



The Department of Communication
Ministry of General Affairs
www.sintmaartengov.org

April 12, 2022

Dear Media Partners,

Please see attached updated Media Accreditation Policy 2022 for your perusal.

Note that all media personnel who wish to obtain accreditation are required to acknowledge receipt that they have received, read and understood the policy by signing the consent form hereto attached, and return to undersigned within two weeks after receiving this letter.

Media Personnel who fail to submit their signed consent form will have their passes retracted.

Media Personnel who have submitted all necessary documents will be eligible to request a new media pass under the updated Media Accreditation Policy 2022 Policy.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Maurice Lake -Department Head
Department of Communication
Ministry of General Affairs
www.sintmaartengov.org



The Department of Communication
Ministry of General Affairs
www.sintmaartengov.org

CONSENT LETTER CONTENT

I have read and been informed about the content, requirements, and expectations of the Media Accreditation Policy 2022 and its associated documents for members of the press who are in the possession of an approved media pass.

I have received a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy guidelines as a condition of my attendance of Government press conferences, briefings, and other related public information events and/or activities.

Media Organization Name:

-

Media Organization Representative Signature:

-

Media Organization Representative Printed Name:

-

Receipt By:

-

Date:

Unit 4E - Level 1- Building 2
JOBSCO Building Complex
Harbor View, Philipsburg, Sint Maarten.
Office Telephone: 1-721 -543 1162 - 1-721 542 4119
ON AIR STUDIO: 1-721 543 1169



The Department of Communication
Ministry of General Affairs
www.sintmaartengov.org

April 12, 2022

Dear Media Partners,

I would like to inform you of the new security procedures based on our Live Council of Ministers (CoM) Press Briefing Rules & Procedures Policy.

The members of the press who are authorized to attend our CoM Press Briefings will have to present the new media pass at the reception upon entering the government building. The member of the press will then receive a color-coded plastic chip.

Every Wednesday the member of the press will receive another color at the reception. This color will be determined by DCOMM and given through to Executive Protection Unit hereto referred to as "EPU".

This colored chip will then be presented to the members of EPU that are at the entrance of the meeting room. Once it is verified, the member of the press will be asked to hand it over and the press member will be scanned with a walk-through metal detector or a handheld wand prior to being allowed to enter the press briefing room.

If the press member is in the possession of a bag, they will be asked to open the bag and a quick visual scan will be done of its contents.

Those refusing to comply will be denied entry.

No member of the press will be allowed to attend after 10 a.m.

In closing, thanking you in advance for your attention and cooperation.

Hoping to have informed all sufficiently.

Sincerely,

Maurice Lake -Department Head
Department of Communication
Ministry of General Affairs

www.sintmaartengov.org

Unit 4E - Level 1- Building 2
JOBSCO Building Complex
Harbor View, Philipsburg, Sint Maarten.
Office Telephone: 1-721 -543 1162 - 1-721 542 4119
ON AIR STUDIO: 1-721 543 1169



MINISTRY OF GENERAL AFFAIRS
Department of Communication

MEDIA ACCREDITATION POLICY 2022

Introduction

The Ministry of General Affairs requires media personnel attending government functions, and/or activities during the course of their employment to be officially accredited by the Department of Communication (DCOMM).

As accreditation and certification are necessary pillars in the establishment of a culture of quality – sustained and maintained by defining objectives, developing capacity to achieve them, and evaluating whether they are achieved. Once this is established, accreditation will be the gatekeeper for assuring that qualitative journalistic reporting is the threshold.

As such, DCOMM -aims to ensure that accreditation is solely granted to working journalists, media professionals, and/ or technical support staff members representing an established media organization.

Media access is a privilege not to be abused, and DCOMM reserves the right to deny or withdraw accreditation of a journalist who abuses the privileges so extended, or put the accreditation to improper use, or act in a way not consistent with the principles of DCOMM. Accreditation and Badges are non-transferable and only valid on Sint Maarten.

DCOMM will review the guidelines once a year, or as needed, to review the policy, which can be revised and should be applied based on a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect for the two simultaneous requirements of security and access. Wider consultations with other parties may be held as needed.

Thank you for working with DCOMM in creating a safe and professional environment where everyone is treated with respect.

CRITERIA FOR MEDIA ACCREDITATION

DCOMM defines “established media” as:

Having an existing reputation within the local, national, or international community for news coverage including critical reviews, editorials, commentary, etc. – using primarily accredited journalists who are recognized as such by their peers and the public.

News outlets, Internet news sites that employ journalists and freelancers to complete their mission to report the news.

A photographer who qualifies for a photographer pass is someone who:

- Is recognized as such by peers.
- Has a history of photographing news stories and events for established media.
- Has been assigned by his/her employer to photograph events.
- Is an established freelance photographer approved by the Media Director.

An accredited journalist who qualifies for a media pass is someone who:

- Has received specialized training in the field (not necessarily in academic institutions).
- Is recognized as such by peers (publishers, assignment editors and journalists working in the same profession or is a member of a recognized association).
- Has a history of reporting for established media.
- Has been assigned by his/her employer to cover events.
- Is an established freelance reporter

Persons to be Considered for Accreditation:

- Members of Established “Local” media houses.
- Members of Established “International” (*non – national*) media houses. International journalists will have to satisfy all requirements imposed by this policy, except for providing local validation credentials. International journalists will be required to provide proof of his/her valid credentials for accreditation from his/her respective country of origin and/or residency immediately prior to his /her request for a media pass.
- An individual holding a letter of assignment on the official letterhead of a media organization signed by the publisher/assignment editor or bureau chief, specifying the name and functional title of the journalist, and the period for which accreditation is being sought.

Major media outlets should limit their accreditation request to a maximum of four individual media passes, while requests from smaller media outlets should be limited to two passes. Consideration may be given for additional requests; however, these cannot be guaranteed.

Persons not eligible for Accreditation:

- Non-journalists, lobbyists, consultants and/or others with an ancillary activity which, in the opinion of the Department of Communication, are incompatible with permanent accreditation as a journalist.
- An applicant may not, for example, be (jointly) employed by, or work on the instructions or under the direction of, a political group, political party or work for a political group, party or movement.
- Former Parliamentarians and/or Ministers who have not satisfied all other requirements imposed by this policy and have been elected to the House of Parliament and/or appointed to Government for the last five (5) years immediately prior to his /her request for a media pass shall not be eligible for accreditation.
- Civil servants are not allowed in Press Briefings as independent reporters or photographers. This is a conflict of interest.

Valid Credentials for Accreditation:

- Valid police record
- Recent picture
- Valid Chamber of Commerce registration
- Valid registration form
- Valid proof of residency
- Valid National Identification

First Time Request for Accreditation

A letter on the official letterhead of a media organization should be sent to the Department of Communication requesting the accreditation of media personnel. The letter needs to be signed by the Publisher, Editor-in-chief, or Assignment Editor. The request should include the duration of the assignment and the reach of the media (print circulation, radio/television audience and/or statistical number of hits for website entities).

The letter can be send either via fax +1(721)543-1169 or via e-mail dcomm@sintmaartengov.org, once signed and scanned (PDF format) .

Note on established media organization:

DCOMM must be satisfied that the individuals applying for accreditation are established media professionals and represent an established media organization; moreover, said media organization must be formally registered as a media organization at the Chamber of Commerce. Accreditation will only be given on proof that the applicant has satisfied all the requirements imposed by this policy and a track record of qualitative journalistic reporting of the news has been established. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and the decisions of DCOMM are final. DCOMM reserves the right to deny or withdraw accreditation of journalists whose activities run counter to its principles and criteria as outlined in this policy.

Privacy policy

Required information provided to the Government of Sint Maarten, the Ministry of General Affairs, DCOMM is used solely for accreditation purposes and will not be published or used wrongfully.

Validity of Media Pass

The media pass is valid for maximum one (1) calendar year.

Rejected Media Pass/Appeal Process

The applicant has the right to appeal in the case that the application has been rejected. DCOMM will inform the applicant why the pass has been rejected. The applicant once having received the rejection letter from DCOMM has five business days to submit a Letter of Appeal. The Letter of Appeal should be addressed directly to Department Head of DCOMM. The Department Head will review the content of the letter and respond within three business days regarding the Letter of Appeal. The Letter of Appeal should be sent by either: e-mail dcomm@sintmaartengov.org, or via Fax +1(721) 543-1169 with as subject matter 'Letter of Appeal'.

RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

Each journalist seeking to renew his or her accreditation must provide the three (3) required items listed below:

1. LETTER

A new letter requesting the renewal of the accreditation of the person(s) on official letterhead of the media organization signed by the Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, Assignment Editor or company official. Providing that person is still in the employment of the company.

2. SAMPLES

Samples of their coverage from the last six (6) months. These samples should be provided when the letter is submitted. These should be sent either by e-mail dcomm@sintmaartengov.org, or fax +1(721)543-1169

Print & Online/Internet-based media - three (3) credited articles.

Radio / TV - three (3) broadcast reports on the Government of Sint Maarten.

Photographers - three (3) published & credited photographic clippings (photo and attached article/cutline).

Media support staff, such as cameramen, soundmen, engineers, producers, associate producers, associate reporters, and technicians can submit the work of the reporter to which they contributed their services to support their accreditation request.

APPLICATION STATUS

Every effort will be made to issue the accreditation as soon as possible, but delays could occur. It needs to be ensured that the request has the required documents (letter and form).

For any inquiries or in the absence of a response within one working week of the submission of your request, you should contact our offices: e-mail dcomm@sintmaartengov.org, Telephone +1(721) 542-4119 or +1(721) 543-1162, Fax +1(721) 543-1169.

Collecting your Media Accreditation

On receipt of confirmation of accreditation via email, Media Personnel are required to come in person to collect their media press pass.

What to bring

A copy of the letter requesting your accreditation. One form of valid ID is required and can be one of the following: passport, driver's license, or ID card.

No badge will be given without the presentation of valid IDs.

Where to pick-up your badge

Department of Communication, Unit 4E, Level One Floor, Building B, JOBCO, Harbor View Office Complex, Sparrow Rd. #4, Philipsburg, Sint Maarten. Telephone: +1(721) 542-4119 or +1(721) 542-31162 Office hours: 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (except on official holidays).

GUIDELINES ON MEDIA ACCESS

All card holders are expected to abide and adhere by the following guidelines by acceptance of and use of their issued GOV/DCOMM Media ID Badge:

All GOV/DCOMM Media ID Badge holders acknowledge that DCOMM as well as the Security Service and EPU, reserve the right to deny or withdraw accreditation of journalists from media organizations whose activities run counter to the principles of the Government of Sint Maarten, the Ministry of General Affairs, DCOMM or who abuse the provided privileges or put the accreditation to improper use or act in a way not consistent with the principles of the Organization or established journalism ethics and standards.

In accepting a GOV/DCOMM Media ID Badge you are agreeing to the terms of the Media Guidelines. The following agreement between DCOMM governs media access at Government Events unless indicated differently, for example, during times of heightened security, additional restrictions may apply.

The purpose of these guidelines is to grant as much access as possible to members of the media while safeguarding and protecting Government Officials and ensuring the safety, security and comfort of all staff, delegates and media personnel alike.

Accredited media personnel who are granted access must abide by the policies in place. For safety, security and control the main entrance of the Government Administration Building will be used by the members of the media for access to the briefing. On presentation of GOV/DCOMM Media ID Badge and proof of valid identity everyone entering the building by this route will be obliged to undergo a security check.

All members of the press shall sign-in for the press conference.

All media personnel shall be seated in the DCOMM Press Room 15 minutes prior to the start of the press briefing.

Access will be refused to anyone arriving late and/ or without appropriate identification. Access to the Council of Ministers Live Press Briefing will be granted ONLY on presentation of the GOV/DCOMM Media ID Badge for the named individual.

CODE OF CONDUCT & SANCTIONS

DCOMM expects ALL media personnel to understand and adhere to these Rules of Conduct and reserves the right, at its sole discretion to enforce the rules and sanction the media as it deems necessary.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Media Personnel must be dressed in business attire, clearly displaying their press badges when entering the Government Administration Building, and during the “Live Press Briefing” at all times.

Media Personnel are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in their interaction with government officials, diplomats, and colleagues in the press corps.

Media Personnel MUST address the Ministers by their appropriate title when posing a question.

All cellular phones must be Turned OFF (not on Silent). Cellular signals will cause interference on both video and audio recordings.

Media Personnel may pose three (3) questions in the first round and ONLY when given the floor by Moderator. Questions are to be limited to 1 minute per question. If time permits, Media Personnel may be given the opportunity to pose further questions in another round.

Media Personnel may not use the name, likeness and/or personal attributes of any of the Ministers for the purposes of exploitative and/or commercial gains without obtaining expressed permission of the Ministers and the DCOMM.

Content filmed, recorded, and/or photographed during the Live Press Briefing is for the sole purpose of dissemination of (informative) news and remains the intellectual property of the Government of Sint Maarten.

Where unexpected circumstances arise, the approach will be to avoid confrontation, maintain civility and find the fastest, safest, and most secure acceptable solution. Those correspondents who violate the ground rules on access may have their accreditation withdrawn indefinitely and/or suspended.

Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct and further committing the acts expanded below will result in the described sanction below.

Inappropriate conduct by media towards members of the Council of Ministers, officials, colleagues, staff of DCOMM and other civil servants is comprehended as follows:

- **Rude Conduct:** action contrary to good manners or moral behavior.
- **Offensive Conduct:** defamatory or insulting words or gestures or any action expressing disrespect.

- **Aggressive Conduct:** Physical attack or aggressive or threatening behavior.

SANCTIONS CHART

Verbal			
Description	Reprimand During	Sanction After	Note
Offensive Language / words or Profanity	Removal from Venue	SUSPENSION	Moderator / MC
Loud Outburst above the Speaker / Presenter	Verbal Warning	WRITTEN Warning	Moderator / MC
Disruptive Conversation	Verbal Warning	WRITTEN Warning	Moderator / MC
Name Calling / Personal Verbal Attacks / Threats or among Press	Removal from Venue	EXPULSION	Moderator / MC
Improper address E.g. Referring to the council as “you Guys” or Non-Official Title; “nick name”	Verbal Warning	WRITTEN Warning	See heading ‘Protocol Ministers’
Actions			
Tardiness/Late Arrivals	Verbal Warning	WRITTEN Warning	Security Posted
Cellular Phones and other Electronics with Loud Sound.	Verbal Warning	WRITTEN Warning	Moderator / MC
Attire / Dress Code	REFUSE ACCESS	WRITTEN Warning	Security Posted Please refer to Dress Code Addendum
Inappropriate Gesture / Profanity	Removal from Venue	SUSPENSION	Moderator / MC & Security Posted
Disruptive Actions	Verbal Warning	WRITTEN Warning	Moderator / MC
Physical			
Touching / Aggressive contact against Officials / Civil Servant / colleagues	Removal from Venue	WRITTEN Warning	Moderator / MC & Security Posted

PROTOCOL MINISTERS (Titles)

The Ministers of the ministries are to be addressed as follows: “The Honorable” is the prefix, title of function i.e. “Prime Minister” or “Minister of Finance ” followed by the Ministers name as the suffix i.e Ms. Silveria Jacobs or Mr. Ardwell Irion.

The questions are to be posed to the Moderator as follows: “Madam Moderator my question is for or to be addressed to the Honorable Prime Minister, Ms. Silveria Jacobs and/or the Honorable Minister of Finance, Mr. Ardwell Irion ...”.

SANCTIONS (Explained)

Aggressive Conduct: Verbal and/or Non-Verbal words and/or gestures that are perceived as threatening and/or violent, will lead to the immediate expulsion of said journalist.

Offensive Conduct: Lewd acts and/or defamatory statements will lead to the immediate suspension of said journalist’s media pass for a period of six (6) months.

Rude Conduct: Journalists who display agonistic behavior will be issued with (2) verbal warnings, (1) written warning; and should the behavior persist, said journalist will be issued with a six (6) weeks suspension of his or her pass.

Dress Code: See DCOMM Live Council of Ministers Press Briefing Policy & Procedures March 6, 2017, document which is part and parcel of this policy. According to the severity of the infraction, the sanctions will be applied and noted are as follows:

- Written Warning from DCOMM (2 times)
- Suspension of Attendance (2 times)
- Expulsion (indefinite)

Offence	Example		
	WW	SS	EX
1	x		
2	x		
3		X	
4	X		
5	X		
6		X	
7	X		
8	X		
9			X

REQUEST FORM MEDIA PASSES 2022

Name applicant: _____

Function: _____

Media house / outlet: _____

Media owner / Manager _____

Business address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone number business: _____

Applicant residential address: _____

Mobile phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Valid police record
- Valid SXM ID card or driver's license
- Valid registration form
- A recent passport picture in electronic format

Signature Media Owner/Manager

Signature Department Head DCOMM

Note: Media Passes will be approved for a one year period and are non-transferable and is only valid on Sint Maarten