

## § 1213.104

policies, procedures, and priorities, and coordinating their activities with Headquarters (and others where appropriate). They are responsible for the quality of public information prepared by Center Public Affairs Officers. They also are responsible for the day-to-day production of public information covering their respective Center activities, which includes obtaining the necessary Center concurrences and coordinating, as necessary, with the appropriate Headquarters Public Affairs Officers.

(e) Center Directors have ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of public information that does not require the concurrence of Headquarters. *See* § 1213.104(d).

(f) All NASA employees are required to coordinate, in a timely manner, with the appropriate Public Affairs Officers prior to releasing information that has the potential to generate significant media or public interest or inquiry.

(g) All NASA Public Affairs Officers are required to notify the appropriate Headquarters Public Affairs Officers, in a timely manner, about activities or events that have the potential to generate significant media or public interest or inquiry.

(h) All NASA public affairs employees are expected to adhere to the following code of conduct:

- (1) Be honest and accurate in all communications.
- (2) Honor publication embargoes.
- (3) Respond promptly to media requests, and respect media deadlines.
- (4) Act promptly to notify the public of, and correct, erroneous information, either internally or externally.
- (5) Promote the free flow of scientific and technical information.
- (6) Protect non-public information.

(i) All NASA employees are responsible for adhering to plans (including schedules) for activities established by public affairs offices and senior management for the coordinated release of public information.

(j) All NASA-funded missions will have a public affairs plan, approved by the Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs, which will be managed by Headquarters and/or a designated NASA Center.

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(k) Public affairs activities for NASA-funded missions will not be managed by non-NASA institutions, unless authorized by the Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs.

### § 1213.104 Public information coordination and concurrence.

(a) *General.* All NASA employees involved in preparing and issuing NASA public information are responsible for proper coordination among Headquarters and Center offices to include review and clearance by appropriate officials prior to issuance. Such coordination will be accomplished through procedures developed and published by the NASA Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs.

(b) *Coordination.* To ensure timely release of public information, Headquarters and Center Public Affairs Officers are required to coordinate to obtain review and clearance by appropriate officials, keep each other informed of changes, delays, or cancellation of releases, and provide advance notification of the actual release.

(c) All public information shall be coordinated through the appropriate Headquarters offices, including review by the appropriate Mission Directorate Associate Administrator and Mission Support Office head, or their designees, to ensure scientific, technical, and programmatic accuracy, and review by the Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs or his/her designee to ensure that public information products are well written and appropriate for the intended audience.

(d) Centers may, however, without the full coordination of Headquarters, issue public information that is institutional in nature, of local interest, or has been deemed not to be a Headquarters release. These releases must be coordinated through the appropriate Center offices and approved by the Center Director and Center Public Affairs Director. The Center Public Affairs Director is required to provide proper notification to the Office of Public Affairs, NASA Headquarters, prior to release. The Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs or his/her designee will determine which public information will be issued nationwide by NASA

Headquarters and shall publish guidelines for the release of public information that may be issued by Centers without clearance from Headquarters offices.

(e) *Dispute Resolution.* Any dispute arising from a decision to proceed or not proceed with the issuance of a news release or other type of public information will be addressed and resolved by the Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs with the appropriate Mission Directorate Associate Administrator, Mission Support Office head, Center Director, and others, such as Center Public Affairs Directors, as necessary. However, the appropriate Mission Directorate Associate Administrator shall be the arbiter of disputes about the accuracy or characterization of programmatic, technical, or scientific information. Additional appeals may be made to the Chief of Strategic Communications and to the Office of the Administrator. When requested by a Center Public Affairs Director, an explanation of the resolution will be provided in writing to all interested Agency parties.

#### § 1213.105 Interviews.

(a) Only spokespersons designated by the Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs, or his/her designee, are authorized to speak for the Agency in an official capacity regarding NASA policy, programmatic, and budget issues.

(b) In response to media interview requests, NASA will offer articulate and knowledgeable spokespersons who can best serve the needs of the media and the American public. However, journalists may have access to the NASA officials they seek to interview, provided those NASA officials agree to be interviewed.

(c) NASA employees may speak to the media and the public about their work. When doing so, employees shall notify their immediate supervisor and coordinate with their public affairs office in advance of interviews whenever possible, or immediately thereafter, and are encouraged, to the maximum extent practicable, to have a Public Affairs Officer present during interviews. If Public Affairs Officers are present, their role will be to attest to the content of the interview, support the

interviewee, and provide post-interview follow up with the media, as necessary.

(d) NASA, as an Agency, does not take a position on any scientific conclusions. That is the role of the broad scientific community and the nature of the scientific process. NASA scientists may draw conclusions and may, consistent with this policy, communicate those conclusions to the media. However, NASA employees who present personal views outside their official area of expertise or responsibility must make clear that they are presenting their individual views—not the views of the Agency—and ask that they be sourced as such.

(e) Appropriated funds may only be used to support Agency missions and objectives consistent with legislative or presidential direction. Government funds shall not be used for media interviews or other communication activities that go beyond the scope of Agency responsibilities and/or an employee's official area of expertise or responsibility.

(f) Media interviews will be "on-the-record" and attributable to the person making the remarks, unless the interviewee is authorized to do otherwise by the Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs or Center Public Affairs Director, or their designees. Any NASA employee providing material to the press will identify himself/herself as the source.

(g) Audio recordings may be made by NASA with consent of the interviewee.

(h) NASA employees are not required to speak to the media.

(i) Public information volunteered by a NASA official will not be considered exclusive to any one media source and will be made available to other sources, if requested.

#### § 1213.106 Preventing release of classified information to the media.

(a) Release of classified information in any form (*e.g.*, documents, through interviews, audio/visual) to the news media is prohibited. The disclosure of classified information to unauthorized individuals may be cause for prosecution and/or disciplinary action against the NASA employee involved. Ignorance of NASA policy and procedures regarding classified information does