

Construction Claims Task Force
Public Contact Protocol
(speaking engagements and other contacts)

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION ONLY
(11/23/05)

Policy Statement

The Construction Claims Task Force was formed in response to public concerns about the rise of construction claims, and it is charged with developing recommendations that will serve the public interest. There is a high level of interest in this issue, so it is important that the task force remains accessible to the public and actively communicates its goals and decisions.

At the same time, task force members need to balance the benefit of free and open communication with the fact that members are part of a public body. As such, deliberations and decisions must occur within a public meeting. Members should avoid making statements that give the appearance that they have already made up their minds on a particular decision or conclusion which has not yet been considered by the full body.

Recognizing both the public benefit and potential pitfalls of engaging in discussions with the public outside of the regularly scheduled meetings, the task force developed these guidelines related to speaking engagements and other contacts with the public. Task force members have personal professional knowledge on these matters, and they should feel free to discuss the goals of the task force and to share what has happened so far. These guidelines will assist task force members to consistently manage their contact with the public.

General disclaimer

Task force members should communicate the following when speaking with the public:

I am one of nine members of the Construction Claims Task Force. I am happy to share with you the goals of the task force, the process we are following, and events that have occurred to date. However, I am not able to speculate about future developments and cannot commit the task force to any individual opinion or decision. The content or results of our discussion will be summarized and disseminated to other members and the general public accordingly.

Public speaking

- § Acknowledge the limits of your speaking role as indicated in the general disclaimer above.
- § Inform the public that we welcome their input through public testimony and submitting written information and suggestions. The easiest way for individuals to stay involved is via the public Web site, <http://egov.oregon.gov/DCBS/CCTF/>.
- § To ensure that the information is placed in the public record, submit a brief summary of the meeting to task force staff dcbs.cctf@state.or.us (see example below).
- § Serving on the task force is a public service. It is inappropriate to accept any compensation or other remuneration beyond that of other attendees.

NOTE: Task force staff will gladly assist members preparing for a presentation.

Phone call/In person

If the individual is asking for known, public information:

- § Go ahead and answer the question

If the individual is requesting something or voicing a concern:

- § Inform the individual that a summary of the conversation will be shared with the task force.
- § Listen to the individual's concern or request, but notify the individual that you cannot speak on behalf of the task force.
- § Encourage the individual to submit written testimony and to sign up for task force updates at <http://egov.oregon.gov/DCBS/CCTF/>
- § To ensure that the information is placed in the public record, submit a brief summary of the conversation to task force staff dcbs.cctf@state.or.us (see example below).

Email

If the individual is asking for known, public information:

- § Go ahead and answer the question

Upon receiving an email from the public:

- § Acknowledge the individuals concern and receipt of any documents/information.
- § Inform the individual that their email will be shared with the task force and made a part of the public record.
- § Forward the email and your response to task force staff dcbs.cctf@state.or.us
- § If the topic is urgent, forward the email to the project manager (Mark Long) and/or task force chair (Eric Grasberger) for further action.

Disseminating Information

At least monthly, task force staff will disseminate a packet containing a copy of all public contacts (speaking engagements, phone, in person, and email) over the past month. Receipt of this packet will be acknowledged at the next public meeting.

Sample

Name: Jane Citizen

Date: Oct. 20, 2005

Issue: Ms. Citizen expressed concern about the quality of construction on her custom home in Salem. She has already contacted CCB. She expressed an interest in testifying, and she requested a copy of the public notice.

Action Taken: Reese Lord added her name and address to the list of interested parties (she does not have Internet access) and mailed her a copy of the Nov. 1 meeting notice. He encouraged her to submit written testimony to the task force.