

FIRE DEPARTMENT
SANTA CLARA COUNTY

PUBLIC INFORMATION SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Under general direction of the Assistant Chief of Administration & Planning or designee, develops and implements Department-wide public information programs and campaigns related to the Department's mission, including marketing, outreach, and/or customer service activities; may act as departmental spokesperson; and performs related duties as required.

The Public Information Specialist manages, with the Fire Captain assigned to the special assignment of Public Information Officer (PIO) or designee, specific job duties, tasks and responsibilities related to the coordination of the public information program of the Department. Working collaboratively with the Fire Captain assigned to the special assignment of PIO, the Public Information Specialist is a single classification that may have the full responsibilities for the day-to-day coordination Department-wide communication efforts to inform and educate the public of Department issues, incidents, events, etc. The incumbent must be able to work independently, balance multiple priorities, respond promptly during assigned work hours and effectively report incidents and significant events, and will be working closely under the direction of the Deputy Chief of Administration and Planning.

This classification is designated as an at-will, unrepresented, Fair Labor Standards Act exempt position in the Unclassified Service.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Depending upon assignment, duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assist in coordinating the Department's emergency information program including assisting with the development of a training program for the development of suppression qualified personnel related to PIO duties; an emergency information line/call center; the timely and accurate dissemination of information during emergencies; and assisting with the coordination with cooperating agencies/partners.
- Serve as the spokesperson of the Department as directed; coordinate the response to all media requests, and advise A-Staff on methods to communicate Department goals.
- Prepare risk management messages for emergencies, threats, or risk-related events.
- Participate in the development, management and coordination of the Department's electronic communication such as the Department's website, social media, and news media for the latest news and developments appropriate for sharing with the public.
- Assist in the development, implementation and maintenance of an integrated strategic communications plan to advance the Department's mission and goals to its constituents (internal and external), and broaden the public's awareness of its programs and priorities.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (continued)

- Coordinate public outreach, media relations, communications, etc. with the Department's communications consultant.
- Perform research; collect and evaluate data; and prepare press releases, media advisories, public service announcements, newsletters, public information flyers, talking points, speeches, presentations, and any other supporting verbal and/or written communications to ensure consistency in the Department's message; and develop a network for effective and timely dissemination of information.
- Work closely with the Fire Prevention Division to coordinate efforts to disseminate public education messages, events and programs to the public and media, and ensure consistency with the Department's goals.
- Provide communications advice to A-Staff on legislative, sensitive issues and special projects.
- Work closely with A-Staff to stay informed of issues affecting the communities served.
- Coordinate and disseminate information for employees.
- Design, write and produce public information materials such as display advertising, brochures, flyers, direct mail materials, newsletters and web pages using a variety of graphics, desktop publishing software, and programming languages to develop or modify materials.
- Interact with professional and technical staff, community interest groups, other governmental agencies, industry, and other sources to obtain information; develop materials for presentations, and respond to information requests from the general public, community interest groups, and other governmental agencies.
- Engage, cultivate, and manage media relations to ensure coverage of the Department's activities with the goal of advancing the Department's mission and goals.
- Photograph still images and takes videos of Department programs, events and projects, as needed or directed.
- Interview employees, Department officers, and representatives from various stakeholders and the general public to secure information and facts.
- Develop and maintain a communication network with the media, radio, television/print medias, organization newsletters, etc. to ensure that the media and public are well informed during critical incidents and disasters in a timely manner.
- Supervise support personnel as directed.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Education and Experience: A bachelor's degree in journalism, marketing, communications, public relations or related field and three (3) years of full-time experience in the field of journalism, communications, public/media relations covering areas such as news media, social media, newsletters and press releases, among others, or closely related field.

or

Sixty (60) college credit units and four (4) years of full-time experience in the field of journalism, marketing, communications, public/media relations covering areas such as news media, social media, newsletters and press releases, among others, or closely related field.

Highly Desirable: Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), Certificate in Public Information from the CAPIO J. Lindsey Wolf PIO Institute.

Knowledge Of:

- Principles, practices and techniques of public relations and public administration, local government, policies, and procedures.
- Communication interviewing techniques.
- Data compilation and routine evaluation practices and techniques.
- Report and correspondence writing practices and techniques.
- English language structure including correct English usage, rules of composition, spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Advertising techniques, copy writing, layout, and production of appropriate public service announcements and news worthy information.
- Communication and dissemination techniques via written, oral and visual media.
- Principles and practices of public relations, including client-media relations.
- Customer service standards and techniques, including quality service standards and customer satisfaction evaluation techniques.
- Research methods.
- Computers and other technological tools such as Microsoft Office and desktop publishing software, among others.
- Automated and manual records management practices.

Ability To:

- Effectively utilizing sound judgment and discretion when representing the Department before public and private organizations, officials, and media representatives.
- Effectively write, edit, and verbally communicate in an effective and skillful manner.

Ability To: (continued)

- Ensure consistency of public information both internal and external to the Department.
- Prepare written correspondence and reports.
- Work independently; make decisions in a changing environment.
- The use of technologies as communication vehicles to promote and advance the Department's mission and goals.
- Keep up to date and informed of new media tools, new technology, and trends.
- Creatively develop new media strategies, adjusting the plan as necessary
- Work effectively with a variety of individuals and groups.
- Gather and analyze data, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.
- Learn and apply principles and practices of supervision.
- Read and learn Department-specific policies, procedures, and related laws and regulations.
- Identify consequences of actions.
- Listen effectively.
- Influence and promote change.
- Persuade others to approach issues and ideas differently.
- Motivate and train staff.
- Effectively handle political and sensitive issues.
- Represent the Department accurately to the media.
- Be flexible and reorganize priorities in the event of a major incident worthy of informing the general public, constituents, and stakeholders.
- Act as the spokesperson for the Department as directed by the Fire Chief or designee.
- Photograph still and action-oriented shots of programs and projects.
- Prepare and/or assist in the preparation of video and/or print media outreach for public information as directed by the Fire Chief.
- Work with the necessary tools such as computers, printers, copiers, video cameras, digital cameras, tape recorders, projectors, etc.
- Learn and use programming languages such as Java and HTML.
- Establish and maintain effective and professional working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Maintain a calm and professional demeanor in confrontational or difficult situations.

Ability To: (continued)

- Maintain confidentiality of information.
- Work protracted hours.
- Appear and act professional at all times.

Working Conditions/Physical Demands: The position will require frequent, sitting, standing, walking, use of hands and fingers to handle or feel objects, tools, or controls; must be able to reach with hands and arms, climb or balance, stoop, kneel or crouch. Lift up to 25 pounds. Must possess excellent vision, distance, peripheral and depth perception and ability to focus. The incumbent may be exposed to similar surroundings as those in the public safety jobs.

Employment Condition: May work irregular hours and occasionally work on weekends as the need arises.

Required License: Possession of a valid state of California driver's license.

Pre-Employment Requirements: The candidate must pass a background check, Live Scan fingerprint, and medical examination.