

2018

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY



GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

1. DEFINITIONS

“Employers” means Councilors

“Electronic communication” means communicating using computer, such as internet and E-mail.

“External communication” means communication between representatives of Council and any outside person organization or media.

“Internal communication” means within and between Council and its committees, the department and division, including communication with any union recognized by SALGA.

“Letterhead” means the official full-color printed letterhead on the council or any electric copies thereof.

“Private calls” means phone calls made by official that do not add value to the quality of services provided by the Council, and are identified by both recipient purposes.

“Supervisor” means the first line manager or immediate supervisor

“Telecommunication” means communication by telephone, Cell phone or fax

“Union” recognized by SALGA

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE AND APPLICATIONS

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the employees of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality are informed about the expected conduct with regard to Communication within and outside Council.

2.2 This policy applies to all employees of the Council, unless expressly stated otherwise.

2.3 This policy is not exhaustive, and does not cover every conceivable situation that might arise. In any case not specification and explicitly covered by this policy, clarity should be obtained from the relevant Departmental Manager or the Municipal Manager including the Mayor.

2.4 It is the responsibility of the Communication and Marketing Division to monitor the general application of this policy, in specialized communication areas, like IT field.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 Council acknowledges that its Communication systems are intended to serve and support, directly, the legislative, oversight and administrative function of the Council, and that every Communication system should add value to this service

3.2 Council recognizes that regular and professional external Communication through a variety of accessible media and all forums that has Communication implication

3.2.1 Allow members, residents and professionals to be informed about, and participate in the activities of the Council, and

3.2.2 Build the profile and enhance the reputation of the Council.

3.3 Council adopts English as its medium of conducting business and English, Afrikaans, Sepedi and Xitsonga as official languages of the Municipality.

3.4 Directors and Managers are expected to deal with all internal and external Communication and respond as quickly as possible, or at most within seven working days by:

3.4.1 Making an appropriate decision, and Communicating this decision to the relevant person, where the Director/Manager is authorized to make such decisions, or

3.4.2 Passing on to relevant higher authority, with recommendation or comments, any Communication or respond concerning any matter the manager / head of division is not authorized to make decision about.

3.5 Council encourages open Communication and free flow of information between management and employees, and between management and any union recognized by the SALGA and visa versa.

3.6 Council also encourages regular staff meetings at divisional and departmental level.

3.7 All Communication, whether verbal, written, or electronic, shall be respectful and positive, shall follow the correct channels and shall add value to the services of the Council.

3.8 Any employee who commits an offence shall be subject to the disciplinary procedure of the Council, if they:

3.8.1 Communicate internally in a manner that is offensive and /or abusive:

3.8.2 Communication externally without authorization and /or in a manner that brings the business of Council into disrepute:

3.8.3 Fail to pay for their private phone calls and / or fraudulently classifies a private phone calls as an officials one:

3.8.4 Abuse the electronic Communication facilities of the Council in any way:

3.8.5 Use or collaborate in the use of the letterhead or any corporate symbol of Council for any fraudulent or dishonest purpose; or

3.8.6 Distributes the Letterhead and /or corporate symbols of the Council to any outside Party without authorization.

4. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

4.1 Council recognizes that internal Communication is a valuable tool that:

4.1.1 Empowers employees

4.1.2 Improve management; and

4.1.3 Promotes a feeling of belonging and being informed amongst employees.

4.2 Internal Communication shall follow the lines of management with Council and shall not, except where expressly allowed by

this or another policy, by-pass any of the required levels of the line management.

- 4.3 Line management has the right to return any Communication received through improper channels to the author thereof, with the note channel of Communication should be followed.
- 4.4 Employees should Communicate in the first instance with their supervisor, and where appropriate, allow space at the bottom of written Communication for a recommendation and /or comment by their supervisor and/or higher managers.
- 4.5 If such Communication can or does not resolve the problem, or if the Communication deserves the attention of higher authority, the supervisor may pass the Communication, together with any recommendation and/or comments /she would like to make, upwards until it reaches the Municipal Manager and the Mayor if appropriate.
- 4.6 Directors who receive communication from their subordinates have the right to decide if the Communication should be passed on to the Municipal Manager, based on:
 - 4.6.1 The complexity of any issue with which the communiqué is concerned: or
 - 4.6.2 The importance of any issue raised in the communiqué.
- 4.7 Directors who receives communication from subordinates has the right to handle communication themselves or to send it to another manager if appropriate.
- 4.8 Managers may communicate directly with another manager, and, if the Communication is of a written or formal nature, may send a copy to the Municipal Manager for his or her information.
- 4.9 Managers under the municipal manager's department alone can communicate directly with the Municipal Manager on issues that require decision making, unless:
 - 4.9.1 The municipal manager has asked a specific employee to communicate with him/her directly on a specific issue.
 - 4.9.2 The municipal manager has delegated any other employee to handle particular communication on a specific issue.

- 4.9.3 An employee is directing a request for an appeal against the findings and/ or sanctions of a formal disciplinary enquiry: or
- 4.9.4 An employee has attempted to address communication through the correct channels (and attaches proof thereof), but feels that their Communication has not been satisfactorily attended to all levels below that of the Municipal Manager.
- 4.10 The Municipal Manager can communicate with the Office of the Mayor on matters that require decision –making, unless:
- a) The Mayor has asked a specific employee to communicate with him or her directly on a specific issue.
 - b) The Mayor has delegated the full time Councilors or officials in their capacity to handle particular communication on a specific issue or with specific employee:
 - c) Any official who, after having exhausted all the channels of communication, is not satisfied with the manner, in which any specific issue has been handled, may seek the Mayor’s intervention.
- 4.11 The Municipal Manager can communicate with the Executive Committee on matters requiring decision-making, unless:
- a) The Executive Committee has asked a specific employee to communicate with it directly on a specific issue, or
 - b) The Executive Committee has delegated some other employee to handle particular communication on a specific issue or with a specific employee.
- 4.12 The municipal manager or directors may communicate with their subordinates according to any of the following channels:
- E-Mail
 - Circular/memorandum to be distributed to all employees.
 - Communication with managers who will in turn pass on this communication to their subordinates: or
 - General staff meeting
- 4.13 Preferably, at least a 48 hours notice, together with an agenda, shall usually be given for general staff meeting.

- 4.14 A director or a manager may communicate with their subordinates according to any of the following channels:
- a) Circular / memorandum to be distributed to all employees in the department
 - b) Communication to any manager in his or her department who in turn shall pass on the communication to their subordinates: or
 - c) Department /division management and staff meetings
- 4.15 Director shall attempt, wherever possible, to convene at least one departmental meetings per month to keep channels of communication open in both directions.
- 4.16 Internal communications between employees who are member of any union recognized by the SALGA and the office bearers of that union shall be conducted in accordance with the organizational rights agreement.
- 4.17 Communication between directors or managers and any union recognized by the SALGA shall be directed through the Municipal Manager, and vice versa.
- 4.18 Frontline communication, such as the switchboard operator and secretaries, shall at all-time give polite and helpful reception to any person visiting or contacting the Council.
- 4.19 All employees shall always show interest and willingness to assist all callers to the best of their ability
- 4.20 The Corporate Services department is responsible for the smooth flow of incoming and outgoing correspondence in the registry

5. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- 5.1 No employees may communicate in their official capacity with any outside person, organization or media unless they have been authorized by the municipal manager to do so.
- 5.2 It is the function of the Communication and Marketing Services Division, with the approval of the municipal manager and the mayor, to communicate with the media, organizations and stakeholders on behalf of the institution, and to issue

publication and all external communication in this regard from other authorized employees shall be conducted in co-operation with the Communication and marketing services division.

- 5.3 The municipal manager may give standing authorization to directors and certain employees whose functions and duties require them to communicate with suppliers or services providers, other provincial departments, or other person or organization.
- 5.4 Any director or employee who has standing authorized to communicate externally shall only do so in a manner that does not tarnish the image of the council nor bring it into disrepute.
- 5.5 Notwithstanding anything contained in 5.3 above, the municipal manager at any time and for any reason may restrict or revoke the right of any employees to communicate external.
- 5.6 The Communication and Marketing Services division shall be responsible for the development and publishing of any external publication that raises awareness and communicate information about the functioning of, and developments within Council.
- 5.7 The Communication and Marketing Services division may also:
 - Enter into partnership with any electronic and / print media to keep the public abreast of developments in the council
 - Publish and distribute information to the public, and
 - Conduct outreach programmes to inform and educate the public about municipal governance matters.

6. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COUNCILORS AND OFFICIALS:

- 6.1 All employees of council shall communicate with and about Councilors in a manner that shows respect and courtesy at all times.
- 6.2 Councilors shall communicate with the administration officials through the office of the Mayor on issues that require decision-making, and in case there are urgent matters requiring the attention of the administration, Councilors shall communicate with officials not below the level of the directors.

- 6.3 Direct communication with level of the managers can only take place when Councilors want to acquire information, and Councilors shall not issue instruction to officials in the course of such communication.
- 6.4 Councilors shall be accorded courtesy commensurate to their status during Council sitting meetings, ceremonial functions, visits, etc.
- 6.5 Guests at ceremonial functions, including sittings shall be seated according to protocol.
- 6.6 The Corporate Services department shall ensure that all the necessary documents are available for distribution prior to each sitting of committees, the Executive Committee and Council

7. LETTERHEADS AND OTHER CORPORATE SYMBOLS

- 7.1 Council recognizes that its letterheads and other corporate symbols are potentially open to abuse and /or fraudulent use, and shall take all reasonable precautions to restrict the distribution of those official symbols outside the Council.
- 7.2 No employee shall use the Letterhead or any corporate symbol of the Council for any fraudulent or dishonest purposes, and shall not participate and collaborate in the fraudulent or dishonest use of the letterhead or mace symbol of the council by any other employee, person or organization.
- 7.3 No employee of the Council shall make originals or copies of the letterhead or any corporate symbol of Council available to any person who is not an employee of the Council or to any other organization except with the written authorization of the Municipal Manager.
- 7.4 The Municipal Manager may, after consultation with the Mayor, give standing Authorization to the Head of Communication and Marketing service division to provide:
 - A high resolution, full-color original or copy of the letterhead to printers who are contracted to the council: and

- A medium resolution, grayscale copy of the mace to newspapers for advertisement, announcement: etc.

7.5 Notwithstanding anything contained in section 9.3 above, the Municipal Manager may, at any time and for any reason, restrict or revoke the right of any employee to distribute the council's letterheads or any corporate symbol.