



Communications from the public

Effective: April 19, 2007

STATEMENT

Audience feedback is extremely important to TFO. This policy sets out best practices for responding to communications from the public while ensuring that TFO meets or exceeds government standards. This policy also allows Programming and all other services to have access, through a database, to information on all communications received by TFO.

TFO shall:

- respond promptly (see 'c') and systematically to bona fide communications from the public about its services, whether positive, negative or neutral, that include a question or request requiring a response;
- respond to negative written communications received through the CRTC in accordance with CRTC regulations;
- maintain a record of communications from the public for organization-wide and corporate purposes of 2 business days for telephone or electronic communications, and 15 business days for regular mail or fax communications, with similar response requirements upon return from a holiday period of closure.

TFO has no obligation to respond to communications that contain obscenities or threats or that constitute any form of harassment. If such communications persist, TFO may decide to take appropriate action.

DEFINITIONS

“Communications from the public” means any contact that an individual makes by telephone, email, fax or mail to inform TFO staff of a positive, negative or neutral comment, suggestion, inquiry or concern about a TFO service.

“Good faith” means without dishonesty or fraud, as determined by the Chair and/or Senior Management.

“Harassment” means actions or communications that persistently or continuously disrupt, despite adequate responses by TFO staff as determined by the Chair and/or Senior Management.

GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

1.0 ROUTINE COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED FROM OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

1.1 Communications from the public are normally addressed or forwarded to Audience Relations, which will make every effort to deal with them in a satisfactory manner. If this is not possible, the Audience Relations department shall ensure that, depending on the matter at hand, a competent person designated by Senior Management responds by telephone or in writing.

1.2 Service or program staff may also receive communications from the public and shall make every effort to respond satisfactorily. Otherwise, the person shall forward the communication to Audience Relations or ensure that a follow-up telephone or written response is given by a competent person designated by Senior Management, depending on the issue.

1.3 When a routine inquiry does not require a written response, the response may be given by telephone or email, at the discretion of Senior Management.

1.4 All communications from the public addressed to TFO's electronic mailboxes or to program or broadcast email addresses will be automatically acknowledged through these systems. No further response will be given to correspondence that does not contain an inquiry or request requiring a response, in the opinion of Senior Management.

1.5 No further response will be given to all other communications from the public that do not contain an inquiry or request requiring a response, as determined by Senior Management.

1.6 The following communications will be forwarded immediately to Senior Management, which will designate the persons responsible for responding to them:

communications from or about municipal, provincial or federal officials;

communications from or about community, religious or business leaders or groups.

1.7 The following communications will be assigned to the appropriate personnel who will assume responsibility for the response, and will also be brought to the attention of senior management:

communications involving legal or regulatory requests or charges;

communications that contain serious charges regarding certain aspects of a program or service;

communications originating from or concerning the CRTC;

communications containing obscenities or threats;

communications that require an interpretation of this policy.

1.8 The Audience Relations department and the various services will be responsible for updating a database of all telephone and written communications received in their area weekly, regardless of the method used to acknowledge or respond to them. Other departments will have access to the information contained in this database.

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED THROUGH THE CRTC

All negative written communications received through the CRTC must be forwarded immediately to the On-Air and Communications department for action in accordance with the CRTC's direction. The procedure in such cases is as follows:

- view the program or segment (if relevant to the nature of the complaint);

- review the complaint with the appropriate management and any other staff involved;
- advise Senior Management and the Legal Department (if applicable) of any potentially contentious issues that the complaint may raise or result from the complaint;
- draft the response and forward it to Senior Management for approval; and
- send a response to the complainant and the CRTC within 3 weeks of receiving the initial correspondence.