

2014 Election Campaign Year

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. In addition to the "no print distribution of newsletters after August 1, 2014," does the same rule apply to electronic newsletters?**

Yes, the same rule applies to electronic distribution of newsletters as to hard copies. They may not be distributed after August 1, 2014.

- 2. Are Councillors permitted to use mass e-mailings to constituents after August 1, 2014 (for example, where there is information to report on infrastructure funding, etc. that is happening at that time?)**

No. The only mass mailings permitted after August 1, 2014 are in emergencies, for example notices about storm damages, mass flooding, sink holes and road closures.

Infrastructure funding project reporting would not fall under this category. City divisions, however, are not prohibited from providing updates concerning projects to the City's residents.

- 3. May a Councillor update his/her website after August 1, 2014 to continue to provide up to date information to constituents?**

Yes. Websites can be updated because Councillors continue in their role as Councillors until the end of the term. Members of their staff continue to be paid until the end of the term. The policy on use of corporate resources during an election year restricts the use of the office budget for advertising and promotion purposes after August 1, 2014. Councillors' staff can update the Councillor's website. The Constituency Services and Office Budget Policy prohibits paying an outside firm or individual to update the website, as that would be using the office budget for advertising and promotion after August 1, 2014.

- 4. If supporters during the campaign e-mail a Councillor at his/her City Hall office, is it appropriate to refer them to the campaign office or should there be no reply at all, or is either permissible?**

It is up to the Councillor to determine if they do or do not wish to reply to e-mails concerning a campaign matter. However, if the Councillor chooses to reply, Councillor staff should respond back to the constituent and request that the constituent contact the campaign office instead and provide that contact information. Staff should not directly forward the e-mail from the City Hall office or the City's e-mail account directly to the Councillor's campaign office, to keep the different roles separate and distinct.

5. May Councillors continue to hold Town Hall meetings after August 1, 2014 for ward related matters?

No, not for routine or non-emergency ward matters. Councillors can only hold town hall meetings after August 1, 2014 for emergency matters, such as flooding, storms, sudden road closures etc. City divisions can continue to hold meetings after August 1, 2014 including planning matters. Councillors can attend these meetings. However, City flyers advertising these meetings will not name them. Reference will be made to the generic term "Councillor, Ward xx"

6. May Councillors use the information on e-mail lists they have as Councillors to send campaign e-mails from their campaign offices? Can they use this information if they receive permission?

No. Mailing list information obtained as a Councillor should not be made available to the campaign team. This is not the same as mailing list information that may have been obtained through campaign efforts, this year or in the past. The important point is to keep the two functions and collection systems separate.

7. How should staff respond to requests from the public to volunteer, work for Councillors, put up signs etc, before their campaign headquarters and team are in place? May Council staff provide any information? How?

If there is not yet a campaign office to refer interested supporters to, Council staff should advise the caller that there is no contact information at this point and they should check back at a future time. If a Councillor staff also works on a Councillor's campaign, they should be fully aware of and comply with the restrictions under the Employee Participation in Municipal Election Campaign policy. Any campaign-related work must be done outside of work hours and City resources must not be used.

8. May Councillors use social media to communicate with constituents?

Councillors may use social media (for example, Twitter, Facebook) to update constituents about the work of the Councillor and their office. Any sites which are free are not subject to the Constituency Services and Office Budget Policy because corporate resources are not being used (and therefore, not subject to the August 1, 2014 cutoff date for use of corporate resources.) However, care should be taken that any social media messages do not contain any campaign or election related information.

For You-Tube videos, Councillors should be aware of the Constituency Services and Office Budget Policy, s.4.7 which prohibits the use of the Constituency Services and Office Budget for advertising and promotion purposes after August 1, 2014. Paying external suppliers or resources to develop and upload a You-Tube video would contravene this policy.

For Councillor's external websites, whether paid for by the Constituency Services and Office Budget or personal funds, that contain links to other social media, care should be taken not to link the member's page to campaign pages or content. The important point

is to keep the two functions (Councillors doing council work and Councillor as candidate) distinct from one another.

9. Are there any recommendations you can make about how to respond to election-related queries?

To help maintain a clear line of distinction between your role as a Councillor and your role as a candidate in the election, you may wish to adopt the following strategies for your office operations:

Suggested auto-reply e-mail message:

In accordance with the Council Policy on the Use of City Resources during an Election, this email address is being utilized exclusively for the business of the City of Toronto. As such, I will not be reading or responding to any campaign-related communications from you to this e-mail address.

Election campaign inquiries should be directed to the appropriate campaign office.

Suggested disclaimer for bottom of response e-mails:

In accordance with the Council Policy on the Use of City Resources during an Election, this email message is strictly related to the business of the City of Toronto.

Telephone Communications

Suggested voice-mail message:

Thank you for calling Councillor (name)'s Office. In accordance with the Council Policy on the Use of City Resources during an Election, this telephone number is being used only for the business of the City of Toronto. As such, our office will not respond to any campaign-related telephone calls. Election campaign inquiries should be directed to the appropriate campaign office.

Suggested action for staff responding to campaign-related phone calls:

- Once staff receives the phone call and determines that it is a campaign-related call, do not engage in a long detailed conversation. End the call as quickly as possible. Refer the caller to the campaign website or the campaign phone number.

Written Correspondence

Suggested response:

Thank you for your correspondence. As a sitting Member of Council, I must ensure my work as an elected official is separated from any campaign in the

upcoming municipal election. As such, I will not be reading or responding to any campaign-related communications from you to my City Hall office.

Please remove my contact information from your distribution list as this address is intended solely for the purpose of business related to the City of Toronto.

10. May I still team with the City in staging joint community events?

Councillors are not permitted to organize community events after August 1, per the Constituency Services and Office Budget policy. However, City divisions can still organize events, including joint Councillor-City events.

The Policy on Donation to Council Member-Organized Community Events does not affect the entitlement of a member of Council to:

- Use his or her office budget to run or support community events subject to the terms of the Constituency Services and Office Budget policy;
- Urge constituents, businesses and other groups to support community events staged by others in the member's ward or elsewhere in the City;
- Play an advisory or membership role in any organization staging community events in the member's ward, e.g. a Business Improvement Area
- Team with the City and its agencies in the staging of community events, e.g. Environment Days.

The Council-approved Use of City Resources during an Election policy prohibits the reference of any Councillor by name after August 1. This policy will apply to joint City-Councillor events.

11. Can I convert my personal website to a campaign website, since I paid for the URL registration and the web hosting fees myself ?

You should not turn your Councillor website to a campaign website, as the public is used to receiving Councillor information on this site. The important point is to keep the two functions separate and distinct from one another.

12. Can I use my City-issued and funded BlackBerry or mobile device for occasional communications for my campaign?

No. the Code of Conduct and the Constituency Services and Office Budget Policy both prohibits the use of City resources for campaign purposes, even for occasional use. You should keep the City-issued and funded BlackBerry or mobile device for Councillor business only. You should have a separate mobile device, with a different phone number and e-mail address for your campaign activities.