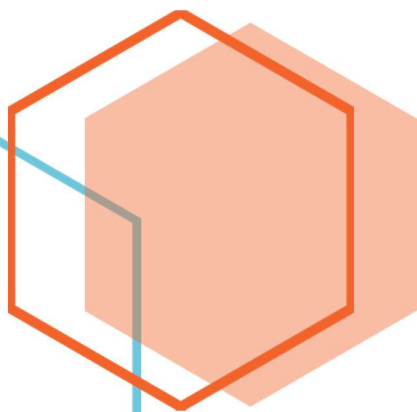




COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

MINISTRY OF THE PRIME MINISTER
AND CABINET



MPMC COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2019

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| MPMC | Ministry of Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| PCD | Press and Communications Division |
| PIMD | Policy, Implementation & Monitoring Division |
| F.K. | Faaiuga a le Kapeneta |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| MFAT | Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| SOE | State Owned Enterprise |
| NEOC | National Emergency Operations Centre |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedures |
| PIMSLS | Public Information Management, Safety and Legal Section |
| NC | National Controller |

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INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (MPMC) in its totality operates from a ‘Whole of Government’ approach in which it encompasses cooperation between all Government Ministries and Corporations. Within the Ministry alone, it strives to strengthen policy coordination throughout whole of Government, bolster national security and responses as well as strengthening information dissemination throughout Government and the Community.

All in all, the Ministry strives to ensure a well governed, secured and informed Samoa. It values to;

- ❖ Lead and promote good governance in its totality
- ❖ Commit to providing professional, honest and effective service to the Government of Samoa
- ❖ Provide transparent, impartial and accountable decision making
- ❖ Have integrity in all transactions, communications and information
- ❖ Maintain effective partnerships with all its stakeholders

The above guiding principles encouraged the establishment of this Communication Strategy in a way to encompass and reflect all of the MPMC’s values. The Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s Communication Strategy is an initiative established to develop effective communication methods across the Whole of Government decision making and initiatives as approved by **Cabinet Directive FK(15)40**.

This Communication Strategy will further ensure that stakeholders are informed. As such, all media releases and responses will be disseminated by the Press and Communications Division through press releases and communication. Such an approach will also highlight how the Press and Communication Division of MPMC operate when dispatching and disseminating media releases and responses to the public regarding any enquiries.

OBJECTIVE

1. To recognize the Press and Communications Division as the leading Government’s core media center for information sharing and dissemination.

AIMS

- I. Promote good Governance
 - Effective communication mechanisms between Government and its Stakeholders
- II. Engage and Communicate
 - Facilitate awareness and public understanding of Government related enquiries, projects and developments.
- III. Ensure effective Collaboration & Cooperation
 - Facilitate information between Government ministries, SOE’s and the Public in a timely and effective manner
 - Encourage and strengthen information sharing between Ministries and Corporations.
- IV. Accessibility and Cost Effectiveness
 - Ensure that the Public is well informed of all Government initiatives and developments.
 - Easy access of Government Ministries and Stakeholders

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MANDATE

The functions and mandated responsibilities of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet are derived from the following legislations and existing policies and plan.

Legislations;

- Citizenship Act 2004
- Constituencies Act 1963
- Constitution of the Independence State of Samoa 1960
- Head of State Act 1965
- Honors and Awards Act 1999
- Immigration Act 2004
- Media Council Act 2015
- Ministerial Departmental Arrangement Act 2003
- National Security Policy and Implementation Strategy 2018
- PASP Communication Strategy
- Law & Justice Sector Communication Strategy
- MoF Public Communications Policy
- MCIT National Information and Communication Technology Policy
- Parliamentary under Secretaries Act 1988
- Passport Act 2008
- Public Finance Management Act 2001
- Public Seal and Crest of Samoa Act 1973
- Public Service Act 2004
- Samoa Antiquities Ordinance 1954
- Samoa Status Act 1963
- Samoa Conventional Arms Act 2017

All of these legislations govern how the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet operate from a whole of Government approach.

ROLES & FUNCTIONS;

1. **Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (MPMC)**

To achieve its Vision and Mission as well as its Functions, the Ministry operates on 5 main strategic goals, they include;

- ❖ GOAL 1: Strengthen whole of Government policy and program coordination and monitoring.
- ❖ GOAL 2: Efficient and effective secretariat services and support.
- ❖ GOAL 3: Efficient and accurate communications.
- ❖ GOAL 4: Vigilant and coordinated national and border security.
- ❖ GOAL 5: Organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

These activities enable the Ministry to operate and achieve its 'Whole of Government' approach. These performance indicators are delineated in MPMC's 10 divisions, with each division operating on their activities in order to achieve these 5 goals. As one of MPMC's key division, the Press and Communications Division under Goals 2, 3 and 4, enforces coordination and media communication efficiency between MPMC and other Ministries furthermore increasing and solidifying the establishment of the Communication Strategy.

**A 'Whole of Government' approach simply means considering policy issues and potential policy solutions from Cabinet's collective overall perspective encompassing all sectors.*

2. **PRESS AND COMMUNICATION DIVISION (PCD)**

The Press and Communication Division of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet houses two

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separate entities, the Press Secretariat and the Savali Newspaper which makes up the Press and Communication Division. Even with two separate entities within the division, both operate on one goal and that is *'To promote transparency through accurate and timely dissemination of Government information'*. Efficiency, timely and accurate information shared are areas in which the Press and Communication Division wishes to achieve through its roles and functions stated below.

PRESS SECRETARIAT

Objectives

- 1) To ensure that the public and relevant stakeholders are provided with quality information on all Government related issues.

Activities

- 1) Compiling press releases in Samoa and English from information collected as a result of Cabinet decisions. (Cabinet Releases)
- 2) Compiling press releases on current events, on matters of national interest and in response to media coverage that warrants a reply from Government
- 3) Responding to all queries (website, phone, email, social media etc.) for Government information.
- 4) Regular updating of the Government website and all Government social media accounts.
- 5) Provide media related advice to the Prime Minister and Cabinet/Government on any media related issue.
- 6) Act as the media coordinator/liaison for the Government for Official Conferences, Meetings and Visits that the Government hosts.

SAVALI NEWSPAPER

Objectives

- 1) To ensure that the public and relevant stakeholders are provided with quality information on all government related issues.

Activities

- 1) Regular and timely production of the Savali Newspaper, both weekly and monthly editions.
- 2) Routine and timely distribution of the Savali to Government agencies, public bodies, diplomatic corps, relevant stakeholders and retail locations.
- 3) Regular updating of Savali website and social media accounts.

PRESS & COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION 'WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT COORDINATION'

The Press and Communications Division of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in its coordination role stipulated in Cabinet Directive FK(15)40, is the centralized hub of information dissemination for all press releases for Government Ministries and Corporations. The flow of information to and from Ministries to Corporations and eventually to the Community is a critical part of PCD's coordinating role.

So, in order for the Press and Communications Division to effectively cooperate with various Ministries and Corporations the establishment of 'Communication Liaison Officers' should be enforced.

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What is a Communication Liaison Officer?

A Communication Liaison Officer is a person who will be designated to liaise with the Press Secretariat of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet regarding press releases and any other media related enquiry.

Such an appointment will be made within every Government Ministries and Corporations. By selecting a Communication Liaison Officer, this will enable the ease of communication between Ministries/Corporations and the Press Secretariat, should there be any enquiries.

The Communication Liaison officer is the key media contact between Ministries and the Press Secretariat. For this reason, the appointment of Communication Liaison Officers within every Ministry and Corporation is vital and should be prioritized in order to ensure effective communication. The appointed employee will liaise directly with the Press Secretariat regarding the Ministry's/Corporation's Press Releases, interviews and any media related enquiry.

Below are criteria for selecting a Communication Liaison Officer within Ministries and Corporations;

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

- Responsible for monitoring all writings on social media and media outlets and identify pressing issues/ enquiries.
- Respond to media inquiries through the Press Secretariat/Press and Communications Division (MPMC)
- Write, edit, and liaise with the Press and Communications Division (MPMC) to distribute content, including publications, press releases, website content, speeches, and other marketing material to all media outlets.
- Build and maintain relationships with journalists, the Private Sector, Ministries and Corporations and the Public.
- Identify target audiences and create strategies to effectively engage and communicate with targeted audiences.
- Liaise with the Press Secretariat regarding publications that are in need of urgent dissemination. E.g.; cyclone warnings, weather forecast etc...
- Establish and maintain effective relationships and maintain a Ministry's media database of all media releases.

2. FOCAL POINT OF CONTACT

- ACEO level required as communication liaison officer

PROCESS & PROCEDURES of PRESS RELEASES FROM MINISTRIES

Phase 1: Identify Pressing Issues

- The Government's Press Secretariat along with Communication Liaison Officer from line Ministries/Corporations are responsible for monitoring all writings on social media and media outlets and identify pressing issues.
- Inform affected Ministries to submit written response to any enquiries.

Phase 2: COMMUNICATION LIAISON OFFICERS

- Liaise with the Press Secretariat to monitor all writings on social media and media outlets.

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- Inform CEO of all enquiries pertaining to Government Agencies
- Provide media response for CEO's endorsement

Press releases from Ministries are received by the PCD from their selected communication liaison officers. As soon as an incident arises and requires an immediate response by a Ministry or Corporation, the communication liaison officer is responsible for researching the issue and preparing a draft press release for the endorsement of the CEO. The draft press release is then forwarded to the Minister for final approval before sending it to the Press and Communication Division of MPMC.

Phase 3: CEO's & MINISTERS

- CEO to liaise with Communication Liaison Officer to endorse written responses.
- Once response is finalized, the CEO is to inform the Minister on the response.
- The CEO will await the Minister's approval before media response is disseminated.

When an issue arises, the relevant Government Agency is to provide a written response and/or media release within 12 - 24 hours of occurrence. This will ensure effective, consistent and a concise response to enquiries that affect Ministries and the Government are well responded to and addressed.

Phase 4: Categorization & News Types

Once approval is granted, the CEO will direct his/her Communication Liaison Officer to forward the press release to the Press Secretariat for publication in the Savali Newspaper and sort these releases into different categories to be dispatched. News categories/types are as followed;

1. Cabinet Releases
2. Latest News
3. Press Release
4. PM and Minister's Speeches
5. Uncategorized

Phase 5: PRESS RELEASE

- Press Secretariat to dispatch media response to media outlets and to the public.

Once all the 5 phases are completed, Press releases are then dispatched through four (4) methods; Savali Newspaper, Government of Samoa Website, Official Social media pages for the Government and Savali Newspaper, and Emails. All these methods are easily accessible to everyone for their information and awareness.

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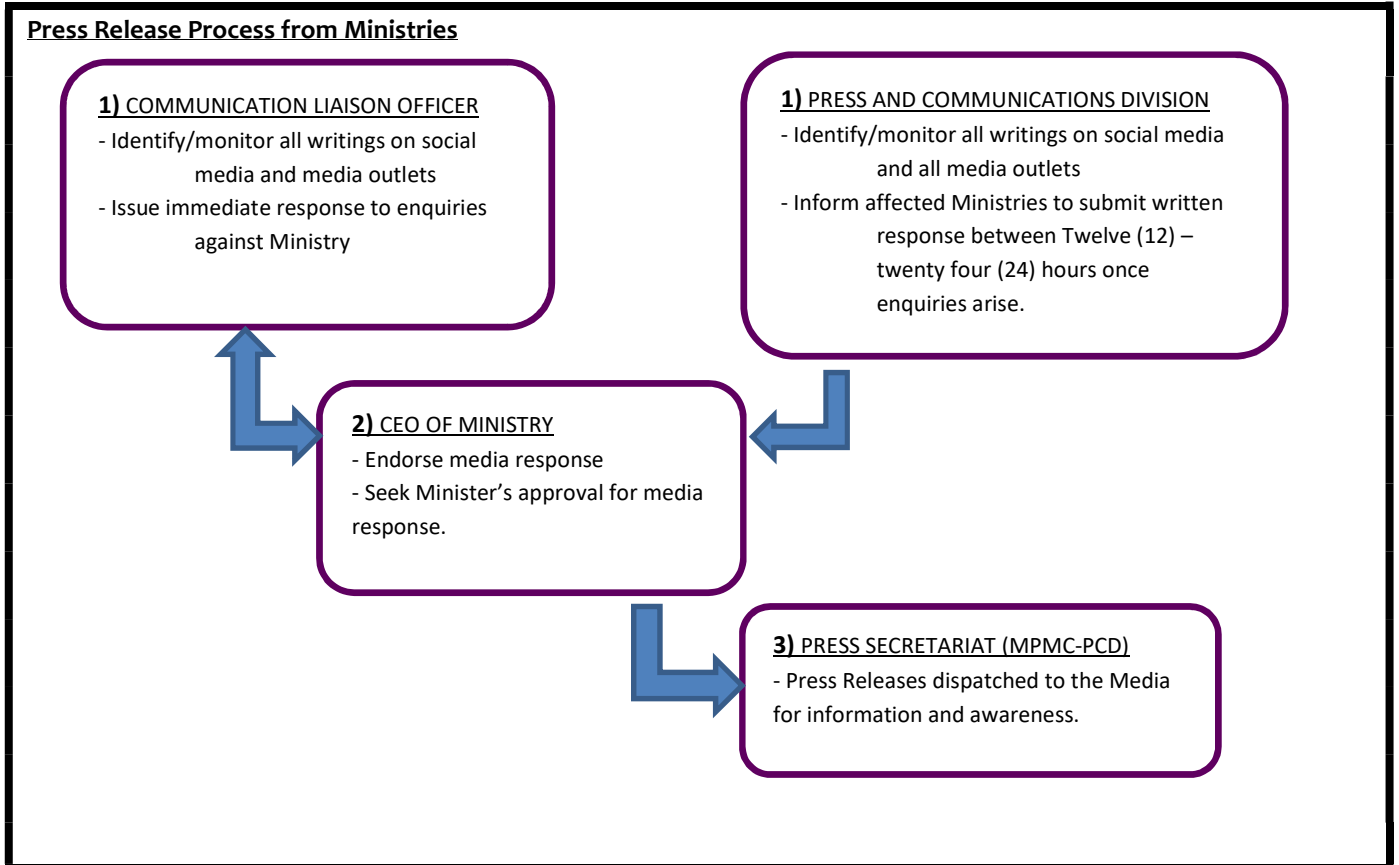


Fig.1. Simple illustration of the 5 phases elaborated above

PROCESS & PROCEDURES FOR CABINET RELEASES

Phase 1: Discretion of the PM

- Permission to dispatch any cabinet releases is made by the authorization of the Prime Minister.
- PM to direct CEO/Cabinet Secretary to dispatch authorized Cabinet releases.

Phase 2: CEO & Press Secretariat

- Once cabinet news has been authorized by the PM to be released, it will be channeled through to the CEO of MPMC and to the Press Secretariat for final compilation and release.

Phase 3: Cabinet Releases

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- Press Secretariat to dispatch cabinet releases to Media, Ministries, Government Corporations and the public.

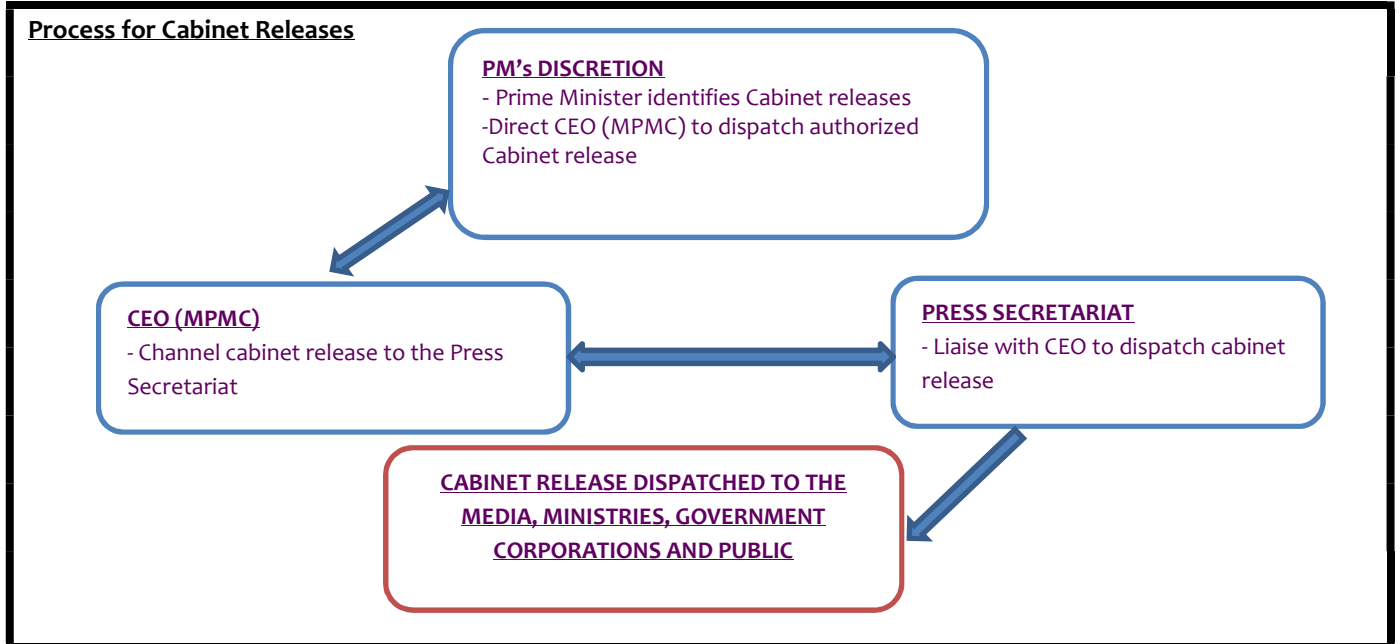


Fig.1.2. Illustration on Cabinet release process.

LOCAL MEDIA COORDINATION

The Press Secretariat serves as a vehicle to distribute alerts to the local media on events and press conferences for government agencies and relevant stakeholders. Within the last two years, PCD has extended this service to the diplomatic corps and development partners. In some instances, PCD is requested to take the lead as facilitator or MC during events or press conferences.

Every week, PCD through the Press Secretariat coordinates the Prime Minister's regular media programs with TV1 Samoa, Talamua Media and MCIT – Radio 2AP. The program with MCIT – Radio 2AP every Thursday includes all other media outlets that would like to listen in and get responses for various issues.

The Press Secretariat has also coordinated responses to media inquiries from overseas media partners such as TVNZ, ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), Reuters, The Australian and Xinhua to name a few. These interviews are mostly with the Prime Minister.

Recently, PCD introduced video clips as inserts on press releases. These clips are posted on both the Government's Social Media (Facebook) and Official website for public viewing.

For dissemination, the Press Secretariat sends all information via email to all Cabinet Ministers, CEOs, senior government officials, local Diplomatic Corps, Samoa's Consulate Offices overseas, local/regional and

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international media organizations, and other relevant government stakeholders. These circulated materials are posted daily on the Government Facebook page, which is fast, effective and efficient.

Process for Facilitating Local Events

- 1) Contact is made with MPMC/PCD regarding event and details shared - who, what, where, when, why.
- 2) If a media alert is required, then PCD issues an alert to local media (via email, FB Messenger and sometimes phone calls) regarding the event.
- 3) If assistance is needed for setting up a press conference, then PCD assists where required.
- 4) A reminder is sent to media for the event.
- 5) A representative(s) from PCD attends the event and a news story is generated for the Savali Newspaper and often a media release is put together regarding the event. Social media coverage is often done on the go, complemented by live video depending on the event.
- 6) Media release is sent out to media and relevant stakeholders, for the event.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND OFFICIAL VISITS

For international events/conferences and official visits to Samoa that are communicated to PCD, the Press Secretariat takes the lead in coordinating media on the ground for the visit/event. The Press Secretariat is also responsible for drafting the Media Schedule and Advisory, to provide guidance for local/international media covering the event. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is generally the leading and implementing agency for all official state visits and most international events/conferences, hosted by Samoa. The Press Secretariat works alongside the taskforce to coordinate media for each of the international events/conferences and official visits to Samoa.

1. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS/CONFERENCES

- PCD through the Press Secretariat take the lead in coordinating media events for the international events/conferences held in Samoa. This includes the facilitating of the media accreditation process for local and overseas media interested in covering the event.
- Should there be a request for interviews with the PM from local/overseas media, these are to be communicated to the Press Secretariat for arrangements. The interview depends on the Prime Minister's availability.
- All interview questions to be presented to the PM ahead of time. A day (24hours) is preferred.

PROCESS;

- 1) Press Secretariat is informed of the Taskforce meeting and attends to garner information about the event.
- 2) A Media Schedule is drafted according to the main event schedule, identifying the dates, times, locations as well as the conditions of the coverage (i.e. for footage and photos only or for footage, photos and interviews).
- 3) Arrange Media Accreditation for local/overseas media interested who are interested in covering the event.

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- 4) Share Media Schedule with MFAT for final edits before dissemination to media.
- 5) Once accreditation language is finalized, send with final Media Schedule to media and arrange for badging and collection of accreditation IDs.
- 6) Arrange for the Official Press Release to go out to media before the start of the event.
- 7) Coordinate media at the media events and facilitate any interview requests with the necessary MFAT personnel.
- 8) Disseminate information (press releases and speeches) from the event to media and usual recipients of information.
- 9) Publish these information and photos on the Government Facebook page and Website.

2. OFFICIAL VISITS

- Similar to the International Events/Conferences, the Press Secretariat works in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) through the Taskforce for the respective visit, to coordinate and facilitate local media coverage.
- PCD would be notified, a month ahead of the visit. .

PROCESS;

- 1) Press Secretariat is informed of the Taskforce meeting and attends to garner information about the visit.
- 2) A Media Schedule is drafted according to the main visit schedule, identifying the dates, times, locations as well as the conditions of the coverage (i.e. for footage and photos only or for footage, photos and interviews).
- 3) Arrange Media Accreditation for local/overseas media interested who are interested in covering the visit.
- 4) Share Media Schedule with MFAT for final edits before dissemination to media.
- 5) Once accreditation language is finalized, send with final Media Schedule to media and arrange for badging and collection of accreditation IDs.
- 6) Arrange for the Official Press Release to go out to media before the start of the visit.
- 7) Coordinate media at the media events for the visit and facilitate any interview requests with the necessary MFAT personnel or contact person from the visiting delegation/organization.
- 8) Disseminate information (press releases and speeches) from the visit to media and usual recipients of information.
- 9) Publish these information and photos on the Government Facebook page and Website.

TIMEFRAMES

As mandated by FK (15)40, all press releases channeled through to the Press Secretariat are to be released within twelve (12) to twenty four hours (24) of any enquiry being identified or the need for a media statement. This timeframe must always be followed when dispatching any media releases/responses in

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regards to public/media enquiries to Government Ministries and SOE's. All media enquiries and authorized Cabinet releases upon clearance from CEO's and Ministers are to be released within 24 hours.

DISASTER & EMERGENCY

In the case of a Natural Disaster and Emergency, the Press and Communications Division through the Press Secretariat under the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), will lead the Public Information Management, Safety and Legal Section (PIMSLS) for NEOC.

The NEOC PIMLS integrates analyses and processes incident information and manages public affairs to provide consistent, coordinated, timely information advice during crisis or incident operations. The mission of the PIMSLS is to provide a structure and system for developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages, recommending, and executing public information plans and strategies on behalf of the National Controller (NC); advising the NC concerning public affairs issues that could affect a response effort; and controlling rumours and inaccurate information that could undermine public confidence in the emergency response effort. The PIMSLS also manages and advises the NC on legal and public safety matters. This section is also responsible for the preparations of legal documents such as Declaration of a Disaster or Proclamation of State of Emergency.

In any case of disaster and emergency, all affected Ministries on whatever issues that might affect human safety are to consult and liaise with the Press and Communications Division to provide quality advice regarding press releases/responses in times of emergency. Such events may include press releases for special weather bulletins, cyclone warnings, spread of diseases etc... The Press & Communications Division immediately assigns a team member to assist the Disaster Management Office, in times of disaster.

ONGOING MONITORING

Additional functions of the Press Secretariat and the Savali Newspaper is to effectively monitor all news, writings, advertisements or complaints against Government Ministries and SOE's. As such, if these writings require responses by Ministries the Press Secretariat will work with Ministries through their Communication Liaison Officers to issue responses where necessary.

This communication strategy will be closely monitored by PIMD as part of its monitoring and evaluation role of Cabinet Directives and PCD as they will be the administrator of this strategy to ensure all components of the strategy are followed whenever press releases/ responses are compiled to be dispatched.

MEDIA TRAININGS

As part of this communication strategy and its on-going monitoring, the Press and Communications Division will provide media trainings for Communication Liaison Officers when needed. PCD will be the coordinating body for all media trainings for selected Communication Liaison Officers in all Ministries and Corporations and will be available to provide media advices to CEO's and Ministries on any enquiries such as;

- Interviews, Media Conferences, Press releases etc...

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This will allow the Press and Communications Division to monitor all Communication Liaison Officers and their progress as well as to continue to improve the skills needed to complete the work efficiently.

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Savali Newspaper

Government of Samoa