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## BC FERRY & MARINE WORKERS' UNION

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**TO:** PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE  
**FROM:** JACK BRUCKMAN  
**SUBJECT:** EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION POLICY  
**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

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### **Introduction**

BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union (BCFMWU, or the Union) has established external communication channels including a mailing list, Union email, a web site, a main Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter account, radio, print, and various press releases including online topical campaign collaborations with media companies. The most recent official collaboration was the #StopFerryWorkerAbuse campaign. The Union also has official spokespeople to interface with select media as needed.

This policy ensures quality, consistency and accuracy in materials developed for the Ferry Worker community at large and other external audiences, this includes the news media, which acts as a conduit to reach these audiences. BCFMWU will maintain current select media contacts to be accessed strategically for messaging the Union's perspective when needed.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for ensuring that a strong, unified, and positive image consistent with BCFMWU's core values and objectives are communicated while messaging to all external audiences.

### **Definitions**

**Media** refers to any print, broadcast (radio or television) or online source (website or social media site) that provides news and information to the general public or specific audiences.

**Brand** is the unique visual, verbal and written attributes, or a combination of these, used by an organization. BCFMWU's current 'Brand' includes being the largest maritime union in Canada representing approximately 4,000 members from across 35 vessels, and 47 ports of call in British Columbia. BCFMWU represents a diverse membership committed to union solidarity, the dignity of the worker, human rights, civil liberty, tolerance, and actively participating in the Labour movement at large. The Union's logo and affiliations are to appear in official letterhead. The Union's affiliations are BC Federation of Labour (BCFED), BC Government & Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), National Union of Public & General Employees (NUPGE), and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF Global).

**Holding Statements** are short official statements made in the midst of a crisis as a story is breaking. Brief accounts of what the Union currently knows, whom the Union is communicating with, and what actions the Union is taking or will be taking (if known) can be shared by a designated spokesperson via BCFMWU email or directly via phone, online, or on camera.

## **Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)**

CASL, is Federal legislation, prevents the receipt of unwanted commercial electronic communication such as promotional emails, text messages, images or sounds. The Union's mailing list is an opt-in subscription based mailing list and only Union relevant emails are sent to this list. BCFMWU will never rent or sell any contact information to a third party.

## **Target Audiences**

The particular group of people identified as the intended recipient of the information sent via the Union's communication channels include current and retired BCFMWU members, the Employer, the general public, the press, affiliates, public figures, legislative leaders, and more. Depending on who the audience is will determine the tone and style of the message. For example, press releases will have formal letterhead and formal contact information while social media postings may have hashtags and a more informal tone depending upon the message.

## **Policy Statements**

All external communications are to be guided by BCFMWU's values and brand. The Executive Director is the final staff sign-off and proofer for external messaging after Admin has first proofed. The Admin Coordinator must sign off before the external communications goes to the Executive Director. From the Executive Director a draft goes to the Provincial President for proofing especially if it includes a quote from the President. Once the Provincial President has signed off, then the external communications should go back to the Executive Director and messaging is made public.

The Provincial President or designate can instigate external messaging but before messaging is publicly shared, it should be signed off on for consistency, proofing, and branding by the Executive Director.

The goal is to maintain the quality and consistency of all written and visual materials used to communicate the Union brand with target audiences. The Union's reputation and credibility is key.

The Provincial President, Executive Director, or designate provides the media with accurate information about news and events related to BCFMWU in a timely manner. It is the Executive Director's responsibility to maintain positive relationships with the media. The Provincial President may designate a spokesperson but talking points and holding statements must be approved beforehand by the Executive Director and/or Provincial President if time is of the essence. Official statements should not be rushed unless there is a deadline given or it is a crisis type situation.

All external communication emails sent on behalf of the Union must comply with Union policies, include basic email etiquette, and *not* include any personal or confidential information related to the Union. Appropriate contact information is not considered personal information.

## **Crisis Management**

If a critical issue erupts that demands a response to the public and/or media in an extremely tight deadline or turnaround, then the Executive Director and Provincial President will create a holding statements ASAP.

## **Web Site**

The BCFMWU web site is considered a key communication and marketing tool to enhance the Union's recognition and promote to the Union's audiences. It is the responsibility of BCFMWU Admin Unit to maintain content and images on the core pages of the Union website in accordance with approval and direction from the Provincial President or designate, Executive Director, and Admin Coordinator.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Provincial President is the official spokesperson to the media for the Union. The Executive Director or a designate, can stand in for the President when needed and collaborates with the Provincial President on formal press releases and media messaging.

The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing the strategic development and execution of the Union's external communications. This includes, but is not limited to, media relations, advertising and marketing, web, photography, video, events and crisis communication. If the Provincial President or designate, is unavailable, the Executive Director will notify an appropriate spokesperson using the Constitution as a guide, as needed for communicating externally on an emergent issue.

The Provincial President and the Executive Director are responsible for enhancing stakeholder relations between the Union and the media community at large.

The Provincial President and the Executive Director are responsible for ensuring the Union's policy is consistently followed and delivered in written and visual materials.

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of CASL for external commercial electronic messages sent within their respective areas of responsibility.

All staff working at the Union Hall and members are required to uphold the confidentiality of all information pertaining to the Union as well as follow related policies, procedures, and directives.

## **Non-compliance Implications**

Non-compliance with this policy may lead to charges under the Union Constitution.

## **Communications Plan**

Changes to this policy will be at the recommendation of the Provincial Executive, Communications Committee, and Privacy Officer and are to be voted on by the Provincial Executive.

## **Related Policies**

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Information Technology Device Policy](#)

In Solidarity,

Jack Bruckman  
Executive Director

Eric McNeely  
Provincial President