

SOP: Approval Workflow for Sensitive or Organization-Wide Communications

This SOP defines the **approval workflow for sensitive or organization-wide communications**, detailing the necessary steps for reviewing, authorizing, and disseminating information that impacts the entire organization or contains confidential content. It ensures communication is clear, accurate, and compliant with organizational policies by outlining roles, responsibilities, timelines, and escalation protocols, thereby maintaining message consistency and protecting sensitive information.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized approval workflow for preparing, reviewing, approving, and distributing sensitive or organization-wide communications.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff and departments involved in creating, reviewing, and distributing internal and external communications that are either organization-wide or contain confidential or sensitive information.

3. Definitions

- **Sensitive Communication:** Any message containing confidential, private, or regulated information.
- **Organization-wide Communication:** Any message intended for all employees or the entire organization.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Originator	Drafter of the initial communication; ensures draft accuracy and clarity.
Department Head	First-level review for completeness and policy compliance.
Legal/Compliance Team	Reviews for adherence to privacy, confidentiality, or regulatory standards (if required).
Communications/PR Lead	Ensures clarity, tone, and consistency with organization messaging.
Executive Approver	Final authorization before dissemination.
Distribution Owner	Coordinates and executes the distribution of approved communications.

5. Workflow Steps

1. **Drafting:**
 - Originator prepares the draft communication, noting sensitivity and intended audience.
2. **Initial Review:**
 - Department Head reviews for completeness, alignment with objectives, and compliance with policy (1-2 business days).
3. **Compliance/Legal Review (if sensitive):**
 - Legal/Compliance Team reviews for regulatory and confidentiality issues (1-3 business days).
4. **Communications/PR Review:**
 - Communications/PR Lead checks clarity, tone, and message consistency (1 business day).
5. **Final Approval:**
 - Executive Approver gives final sign-off (1-2 business days).
6. **Distribution:**
 - Distribution Owner disseminates the communication through approved channels.
7. **Documentation & Archiving:**
 - Store approved communication and approval records for future reference and audit.

6. Timelines

- Standard approval workflow: 2-7 business days depending on sensitivity and number of required reviews.
- Expedited path: In urgent cases, designated approvers must be notified. Approval timelines may be compressed as appropriate, but no step can be skipped.

7. Escalation Protocol

- If any approver is unavailable, alternate/designee must be assigned to avoid delay.
- Issues or disagreements unresolved within the workflow must be elevated to a senior executive or the Compliance Officer.

8. Related Documents

- Communications Policy
- Data Privacy/Data Handling Policy
- Records Retention Policy

9. Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author/Owner
1.0	2024-06-12	Initial SOP release	Communications Dept.