

# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS Standard Operating Procedures

COMMISSIONED OFFICER ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE



**COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**  
**OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**



## References

### COA Governing Documents

- Strategic Plan
- Bylaws

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# Article

## I. PURPOSE

The Commissioned Officers Association (COA) of United States Public Health Service (USPHS) **Communications and Public Relations** Committee Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) provides operational and procedural guidance for the COA's **Communications and Public Relations** Committee (CPRC).

This SOP applies to all documents created that are related to all functions within the COA Communications and Public Relations Committee to establish policies, processes, records, and acceptance criteria under the auspices of the COA. This SOP does not apply to documents created by other organizations outside of the COA Communications and Public Relations Committee.

## II. MISSION

Gather information and disseminate information to our members and the public.

## III. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES & ORGANIZATION

### Section 1. Committee Responsibility

The Communications and Public Relations Committee shall work with the COA Board of Directors and COA staff to facilitate communication with its members and the public.

### Section 2. Structure

The Communications and Public Relations Committee consists of one Committee Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and active COA members in good standing. The **Communications and Public Relations** Chair may form permanent or ad-hoc subcommittees within, as needed.

- A. **Chair:** Communications and Public Relations Chair shall be currently serving on the COA Board of Directors and is to be appointed by the Chair of the COA Board of Directors. The Communications and Public Relations Chair acts as a liaison between the COA Board of Directors and the COA Communications and Public Relations Committee. The Communications and Public Relations Committee Chair facilitates, organizes, and maintains order in meetings; advises the Communications and Public Relations Committee on new and existing projects; and reviews and finalizes Committee-specific documents. The current Communications and Public Relations Committee Chair may have input on the selection of the next Communications and Public Relations Chair and/or Vice Chair.
- B. **Vice Chair:** The Vice Chair is in a mentorship position. The Vice Chair is mentored by the Chair in preparation to become the eventual CPRC Chair. The mentorship period allows for a smooth transition during leadership change over as well as enhanced effectiveness in Committee dynamics and leadership. The Vice Chair shall act for the Chair in absence of the Chair.

- C. **Secretary:** The Committee Secretary must be extremely organized and detail oriented. The Secretary must communicate efficiently, plan and prepare for meetings ahead of time, respond to requests of information in a timely manner, and ensure accurate documentation of Committee activities. The Secretary shall maintain accurate minutes of meetings and submit to the Chair and Vice chair within 72 hours after a Committee meeting for review prior to uploading on Onboard. The Secretary shall carefully preserve, on file, all reports and activities presented to the Board and shall be in charge with the necessary business and professional correspondence.
- D. **Committee Members:** Any COA member, in good standing, is encouraged to serve on the Communications and Public Relations Committee. The Communications and Public Relations Committee shall be diverse in the following: Agency/Operating Divisions, geographic location, rank, and active duty status. The size of the Comm/PR Committee shall be adaptable to meet the Comm/PR **Committee's mission**, as determined by the Comm/PR Committee Chair.
  - i. Recruitment of Committee members: Wide, open call for committee members is conducted using a blast e-mail through COA and an announcement in Frontline.

#### IV. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

##### Section 1. Responsibilities

The Comm/PR Committee Chair must keep the Committee viable and productive through aligning the meetings and projects to facilitate the mission of the Comm/PR Committee.

- A. The Comm/PR Committee Chair will have the following responsibilities:
  - i. Prepare written reports (to be included in the minutes) for Committee meetings to communicate project progress and Committee activities. Meeting minutes shall be archived on the Committee's designated page on the OnBoard webpage.
  - ii. Prepare written and verbal reports for the COA Board of Directors meetings.
  - iii. Review Committee SOP and other Committee documents (as listed in the Committee SOP) at least annually.
  - iv. Involve as many Committee members as possible in discussions by soliciting opinions and experiences.
  - v. Ensure Committee members understand expectations for assigned tasks and projects.
  - vi. Ensure individual project milestones are met, and if not, identify the cause and rectify the problem.
  - vii. Provide orientation to new Committee members to review the mission of the Committee, current projects, time, and frequency of meetings, etc.

- viii. Prepare End-of-the-year Certificates of Appreciation (see Appendix A).
  - ix. Maintain accurate records of Committee attendance.
  - x. Mentor the Vice Chair:
    - Review available resources:
      - 1. Bylaws
      - 2. The Standard Operating Procedure
      - 3. COA website
- B. The Comm/PR Vice Chair will assume the following responsibilities:
- i. Coordinate updating the SOP
    - i. Start this process in August after officers are familiar with their responsibilities.
    - ii. Determine best approach to updating all needed sections.
    - iii. Compile drafts as needed, creating a final SOP draft before the November Board Meeting.
    - iv. Present any changes or major updates at before the November Board Meeting for approval.
    - v. Have the Chair and Board of Directors approve the newest SOP version by signing and dating the document.
    - vi. The finalized document will be uploaded onto OnBoard.
  - ii. Observe the Chair and gather necessary information/knowledge to prepare for the upcoming term as Chair.

Each of these positions are one-year terms and should be staggered in terms so there is always an experienced person on the committee.

- C. The Comm/PR Committee Secretary will assume the following responsibilities:
- i. Send meeting requests for monthly and ad hoc meetings.
  - ii. Distribute agenda to Comm/PR Committee members prior to meetings.
  - iii. Take meeting minutes for all official Committee meetings and as requested by the Chair. This includes the monthly meeting and additional meetings for the Chair and Vice Chair.
  - iv. Prepare and distribute meeting minutes to the Comm/PR Committee.
    - i. Maintain accurate records, “minutes” of all meetings of the Committee.
    - ii. If the secretary is unavailable to attend the meeting, the secretary must find a suitable replacement.
    - iii. First draft of meeting minutes for all meetings are sent to the Chair and Vice Chair for review and comment within 72 hours after the Committee meeting.
    - iv. Distribute draft minutes for approval via the listserv to all Committee members within a *week* after the meeting.

- v. Prior to approval, all recommended changes must be reflected in the draft minutes; the updated draft will be voted on and approved during the next Committee meeting.
  - vi. After minutes are officially approved, final minutes are sent electronically to the Committee Chair and the Secretary for uploading to the Onboard platform. The Onboard platform will serve as a permanent archive repository for meeting minutes.
  - vii. Meeting minutes are archived by the Communications and Public Relations Committee Chair via the designated space on the OnBoard webpage.
  - viii. Maintain accurate records of Committee attendance.
  - ix. Maintain contact information for all Committee members (include both work and personal e-mail).
- D. Committee Members who wish to be involved with the Comm/PR Committee are to fulfill the following expected roles and responsibilities:
- i. Be willing and able to give the necessary time to attend meetings and perform any assigned duties. Meetings occur on the first Monday of each month at 12 EST.
  - ii. Actively participate in discussion and be willing to listen to and respect others' viewpoints.
  - iii. Think in terms of the welfare of the group rather than personal interests.
  - iv. Accept and follow through on assignments.

## Section 2. Meetings

The Communications and Public Relations Committee shall hold at least quarterly meetings where all Committee members shall report their various activities. The meetings are scheduled at the discretion of the Committee Chair (Co-Chair). The COA Communications and Public Relations Committee operational year is July 1 to June 30. The meeting schedule will be sent to the Committee Members with a videoconference link and a calendar invite.

## Section 3. Certificate of Appreciation Eligibility

Committee members who wish to receive a certificate of participation in the Comm/PR Committee must attend at least half of the scheduled Committee meetings and/or report they will not be in attendance prior to the meeting date/time.

## V. Subcommittee

### A. Section 1. Social Media

#### 1. Social Media Coordinator

- a. Mission- The mission of the Social Media Coordinator is to develop social media content and collaborate with the Board of Directors and/or COA staff on posts on various social media

platforms.

b. Duties:

- (1) Execute draft posts of information, modification requests, format changes, and general maintenance of the COA social media accounts in partnership to COA staff. Coordinate with Standing Committees to keep content up to date.
- (2) Communicate and work closely with COA Board of Directors leadership to ensure all guidelines are followed and needs are met.
- (3) Maintain in partnership COA Social Media Accounts:
  - i. Facebook: Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COA)
  - ii. Instagram: COAUSPHS
  - iii. Twitter: Commissioned Officers Association (COA) (@COAUSPHS)
  - iv. LinkedIn: Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
  - v. Track viewership of posts to inform Committee on member interests

B. All post will be in compliance with the USPHS code of conduct and will be free from the following, but is not limited to, posting comments or pictures that: reveals personally identifiable information (PII) about a patient or recipient of services provided by the officer while acting in an official capacity; has the potential to affect the integrity or success or otherwise compromises or jeopardizes an agency or Corps mission; is a violation of an agency or Corps policy; shares or reveals specifics regarding a Corps deployment (e.g., dates, locations, assignments, etc.) including but not limited to any pictures taken during a deployment; disobeys a lawful order (e.g., during a Corps deployment). For the purposes of this paragraph, social media includes websites, applications, and web-based tools that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content and where people or groups can engage in dialogue, interact, and create, organize, edit, comment on, combine, and/or



share content. This paragraph does

not apply to posts on social media that the SG, or his/her designee, has approved.

- C. Assist COA staff in monitoring social media sites and alerting staff on posts that violate USPHS code of conduct or COA's social media policies.

# Appendices

## Appendix A. End-of-the year Certificate of Appreciation

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