



City of Merritt
2185 Voght Street
Merritt, BC V1K1B8
250 378-4224
merritt.ca

Policy 1-03

CATEGORY 1.0 - Legislative	COUNCIL POLICY COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE Contact Department: Corporate Services
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Purpose

1. To establish the City of Merritt's policy regarding the handling of electronic and paper correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council.
2. To ensure that all correspondence received is distributed and responded to in a consistent manner and that appropriate record keeping policy is applied.

Definitions

3. In this Policy:

"Correspondence" means all letters or requests sent to the City of Merritt from someone outside of the organization addressed to "Mayor"; "Council"; "Mayor and Council", "City Council" or individual Council members either via paper, or electronically (email).

"Meeting" means a Council, Committee of the Whole, or committee meeting

Policy

4. Correspondence received by the City of Merritt is generally considered to be public information, subject to the requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
5. All Correspondence received will be filed, tracked and circulated in accordance with this policy and the City's records management policies and procedures.

Procedure

Correspondence received by City staff

6. All Correspondence received by the City addressed to Mayor and Council will be forwarded to the Corporate Officer for tracking, filing and distribution to Mayor and Council.
7. Correspondence addressed to the Mayor or individual Councillors and marked "confidential" or "private" is deemed to be private Correspondence and will be directed unopened to the addressee's mailbox at City Hall.



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Correspondence received by the Mayor or a Councillor

8. If the Mayor or a Councillor individually receive Correspondence relevant to a matter under consideration by Council or a committee, the recipient will forward that Correspondence to all of Mayor and Council.
9. As an exception to section 8, the recipient does not need to circulate the Correspondence if they deem it more appropriate to share all relevant information with Council or the committee during the Meeting where the matter is being considered.
10. Any other Correspondence addressed individually to the Mayor, a Councillor, or group of Councillors may be dealt with at the discretion of the recipient(s), which may include personal response, directing the Correspondence to staff for response, or circulation to Mayor and Council.

Direction to include Correspondence on a Meeting agenda

11. At the direction of the Mayor, the Corporate Officer will add Correspondence to an upcoming Meeting agenda for consideration.

Operational requests

12. When the Mayor or Councillors receive Correspondence of an operational nature, they will forward them to info@merritt.ca for staff response.
13. Staff will respond to all inquiries promptly (considering the nature of the request) and where the inquiry was forwarded by the Mayor or a Councillor, will copy the response to all Council members.

Council response to Correspondence

14. Where Mayor and Council choose to respond to Correspondence, such response will come from the Mayor, copying all Councillors.
15. Where an individual Councillor or the Mayor is requested to provide a policy position on a matter in response to Correspondence, if they wish to respond, the Council member or Mayor shall:
 - i) provide the official stance of the City, if one has been established; and,
 - ii) if desired, provide his or her personal position on the matter, clearly articulating that this is his or her personal position, not the position of Council; and
 - iii) share that response with the Mayor and Council.



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Privacy

16. Correspondence submitted to the Corporate Officer for consideration at a Meeting forms part of the public record and will be published with names and street addresses included, but information such as email addresses and telephone numbers will be redacted.
17. Correspondence submitted to the Corporate Officer relating to a matter under section 90 of the *Community Charter*, that is not of an operational nature, will be considered at a closed Council Meeting.

General provisions

18. Correspondence relating to a pending development application, a public hearing, or a matter that is awaiting a staff report for Council's consideration, will be held until that item is brought forward at a Meeting. At that time, the Correspondence will be attached as background information to the corresponding agenda item.
19. Prior to disclosure on a Meeting agenda, the Corporate Officer may redact inappropriate portions of Correspondence that otherwise have a legitimate request, question, comment or suggestions and provide a redacted copy to the sender. Any exclusively inappropriate, offensive, misleading, harassing or threatening Correspondence will not be acknowledged or circulated, at the discretion of the Corporate Officer.
20. Anonymous Correspondence received will not be investigated by staff unless potential safety, liability or health issues are raised.

Amendments