operations Officer (C/MLGOO)	Media in the local beat

DILG PRESS CONFERENCE SEAT AND TABLE ARRANGEMENTS

- There should be a clear path starting at the entrance of the event venue to the Presidential Table (Press Conference Panel). It should allow the Secretary's clear access to exit for any contingency.
- The Secretary should be seated in the middle position to the right of the host/moderator. The next-in-rank official present during the press conference is seated on the left side of the Secretary. Other officials of the Department are seated at the right side of the Secretary, and officials of other agencies (in case of interagency/joint press conference) are seated at his/her left side. Ensure the proper arrangement of tent cards bearing the names and ranks/designations of officials seated at the Presidential Table.
- For regional or provincial media activities, the Regional or Provincial Director through the designated regional information officer should be consulted in identifying persons/personalities who should join the Secretary at the Presidential Table.