



Policy: 7.1	Type: Staff
Title: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS	
Accountable: Senior Vice President, Communications	
Responsible: Director, Media & Public Relations	
Approved By: Chief Executive Officer	
Effective Date: 03/01/2000	Amendment Date:

1 Policy

NRECA policy is based on the principle that effective communication is the cornerstone of successful cooperative operations. In order to maintain public trust and credibility, the Association has an obligation to speak with a consistent voice, openly and honestly, about its operations, events, actions and policies.

NRECA's external communications are defined as the formal expressions (written, visual or oral) of Association policy intended to convey to the general public or to specific publics, excluding members, (1) policy as adopted by the membership or as set by the Board of Directors or management, and (2) actions and events of the Association or that affect the Association and its members.

2 Guidelines

(a) Media Relations

Media Relations is responsible for managing the Association's media activities, including development of media strategies, initiation of contact with the media, and response to media inquiries.

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer is the chief spokesperson for the Association. The Director, Media and Public Relations serves as the Chief Executive Officer's representative with the media and serves the officers of the Association in the same capacity. The Director, Media and Public Relations has major responsibility to represent or speak on behalf of the Association, and to plan and coordinate the Association's media relations programs.
- (2) It is the policy of NRECA to be cooperative and responsive to news media inquiries. While Media Relations has the primary responsibility for handling media inquiries, there are times when senior management will be approached directly by reporters. It is not always necessary to refer reporters to Media Relations before talking with them, but it is necessary for the Director, Media and Public Relations to know about all media contacts in a timely manner. (Media contact report forms may be obtained from Media Relations)

Senior management is encouraged to speak to reporters openly and fully about matters within their area of responsibility and professional expertise. This practice will help assure that our industry's position on current issues is accurately and fully reported in trade journals and the general media.

Policy 7.1

- (3) The following guidelines can be helpful when deciding when to refer media inquiries to Media Relations.
 - (i) Refer the inquiry whenever an employee:
 - (A) receives a call from non-trade press national newspapers, magazines, broadcast networks.
 - (B) other than the Department Vice President, or his or her designee is asked to speak on behalf of NRECA.
 - (C) is asked for the rural electric cooperative position on or reaction to "breaking" news or new developments involving political or policy questions.
 - (D) is asked to express an opinion or position statement outside the employee's area of expertise and job responsibility.
 - (E) is reluctant to talk to the media.
 - (ii) Handle the inquiry and inform the Media Relations staff whenever an employee:
 - (A) is asked for routine information previously released, either in a publication, statement or news release.
 - (B) is asked to explain or clarify previously released information within the employee's area of expertise and responsibility.

(b) News Dissemination

All NRECA employees are encouraged to work on a consistent basis with Media Relations, in providing information concerning newsworthy activities and significant future programs and discussing plans for dissemination of the information.

It is expected that procedures will be established by all departments or major divisions with Media Relations to facilitate the flow of news and information to the public.

Media Relations should be informed of timely and/or significant activities so that successful public relations strategies can be developed and appropriate public outlets tapped to build interest in the program and support for the Association's goals.

- (1) All news releases to the trade or general press will be issued through NRECA Media Relations. The Media Relations staff has the responsibility to work with other departments and divisions in the development of media plans, news materials, and dissemination of information.
- (2) Letters to the editor, feature articles, columns or other opinion pieces for public consumption that relate to Association policy and Association activities should be cleared by the employee's Department Vice President and coordinated with Media Relations. Media Relations staff will assist as appropriate in the development of such material.