



Communications Policy

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Communications

Communications Policy

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2. Introduction

2.1 Policy statement

AMVIC is responsible to protect consumers and industry from unfair practices in the automotive business industry. One way AMVIC does this is by communicating effectively and efficiently with all stakeholders. This policy covers the AMVIC website, social media and other communication-related activities.

2.2 Purpose

In accordance with AMVIC's Mandate and Roles document, AMVIC is responsible for "Fostering open and clear communication in the automotive business industry and supporting an honest exchange of information among industry, government and consumers." (Section 1.3.1). The purpose of this policy is to provide clear operational guidance in meeting AMVIC's goals.

2.3 Definitions

In this policy;

- i. "AMVIC" means the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council.
- ii. "Chair" means the Chairperson of the AMVIC Board of Directors.
- iii. "Director" means a member of the AMVIC Board of Directors.
- iv. "CEO" means the chief executive officer of AMVIC.
- v. "Communications Manager" means the manager of communications and education of AMVIC.
- vi. "CPA" means the *Consumer Protection Act*.
- vii. "interview" or "comment" means any verbal or written (including through social media) comment, opinion or reaction.
- viii. "media" means any news media organization, reporter or employee of that organization.
- ix. "Employee" means any employee of the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council.
- x. "the Ministry" means the Government of Alberta Ministry of Service Alberta.
- xi. "website" means AMVIC's website, amvic.org.
- xii. "social media" means forms of electronic communication when users create their own content to be posted on a public forum. This can include discussions, information and ideas in the form of words, visuals, video, audio or other formats.
- xiii. "authorized spokesperson" means the Chair, the CEO, the Communications Manager or their designate.
- xiv. "Registrar" means the Director of Fair Trading (as delegated).

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3. Policy

AMVIC and Service Alberta have agreed on a communication protocol, included in the Mandate and Roles Document, which explains the roles and responsibilities with respect to the publication of materials for public consumption, inquiries from the media or public responses to emerging issues in the public domain.

3.1 Media

3.1.1 Application of policy

Individuals from media, government, associations, interest groups and the public may try to contact a Director and/or an employee of AMVIC for comment. In order to respond to media requests in a timely manner the Chair, CEO and Communications Manager, or their designate, are authorized to speak on behalf of AMVIC to members of the media. Day-to-day media requests must be handled by the CEO, the Communications Manager or their designate. The CEO and the Communications Manager will not comment on Board-related media requests or Ministerial-related requests. Requests of this nature will be referred to the Chair or Ministry, as applicable. The following outlines the protocol for responding:

Board members

If a Director is approached by a member of the media for an interview or comment regarding AMVIC, or a news issue that relates to AMVIC, the request must be directed to the Chair. The Chair may appoint a Director as spokesperson to speak on behalf of the board on specific issues. When the Chair or a Director comments on an AMVIC-related story, the story should be related to the AMVIC board and not about AMVIC operational topics or issues. The Chair should notify AMVIC's CEO and Communications Manager of any comment or interview they provide so AMVIC can be prepared for any follow-up requests and so AMVIC can inform the Ministry.

A Director should be clear they are not representing AMVIC operations when commenting on a media story that is not related to AMVIC.

Employees

If an Employee is approached by a member of the media for an interview or comment regarding AMVIC or an issue in the news that relates to AMVIC, the Employee should immediately direct the request to the CEO or the Communications Manager. Employees will not speak nor provide information to members of the media, or in a public forum, on behalf of or about AMVIC.

If an Employee identifies themselves publically as an AMVIC employee, they must state that views and opinions expressed do not represent that of their employer. See the AMVIC Code of Conduct for additional information.

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3.2 Social media

3.2.1 Application of policy

AMVIC supports the use of social media as a communications tool to further consumer and industry awareness of AMVIC and the automotive industry in Alberta. AMVIC will use social media to disseminate consumer and industry information, promote AMVIC's programs and services, and engage Albertans in discussions about buying and selling automotive goods and services.

All posted content should be appropriate for public consumption, be authored by delegated AMVIC spokespersons and not contain personal views. There should be no foreseeable security or privacy risk to sharing information. Third-party content may be shared from partners such as Service Alberta or law enforcement, if relevant. Third-party content must be accurate and appropriate, and should only be shared if it clearly adds value.

Communications staff will identify opportunities to support AMVIC initiatives. All social media will adhere to the terms of use defined by each social network. Accounts will be constantly evaluated to ensure communication goals are being met and that the forum is appropriate. Should the forum no longer be appropriate, it will be evaluated and possibly deleted.

Only an individual delegated by the Communications Manager or CEO as an official AMVIC spokesperson may represent AMVIC in a social media forum of any kind. While participating in a social media forum, AMVIC will follow all communications protocols set out in AMVIC's Mandate and Roles Document. Employees should refer to the AMVIC Code of Conduct for expectations regarding personal use of social media.

3.2.2 Responsibilities

CEO is responsible to:

- a. Approve all official designated AMVIC spokespeople.
- b. Approve AMVIC's participation in all social media forums.
- c. Approve social media training for all designated AMVIC spokespeople.
- d. Report security breaches to the AMVIC Board of Directors.

Communications Manager is responsible to:

- a. Recommend to the CEO staff to be delegated as official spokesperson.
- b. Recommend to the CEO social media forums that are safe and appropriate for AMVIC.
- c. Plan social media information campaigns, contests and evaluation strategies, if applicable.
- d. Report to the CEO immediately, any security or policy breaches that could pose a risk to AMVIC or AMVIC's reputation.

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AMVIC employee designated as an official spokesperson is responsible to:

- a. Post, modify and monitor information on any AMVIC social media site after receiving training on how to represent AMVIC in the online domain.
- b. Convey only official AMVIC positions, not individual personal views.
- c. Ensure all social media contributions are respectful, appropriate, factual and in compliance with all laws.
- d. Report to the Manager of Communications any event or comment they believe could pose a security or safety risk to AMVIC or AMVIC's reputation.
- e. Report to the Manager of Communications any event or comment that they believe is threatening, racist, offensive or derogatory. Comments or users could be deleted or blocked if deemed inappropriately malicious and do not further or add to a conversation.
- f. Conduct a high-level industry e-scan for issues and trends in the automotive industry.

AMVIC employee as a private citizen is responsible to:

- a. Exercise their rights and freedoms of speech just as any other private citizen.
- b. Use a personal email address (not an AMVIC email address) when participating in social media as a private citizen.
- c. Clearly state they are not representing AMVIC when engaged in an information exchange related to topics involving AMVIC.
- d. Keep private any information they acquire through their position of trust as an AMVIC employee.
- e. Comply at all times with the terms of the AMVIC Code of Conduct, the Employee Handbook and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- f. Report to their AMVIC supervisor any breach of this policy, or any event that has the potential to place AMVIC or AMVIC's reputation at risk.

3.3 Website

3.3.1 Application of policy

AMVIC manages its own website, which resides on a domain which AMVIC owns, called amvic.org. AMVIC's communications department is responsible for managing and publishing content on the website. The content will be informative, accurate and non-partisan and will apply to industry members and consumers. Content will be updated in a timely manner and regularly reviewed to ensure relevance.

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Website posting

- a. In accordance with Section 157.1 of the CPA and Section 16 of the Appeal Board Regulation, AMVIC is required to maintain a public record of Undertakings, Director's Orders, Court Orders, Administrative Penalties, Appeals and any other prescribed document or information. The Registrar may prescribe the form of the public record and to ensure consistent and fair application of the duty to maintain a public record, AMVIC posts the following documents on its website within a timely manner of being issued or ordered:
- Director's Orders will remain on the website for **three years**.
 - Administrative Penalties will remain on the website for **10 years**.
 - Undertakings will remain on the website for **three years**.
 - Appeals:
 - An appeal decision made by an appeal committee under Section 22 of the Automotive Business Regulation regarding a salesperson registration of an individual who has never worked in the automotive industry will remain on the website for a period of **three years**.
 - An appeal decision made by an appeal committee under Section 22 of the Automotive Business Regulation regarding a salesperson registration of an individual who has worked in the automotive industry will remain on the website for a period of **five years**.
 - An appeal decision made by an appeal board under Section 179 of the CPA will remain on the website for a period of **10 years**.
 - Court Orders will remain on the website for **10 years**.
- The website will be reviewed and updated quarterly to ensure all decisions are removed in a timely manner.
- The Registrar has discretion to remove an administrative action or appeal decision from the website prior to the prescribed time period if requested by the subject of the decision. The Registrar will review each request and make a decision based on the individual circumstances of each request. When so directed by the Registrar, the communications department will remove an action or appeal decision.
- b. AMVIC maintains a current list of charges posted on its website (remain on website for **10 years**). AMVIC uses its discretion to publicize further details surrounding those charges including, but not limited to, the names of the accused. AMVIC maintains a current list of convictions, including but not limited to names and sentences, on its website (remain on website for **10 years**).
- c. AMVIC maintains a list of licence and registration cancellations on its website. Names are placed on the list as soon as possible once the decision is rendered but before the appeal period

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expires. The list includes the name and year of the cancellation and remain on the website for **10 years** unless overturned through appeal. AMVIC uses its discretion to publicize further details surrounding those cancellations including, but not limited to, the cancellation decision or a synopsis of the decision (remain on website for **10 years**).

- d. AMVIC redacts investigator names and complainant names from documents posted under Section 3.3.1 (a). AMVIC employee names are listed as first name and last initial, unless otherwise requested by the employee.
- e. AMVIC posts press releases in chronological order on the website for a period of **five years**.
- f. Industry and consumer bulletins, and the Impact newsletter are posted on the website and remain on the website for a period of **three years**.
- g. Annual reports are posted on the website and remain on the website for a period of **three years**.
- h. Business and financial plans are posted on the website and remain on the website for a period of **three years**.
- i. Strategic plans are posted on the website and remain on the website for a period of **three years**.
- j. Operational reports are posted on the website and remain on the website for a period of **three years**.

Technological maintenance and changes to the website

AMVIC staff have overall responsibility for website content and have the ability to make content changes. The website is hosted externally, and a third party website company is responsible for updating the content management system and any plug-ins or features to keep the website up-to-date and optimized.

Every effort is made by AMVIC staff to ensure the website remains accessible at all times. Communication staff endeavour to check for broken links or pages to keep the website in good working order.

DNS (domain name system) information for the website is externally hosted, with AMVIC maintaining control of the individual host records for the website. An SSL (secure sockets layer) security certificate has been registered by AMVIC with a third party certificate authority, and users of the website are automatically switched to SSL to ensure communication between the users and the web server are secured. AMVIC does not employ tracking cookies nor offer advertising services on its website.

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3.4 Government of Alberta Policies

It is important that the Communications Manager be aware of and follow the established principles and practices of the relevant Government of Alberta policies as each applies to AMVIC as a public agency. These policies are important references for the AMVIC communications staff.

3.4.1 Communications policy

The Government of Alberta's Communications Policy was established to ensure that government communications are coordinated and effective and give Albertans the information they need. The policy is administered by the Government of Alberta's Communications and Public Engagement Office, working with Deputy Ministers across the government. Ministries are responsible for determining appropriate protocols for agencies, boards and commissions that report to them (see Mandate and Roles Document, Section 4).

As per the Government of Alberta Communications Policy, all materials will be provided in English. AMVIC will consider developing materials in additional languages where that is deemed beneficial to Albertans, considering the intended audience, cost and overall effectiveness, including timeliness.

3.4.2 Social media policy

The Government of Alberta's Social Media Policy ensures that the Government of Alberta's social media presence is coordinated, consistent and responsive to the needs of the public. Social media must comply with the Government of Alberta's Communications Policy, the Government Identity Policy (not applicable to agencies, boards and commissions) and Voice, Tone and Style Policy. The Social Media Policy and the accompanying standards apply to all government social media channels and all use of social media by public servants in official spokesperson capacities.

3.4.3 Canadian Press style

The Government of Alberta uses The Canadian Press style. AMVIC communicates within the parameters of the AMVIC Style Guide (based primarily on Canadian Press style), where and whenever possible, ensuring a consistent and expected writing style and professionalism in all AMVIC communications.

3.4.4 Election communication

During a provincial election campaign, materials will only be posted or sent out if allowed under the Government of Alberta Election Communication Policy.

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4. Administration

4.1 Related documents and legislation

Consumer Protection Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 Automotive Business Regulation
 Appeal Board Regulation
 Administrative Actions Policy
 Administrative Penalties (*Consumer Protection Act*) Regulation
 AMVIC Employee Handbook
 AMVIC Code of Conduct
 AMVIC Mandate and Roles Document
 Government of Alberta Communications Policy
 Government of Alberta Social Media Policy
 Government of Alberta Election Communication Policy

4.2 Procedures

4.3 Forms

4.4 Amendment history

Version	Date	Summary of update
1.	Oct. 2, 2019	Original. Reviewed and approved.
2.	Sept. 15, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update posting time frame of appeal committee decisions made under Section 22 of the Automotive Business Regulation. Consolidating all posting time frames of administrative actions and appeals into one policy Reviewed and approved by AMVIC CEO, Malcolm Knox.

4.5 Scheduled review date

September 2025