



MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Local, state, national and international media are vital partners in achieving the goals of The Canadian Support Workers Association. In order to maximize the advantages of media presentation and minimize the risks of media misrepresentation it is necessary to establish guidelines for how media contacts will be conducted.

It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. The organization welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena.

In dealing with the media, staff, Board members and other volunteers should be conscious that they may be seen as representatives of the organization and should therefore avoid making comments or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the long-term reputation of The Canadian Support Workers Association.

PURPOSE

The Canadian Support Workers Association works with the media in order to

- advocate for the goals of the organization
- promote the work of the organization
- inform the public of the details of the organization
- assist in fundraising for the organization

In order to ensure that these purposes can be fulfilled, this policy regulates the choice of people entitled to speak for The Canadian Support Workers Association.

The media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the community in holding The Canadian Support Workers Association to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to officers and members and to background information to assist them in this role.

To balance this, The Canadian Support Workers Association must have the capacity to defend itself from any unfounded criticism, and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts (if necessary using other channels of communication).

It is the responsibility of all staff, board members and volunteers to ensure that effective media relations are maintained in order to achieve the aims of The Canadian Support Workers Association. Naturally, in doing this, certain legal constraints might apply (e.g. not making comment on current court cases, especially those before a jury).

This policy deals with the day-to-day relationship between The Canadian Support Workers Association and the media and does not address how the organization will work with the media in a crisis, for which separate guidelines are available below.

CRISIS

A media – related crisis is something that all organizations must prepare for. In the event that The Canadian Support Workers Association, or one of its members, or staff, find themselves(s) being approached by the media during a time of crisis, they must refer the matter to the President of the Association.

CORE POLICY

The Canadian Support Workers Association operates on the values of

- **Honesty:** The organization will never knowingly mislead the public, media or staff on an issue or news story.
- **Transparency:** The organization will promote openness and accessibility in our dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
- **Clarity:** All communications with the media will be written in plain English
- **Balance:** Information provided to the media by The Canadian Support Workers Association will as far as humanly possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.

The Canadian Support Workers Association should seek to establish and maintain a good and open relationship with the media. It is important that the organization works with the media to communicate important public information messages about its work and its goals.

However, contact concerning any significant matter in the name of or on behalf of The Canadian Support Workers Association should only be made by staff, Board members and other volunteers where:

- They have consulted the President nominated by the Board
- They have the required expertise to speak on the issue under discussion
- They have some experience in media relations.

Where any of these criteria do not apply, staff, Board members and volunteers are recommended to exercise extreme caution and to seek guidance from the most senior staff or Board member available.

AUTHORISATION

Miranda Ferrier

Miranda Ferrier

President, OPSWA



MEDIA RELATIONS PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board nominates the President of the Ontario Personal Support Worker Association to coordinate the association's relationships with the media.

The President of the Ontario Personal Support Worker Association is solely authorized to speak on behalf of The Canadian Support Workers Association, unless written consent is provided by the President.

Where information or public comment is requested or required, the President shall determine the most appropriate person to respond.

Staff, Board members and other volunteers, and third parties, are encouraged to deliver public presentations that discuss The Canadian Support Workers Association's work and its goals, provided that they make it clear where such presentations are or are not authorized by the organization.

All staff, Board members and other volunteers must observe The Canadian Support Workers Association's Privacy Policy in relation to client records.

PROCESSES

Significant statements on behalf of The Canadian Support Workers Association shall be made as authorized by the President as detailed above.

It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to The Canadian Support Workers Association are those of the organization or of an individual. At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of The Canadian Support Workers Association.

The President is responsible for:

- Producing and updating a list of key contacts for distribution to local press and radio and TV stations. The President can also be contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach for a comment.
- Producing the organization's annual public relations plan, which shall be consistent with the organization's business plan and marketing plan.
- Coordinating all media conferences for The Canadian Support Workers Association. All such conferences shall be videotaped by the organization.
- Authorizing all media releases from The Canadian Support Workers Association, and for mounting them on the organization's website. All media releases must also be checked and approved by staff in charge of the relevant area before distribution.
- Being involved in any approaches to the media to feature The Canadian Support Workers Association's work.
- Receiving and coordinating a response to all approaches from all national press, radio or TV stations or specialist press.

Policies can be established or altered only by the Board: **Procedures** may be altered by the CEO.



All staff, Board members and volunteers are responsible for:

- Providing advice (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) to the President on any issues that are likely to be complex or contentious or to be sustained for any length of time. In such a situation the President will work with the relevant staff and Board members to produce a communications plan which will ensure that balanced, timely information is provided to keep all parties informed.
- Ensuring that no photos of clients, patients, employees, or students shall be released to the public via advertising, news media, or internet, or by any other means, without the approval of the President, who shall satisfy themselves that the organization's Privacy Policy has been observed.
- Notifying the President of any contact made in the name of The Canadian Support Workers Association to the media and providing the name of the reporter or writer and the media outlet they represent.

Any significant media contacts with The Canadian Support Workers Association's staff or members on any issue likely to prove contentious shall, where possible, be videotaped.

Any filming or taping on The Canadian Support Workers Association's property or of the organization's proceedings by the media is subject to prior permission of the President.

Every effort should be made to assist the media in their inquiries. Where media queries involve requests for information that will require substantial staff work to produce, such work must be authorized by the President. It will usually be necessary to provide information in addition to that which is requested in order to set the facts and figures in context. Requests for detailed information of this nature, whether from the local or national media, should be referred to the President.

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Canadian Support Workers Association

The Canadian Support Workers Association reserves the right to withhold certain sensitive information concerning, say, commercial transactions or governmental negotiations. Any such information will be clearly labelled and clearly notified to relevant staff.

If any unauthorized releases of confidential information do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action will be taken.

AUTHORISATION

Miranda Ferrier

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President, OPSWA

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