

PURPOSE

This policy establishes a process and identifies designated Chatham Area Transit personnel responsible for disseminating consistent and accurate information to media outlets and the public in a timely manner.

DEFINITIONS

Unique terms that add to the reader's understanding of the basic policy.

1. Media Outlets: newspapers, online news sites/publications, radio, television, magazines, trade organizations, blogs.
2. Internal Media Contacts: Systems Development's Chief Strategy Officer and Communications Manager.

SPECIFICS

1. This policy aims to prevent inaccurate and inconsistent information from being distributed to the media and public.
2. In addition, the policy establishes safeguards for preventing the disclosure of confidential information that is excluded from state and federal open-record requirements.

PROCEDURE

1. Inquiries from media outlets should be directed to System Development's Chief Strategy Officer and/or Communications Manager. This is so a response can be discussed with the appropriate department head and/or CEO and the information can be disseminated in a timely manner.
2. Any CAT employee asked by a media representative to make an official statement about CAT, its services, policies or employees must be authorized by CAT's CEO or a member of the System Development's Communications management team.
3. All official announcements about CAT, its services, policies, employees, and Board of Directors will be made by CAT's Communications team via news release, media advisory, social media post, and/or new conference. News releases that include quotes by staff must be approved by the individual and his/her supervisor.
4. CAT's Directors/Managers are requested to use their best judgement when asked for interviews during an agency or community event. Directors/Managers are asked to inform the Chief Strategy Officer and/or Communications Manager of any interviews that occur and of the topics discussed during such instances.

5. CAT's communications team will strive to respond to all media requests by the requested deadlines. When this is not possible, CAT's designated communications personnel will contact the media representative to explain we are unable to provide the requested response or information by the deadline, but a response will be provided as soon as possible.
6. In general, it is not advisable for any member of CAT's leadership team or board member to say "no comment" to a member of the media since this often fosters negative connotations in subsequent news reports.

APPLIES TO

This policy applies to all employees of Chatham Area Transit Authority.