

FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Policies and Procedures Manual

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| PART | I | Operations Policies and Procedures |
| SECTION | OIG-110 | General Management Policies and Procedures |
| CHAPTER | 110.9 | Media Contacts |

1. Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to establish OIG policy, responsibilities, and procedures for interacting with the news media. Specifically, this policy addresses handling inquiries, participating in formal interviews, initiating contacts, and issuing press releases. The OIG policy for releasing reports is found in *Chapter 110.7, Release of OIG Reports to the Public and the Congress.*

2. Scope. The information in this chapter applies to all OIG employees. OIG employees are not covered by *FDIC Circular 1420.1.*

3. Definitions. The term "news media" includes all persons reporting for any printed publication, television, or radio. For the purpose of this policy, the designated officials are the Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General, Counsel to the Inspector General, Assistant Inspectors General (AIGs), and any OIG staff who get specific designations from the Inspector General.

4. Policy. As a general rule, OIG official reports, including audit, evaluation, semiannual, and investigation reports, should be allowed to "speak for themselves" to the news media without elaboration of opinions or conclusions. Only designated OIG officials are authorized to answer news media inquiries or participate in news media interviews. As appropriate, the OIG will coordinate its media contacts with FDIC's Office of Corporate Communications (OCC), and utilize the media services offered by this office. Any employee who makes an unauthorized disclosure of OIG reports or other information to the media or any other party will be subject to adverse and disciplinary actions.

5. Responsibilities and Procedures
 - a. Handling Inquiries. Designated OIG officials are responsible for providing an OIG response to an inquiry from the news media. Media inquiries pertaining to FDIC matters should be referred promptly to the OCC, after notifying appropriate designated OIG officials.
 - (1) Published Audit or Evaluation Report. Designated OIG officials with specific knowledge of the issue can respond to informal, fact-finding inquiries from the news media on a

published audit report. All conversations with the media should be assumed to be "on the record."

(2) Completed Investigation. Because of potentially sensitive issues involved, comments by an OIG official to the media on a completed investigation, including employee investigations, are generally considered inappropriate. Completed investigative reports are released only under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) after review by the Counsel's office. Any person requesting an investigative report should be directed to submit a written FOIA request. For the most part, OIG investigation reports are designed to "speak for themselves" and preclude further comment to the media. When an investigative report has been released under FOIA or otherwise publicly acknowledged, designated OIG officials with specific knowledge of the issue may comment on a completed investigation, as it relates to a matter of public record (e.g., indictment, trial, conviction, sentencing). Such comments should generally be confined to matters which are on the public record and not matters contained in the investigation, which have not become part of the public record.

(3) On-Going Work. As a general rule, on-going work should not be discussed with the media.

(a) On-going Audit or Evaluation. A designated OIG official receiving an informal request for information related to an on-going audit or evaluation can acknowledge that a review is in process. If the inquiry relates to an on-going congressionally requested assignment not a matter of public record, the designated OIG official should discuss the inquiry with the requester before providing a response to the media.

(b) On-going Investigation. A designated OIG official receiving an informal request for information related to an on-going investigation should "neither confirm nor deny" that such an investigation is in process. Normally, the AIG for Investigations, or designee, will contact the Assistant U. S. Attorney involved with the investigation to coordinate the preparation of a press release when the case is prosecuted. Paragraph 5.d. below addresses press releases.

(4) Notification Within OIG and FDIC. Designated OIG officials receiving a media inquiry on either completed or on-going work should verbally notify the Inspector General within 24 hours of its occurrence. Officials receiving the inquiry should document the conversation held with the media representative (i.e., subjects discussed, information provided) in a brief memorandum to the Inspector General. As necessary, the designated OIG official will coordinate the informal media contact with OCC.

b. Participating in Formal Interviews. Upon request from the media to participate in a formal, prearranged interview (i.e., newspaper, radio, television, press conference), OIG staff should refer the request to the Inspector General or another designated OIG official. To the extent possible, the highest level and most appropriate OIG official should participate in formal interviews with the media. The responsible OIG official will keep the Inspector General and OCC informed regarding all requests for formal interviews with OIG officials.

c. Initiating Contact with the Press. Should the need arise, only the appropriate designated OIG official, with the Inspector General's approval can initiate OIG contact with the news media. Typically, this contact would relate to the imminent release of sensitive or controversial information or report. The OIG official initiating the contact should document the nature of the conversation in a memorandum to the Inspector General, if appropriate. The OIG officials will also coordinate the media contact with OCC, as appropriate.

d. Coordinating the Issuance of Press Releases. The OIG utilizes OCC to prepare the initial draft and issue press releases on significant activities resulting from OIG audits, evaluations, and investigations. In some instances, the U.S. Attorney's office and OIG draft press releases pertaining to investigations which are provided to OCC prior to issuance.

(1) Drafting Press Release. The responsible OIG official will coordinate with OCC and provide them with information to be included in the press release. For the most part, the press release should only address completed work and only include information that is a matter of public record. The responsible OIG official will review OCC's draft and, if necessary, provide comments. The Inspector General must approve the final draft press release before it is issued.

(2) Issuing Press Release. The responsible OIG official will coordinate with OCC to issue the OIG-approved draft press release. OCC will ensure that major news organizations, at a minimum, receive OIG press releases.

e. Distributing OIG Reports to the Media. The OIG policy for releasing audit and evaluation reports, semiannual reports, and Reports of Investigation is contained in *Chapter 110.7, Release of OIG Reports to the Public and the Congress.*

6. OIG Point of Contact. Questions regarding this chapter should be directed to the AIG for Management and Congressional Relations. Questions on the extent of information that can be shared with the media should be directed to the designated OIG official immediately responsible for the report

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| OIG-110.9 |
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| Media Contacts |
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or issue involved.