

Communications Guidelines and Protocols During an Election

While the pre-established guidelines for government communications generally apply during an election campaign, there are some additional guidelines to ensure that CNS remains non-partisan.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

It is important that the electoral process be on public record. The following is appropriate to go through CNS:

- A note to editors of the photo opportunity or media availability of the election call.
- A government photographer may attend the event and take photographs for distribution to media and for government record (not for political or campaign purposes).
- A news release announcing the election date (no references to campaign strategy or political party).
- The photograph can be featured on the government home page, with a link to the news release announcing the election date.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADVERTISING DURING AN ELECTION

Communications activities, specifically announcements and advertising, are prohibited during election periods subject to the exemptions below:

- Announcements/advertising/communications activities (i.e. news releases) required by law to issue a public notice for legal purposes;
- Announcements/advertising/communications activities (i.e. news releases) to inform the public of a danger to health, safety or the environment;
- Announcements/advertising/communications activities (i.e. news releases) about a job posting or staffing notice;
- Announcements/advertising/communications activities (i.e. news releases) about a tender notice for a project or work that was announced publicly before the election was called and that is funded in the current fiscal year budget;
- Announcements/advertising/communications activities (i.e. news releases) when a department is required to advise the public of programs funded and announced on a regular basis as routine department business (i.e. traffic advisories, program application deadlines, recognition of cultural and commemorative days/weeks/months). These announcements/advertising/communications activities may proceed in consultation with a

CNS MD, however no new funding or new program announcements may be made and Ministers are not named or quoted.

In addition:

- announcements/advertising/communications activities should not suggest or give favour to a Minister, the government or any political party.
- all partisan and political communications is coordinated through individual caucus offices.
- program staff, Deputy Ministers and other senior government officials may be quoted in a news release in place of the Minister, where appropriate.
- Ministers' names are not included in advertising copy during an election campaign.
- advertising on the electoral process may come through CNS.

MEDIA RELATIONS

On occasion, communications staff may be contacted by a journalist to respond to an inquiry or comment on a departmental policy or program that has become part of the election campaign or platform. Media Relations Advisors can provide factual information about existing departmental policies and programs. If media require a spokesperson, Deputy Ministers and program staff can be made available. Media seeking comments on platform commitments should be referred to the relevant political party.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEO

Communications Nova Scotia does not provide photography or video services to candidates during an election campaign. Government photographs and video must not be used for political or campaign purposes.

MEDIA MONITORING

Media monitoring services will be limited to the election process only (i.e., accessibility of polls, advance, special polls, etc.). There will be no media monitoring of campaigns, platforms, or related events/activities.

CREATIVE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

Communications Nova Scotia will not design, produce or print political or campaign related information. Information on the election process may be produced and distributed via print or electronically through Communications Nova Scotia.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY – USE OF PROVINCE HOUSE

Province House and the services of Legislative Television Broadcast & Recording Services (LegTV), may not be booked for announcements or events that may suggest or give favour to the government or any political party. Each individual request will be assessed by the staff of the House of Assembly Operations or LegTV. For more information contact the Clerk's Office at (902) 424-4661.

LEGISLATIVE TELEVISION

Program material may not be used for political party advertising, election campaigns or any other politically partisan activity.

Program material may not be edited for use in promotional material by any political party or other organization and may not be used in any edited form that could mislead or misinform an audience or viewer, or which does not present a balanced portrayal of the proceedings of the House. For more information contact the Clerk's Office at (902) 424-4661.

AFTER THE ELECTION

Communications Nova Scotia staff will provide full communications support, advice and services, as required, during the transition and swearing in of the new government.

CNS staff work with the Protocol Office to co-ordinate logistics for the swearing in ceremony of the Executive Council and with House of Assembly staff for the swearing in of the Members of the Legislative Assembly.