



Media Relations Policy – A.01

An informed public is an essential element of a transparent, fair and equitable liquor licensing system. The media plays an essential role in informing the public about developments and decisions in the regulation of licensed establishments and permit holders.

Both the NWT Liquor Licensing Board (the Board) and the public are well-served when media coverage of hearings and decisions is accurate and complete. This being said, the Board also has a responsibility to the parties to the liquor licensing process to ensure that public access does not interfere with or compromise procedural fairness. Given those objectives there must be guidelines on how and when the public, including the media, will have access to the Board.

Compliance hearings are public. The *Liquor Act* sets out the parameters for the Board's conduct of its hearings. Board proceedings to consider licence applications are not necessarily public, although the Board may hold a public hearing if it considers it would be of public interest.

Access to Information

Access to Board Decisions

The public, including the media, has access to Board decisions. Board decisions are posted online on the GNWT Department of Finance website under "Liquor Licensing Board".

Compliance Hearings

The general rule is that compliance hearings are open to the public. Seating space available to the public will vary depending on the venue. Public seating cannot be reserved, and is available on a "first come first served" basis.

While public access to a compliance hearing is the presumption, the Tribunal conducting the proceeding can order all or part of the hearing closed. This can include an order restricting the continued participation or attendance of any person at a hearing. The Tribunal will consider factors such as public safety, the vulnerability of a particular participant, and sensitivity of the evidence in making such orders.

Communications Devices

Cameras

Filming or photographing a hearing is not permitted without the prior permission of the Tribunal. Cameras – including television cameras – are not allowed in any hearing rooms during the conduct of a hearing without the express permission of the Tribunal.

Tape Recorders

Members of the public may not tape record Tribunal proceedings.

Computers

Laptop computers and tablets are generally permitted in Tribunal hearings, provided there is no disturbance to the proceedings and the devices are used solely for the purpose of note-taking.

Cell Phones

The public may take their cell phones with them into the hearing room, however the phones must be turned off and never used in the hearing room. Cell phones with camera features may not be used for the purpose of taking pictures.

Entering and Leaving the Hearing Room

Members of the public are requested to limit going in and out of the hearing room while proceedings are in progress. Depending upon the size and layout of hearing rooms, such disturbances can be disruptive to the proceedings.

The Tribunal may direct that members of the public, including media representatives, will not be permitted to enter and leave hearing rooms while proceedings are in progress.

Media Interviews and Publication Bans

Interviews

The media may hold interviews outside the hearing room. Media representatives should check in advance with respect to an appropriate location for interviews.

Bans on Publication

While the media is, in general terms, entitled to publish information about hearings there are some exceptions to this right. The Tribunal may impose publication bans to protect the fairness and integrity of the hearing or the privacy or safety of a participant.

Media Enquiries

Media enquiries should be directed to the Executive Secretary of the Board and will in most cases then be directed to the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Board. The Board recognizes the time constraints the media work within, and will make reasonable efforts to respond in a timely fashion.

Effective the 22nd day of May, 2018

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra Aitken". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sandra Aitken, Chairperson

On behalf of and with the concurrence of the Board Members.