



CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA AND LEGISLATURE

Date:

August 30, 2021

By Direction Of:

Lucas M. Miller, State Inspector General

A. Purpose.

To establish the Office of State Inspector General's (OSIG) policy and procedures for governing interactions between OSIG employees and external news media and the offices of state and federal legislators. This policy applies to all OSIG employees. Failure to abide by this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination.

B. Policy.

As a public agency, the OSIG has an obligation to provide information to the people of the Commonwealth. OSIG serves the people, and acts as their advocate for integrity, ethics, and accountability in the executive offices of state government. It is a core principle of OSIG that ready access to information, within applicable law, is essential to good government. Therefore, it is the policy of the OSIG to maintain relationships with the media and legislative offices that are based upon trust, cooperation and mutual respect. Whenever an OSIG employee is contacted by a media outlet or legislator or their staff members, he/she will display the same courtesy and professionalism as they would to our clients and business partners. It is important for the assigned media and/or legislative liaison(s) to respond quickly, courteously and professionally to all media and legislative inquiries.

Legislative Inquiries

The State Inspector General, or his or her designee, shall appoint or designate a Legislative Liaison for the OSIG. All legislative inquiries must be directed to the OSIG's Legislative Liaison. OSIG employees are prohibited from answering any questions posed to them by a legislator or a legislative staff member or release any information about the OSIG, its cases, or its operations without the express approval of the Legislative Liaison or the State Inspector General. The employee will state that it is the OSIG's policy to refer all legislative inquiries to the OSIG's Legislative Liaison. The employee will then immediately refer the inquiry from, or contact with, the legislator or legislative staff member to the Legislative Liaison. Any release of information about the OSIG or its investigations that is not approved by the State Inspector General, or his or her designee, is a violation of this policy.

All legislative inquiries must be forwarded to the OSIG's Legislative Liaison immediately via the OSIG's online inquiry system. In addition to inputting the inquiry into the online system, OSIG employees must email the legislative liaison with the necessary information and copy their chain of command. The OSIG's Legislative Liaison is responsible for tracking and updating the completion of a legislative inquiry in the OSIG's online inquiry system, as well as making recommendations for its improvement.

Media Inquiries

This policy covers all external news media of any type or form including, but not limited to, broadcast, electronic, and print.

The State Inspector General, or his or her designee, shall appoint or designate a Communications Director for the OSIG.

Each inquiry the OSIG receives from the media must be reviewed by the appropriate OSIG Executive Staff and, if necessary, by the Governor's Office. Once approval is received to reply to an inquiry, only those persons authorized by the State Inspector General and the Communications Director shall release the information to the media.

All media inquiries must be immediately directed to the OSIG's Communications Director to ensure a timely response. Any contact with a media representative shall be reported immediately to the OSIG Communications Director via the online inquiry system. In addition to inputting the inquiry into the online system, OSIG employees must email the Communications Director with the necessary information and copy their chain of command. The only response an employee may make to a media inquiry is to state that it is the OSIG's policy to refer all media inquiries to the OSIG's Communications Director who will promptly respond. OSIG employees will not release any information regarding the OSIG or its investigations to any media source. Any release of information, directly or indirectly, to any such media representative, or an agent thereof, about the OSIG is a violation of this policy unless expressly authorized as described above.

No OSIG employee, without prior express authorization from the OSIG Communications Director, shall initiate contact with any media representative, by any means of communication, on any matter affecting the operations or business of the OSIG. This explicitly includes anonymous, "background," or "off the record" communications.

The OSIG's Communications Director is responsible for tracking and updating the completion of a media inquiry in the OSIG's online inquiry system, as well as making recommendations for its improvement.

Press releases

All OSIG press releases, or joint releases mentioning the OSIG, must be reviewed and approved by the OSIG Communications Director, the State Inspector General or his or her

designee and the Governor's Office. The appropriate logo should be included on the media release as per branding guidelines. Releases concerning criminal prosecutions shall include the appropriate notice that all individuals charged are presumed innocent.

C. Procedures.

Legislative Inquiries

OSIG employees who receive an inquiry from a legislator or a legislator's employee or representative regarding the OSIG will access the "Press/Legislative Inquiry" hyperlink located on the left navigation tab on the IGSNet's main page. Once there, the employee will enter the following information and submit the inquiry:

- The Reason for Inquiry (enter the specific subject of the inquirer's call);
- Name of the person making the inquiry and the name of the legislator they work for along with their contact information;
- Entered By (the name of the OSIG employee who received the inquiry and entered the information); and
- Any accompanying documentation received.

Employees will advise the source of the inquiry that the OSIG's Legislative Liaison will contact them promptly.

In addition to inputting the inquiry into the online system, OSIG employees must email the legislative liaison with the necessary information and copy their chain of command.

Media Inquiries

OSIG employees who receive an inquiry from any media source regarding the OSIG will access the "Press/Legislative Inquiry" hyperlink located on the left navigation tab on the IGSNet's main page. Once there, the employee will enter the following information and submit the inquiry:

- The Reason for Inquiry, if provided by the requestor (enter the specific subject of the inquirer's call);
- Name of the person making the inquiry and their affiliation along with their contact information ;
- Entered By (the name of the OSIG employee who received the inquiry and entered the information); and
- Any accompanying documentation received.

Employees will advise the source of the inquiry that the OSIG's Communications Director will contact them promptly.

In addition to inputting the inquiry into the online system, OSIG employees must email the Communications Director with the necessary information and copy their chain of command.

D. Additional Information.

For further information relating to this policy, contact your immediate supervisor.
