

**From:** Markowitz, Deb [Deb.Markowitz@vermont.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 07, 2011 10:24 AM  
**To:** Mears, David  
**CC:** MacLean, Alex; Allen, Susan  
**Subject:** FW: Follow-up on ANR communications policy

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: Page, Candy [mailto:CPAGE@burlingt.gannett.com]  
Sent: Thursday, April 07, 2011 10:03 AM  
To: Markowitz, Deb  
Cc: Kilian, Michael  
Subject: RE: Follow-up on ANR communications policy

Deb,

Thanks for your note. I continue to believe that asking employees to report their conversations with journalists to their bosses does not encourage open communication. You're a manager and lawyer, I'm a journalist -- I guess it's hard for either of us to see the world from the other's point of view.

But thanks for being open to the conversation,  
Candy

-----Original Message-----

From: Markowitz, Deb [mailto:Deb.Markowitz@state.vt.us]  
Sent: 3/31/2011 1:57 PM  
To: Page, Candy  
Cc: Kilian, Michael; Mears, David  
Subject: RE: Follow-up on ANR communications policy

Hi Candy,

Thanks for the email. I am glad your experience is that employees are responsive and that they no longer feel like they should not be talking to you. We have tried to convey that message to staff.

In response to your concerns I took a look at the form we use here- and except for asking your deadline it does not require employees to interrogate journalists. It is minimalist and asks simply what the subject matter that was discussed and what the employee responded. I have found that it has been a great help to me and the leadership team to read these. I almost always learn something, and sometimes I find an opportunity to link the reporter with additional information that could be helpful. On occasion I even call the reporter myself to link the specific question to a larger policy discussion. The reporters who receive the follow-up calls are always very appreciative.

I have attached a copy of the form so you could see for yourself what I am talking about.

Feel free to call if you wish to discuss this further.

Deb

-----Original Message-----

From: Page, Candy [mailto:CPAGE@burlingt.gannett.com]

Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 11:31 AM

To: Markowitz, Deb

Cc: Kilian, Michael

Subject: Follow-up on ANR communications policy

Deb,

First, thanks for the Muninet material.

Second, we talked late last year about the ANR policy that requires all staff members to fill out a report every time they speak with me. I was reminded of this when I just called someone in an ANR department seeking a specific piece of information (a link to a document on the ANR website that I couldn't find on my own). Before the person would answer my question, the person said, I have to ask you some questions for this form I have to fill out. What is the subject of your story? What is your deadline?" Then the person appeared to pause (during our very brief conversation) to write down on the form the answers he/she gave me.

Here is my concern: It is none of ANR's business what my story is about -- that's like inquiring someone's motive when they ask for public information from the state. It is none of ANR's business what my deadline is. Of course, for practical reasons, the staff member I'm interviewing may need to know my deadline. And I share the subject of my story with the person I'm interviewing. But when the INSTITUTION demands ROUTINELY to know these things as a condition of sharing information, I think a line has been crossed.

Third, I want to emphasize that I generally find an excellent level of cooperation from the ANR employees I speak with. Your Waste Management folks, for example, recently spent large amounts of time helping me with a package of stories on petroleum pollution. They couldn't have been more helpful. I also sense that some ANR staff members feel more comfortable talking to the press since the change in administration. You and David Mears and Pat Berry have been terrifically accessible, which I greatly appreciate.

What concerns me is the principle of thing. Government should not be interrogating journalists. And, as a practical matter of encouraging openness in government, requiring staff to report their conversations with the media can easily discourage openness on the part of the scientists, regulators and technicians who work for you.

Thanks for listening,  
Candy