

POLICY ON MEDIA RELATIONS

Communications Department

February 2018

OACIQ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE OACIQ	3
MISSION AND VISION OF THE OACIQ	3
TARGET PUBLICS	3
THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT	3
COMMUNICATION TOOLS PRODUCED BY THE OACIQ	4
THE POLICY	5
BACKGROUND	5
OBJECTIVE	5
LEGAL AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK	5
MAIN TOPICS OF COMMUNICATION	5
SPOKESMAN	6
PRESS ATTENDANCE AT OACIQ EVENTS	7
COORDINATION OF MEDIA RELATIONS	8
RESPONSE TIME	8
LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION	8
INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES AND DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS	9
ACCESS TO INFORMATION	9
THE REPORTER'S TOOLKIT	10
THE OACIQ.COM SITE	10
PRESSROOM	10
PRESS RELEASES	10
USE OF THE OACIQ REAL ESTATE SEAL AND LOGO	11
THE <i>BUYER'S GUIDE</i> AND <i>SELLER'S GUIDE</i>	12
STATISTICS	13
ANNUAL REPORTS	14

THE OACIQ

MISSION AND VISION OF THE OACIQ

Mission

The Organisme d'autoréglementation du courtage immobilier du Québec (OACIQ) ensures the protection of members of the public who enlist the services of real estate and mortgage brokerage professionals governed by the *Real Estate Brokerage Act*.

Vision

The OACIQ is the authority of real estate and mortgage brokerage in Québec. It protects and assists the public by ensuring sound broker practices.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Department's role is to promote the Organization's mission so that members of the public know when and how they are protected by the *Real Estate Brokerage Act* and what resources are available to them. Content is also transmitted to professionals authorized by the OACIQ to inform them about their professional practices.

The Communications Department is the Organization's front door where the media are concerned. The Department receives journalists' requests and responds diligently to their queries, acting as an intermediary between the press and the Organization's spokespersons.

It may also actively solicit media attention when it's relevant to disseminate information or key messages.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS PRODUCED BY THE OACIQ

oaciq.com



A public web site providing information about real estate and mortgage brokerage issues.

synbad.com



Extranet site containing information on best practices and other useful information and relevant topics.

Newsletter: *Pro@ctive*



The *Pro@ctive* newsletter is sent out weekly to some 18,000 professionals authorized by the OACIQ and brokerage partners.

Content: reminder of best professional practices in accordance with the *Real Estate Brokerage Act*, important information (example: licence renewal, new forms)

THE POLICY

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to its mission to protect the public, the Organization handles requests for information and gives interviews on certain topics relating to the real estate industry.

OBJECTIVE

The OACIQ Policy on Media Relations is intended as a framework to facilitate cooperation between the OACIQ, its spokespersons and stakeholders, and the media, in order to provide accurate information that satisfies journalists' needs while reflecting the OACIQ mission.

LEGAL AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

The OACIQ Policy on Media Relations is based on a set of legislative and regulatory provisions, more specifically:

- The *Real Estate Brokerage Act* and its regulations (R.S.Q., chapter C-73.2); and
- An *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information* (Act respecting access to information).

MAIN TOPICS OF COMMUNICATION

The OACIQ may be called upon to state its position, to comment or provide explanations on a certain number of topics relating to its public protection mission or to the *Real Estate Brokerage Act*. Without being exhaustive, the following list outlines the range of topics:

- Real estate transactions:
 - The protection mechanisms available to consumers engaged in a real estate or mortgage transaction;
 - The obligations of professionals authorized by the OACIQ, i.e., real estate or mortgage brokers, under their strict code of conduct.

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- Professional practices:
 - The duties and obligations of professionals authorized by the OACIQ in accordance with their code of conduct provided by the *Real Estate Brokerage Act*.

 - The Organization and its activities:
 - The mission of the OACIQ;
 - Activities of the Organization (events, protections offered to the public, court appearances, etc.);
 - The *Real Estate Brokerage Act* and its regulations (including the Rules of Professional Ethics);
 - Others.

Matters requiring special handling:

- For reasons of impartiality, the OACIQ does not direct the media to individual brokers or agencies. Journalists are invited to contact a professional near them.

- Matters that are the subject of a disciplinary complaint, an investigation, or proceedings before the discipline committee require special handling which is described later in this document.

SPOKESPERSON

As stipulated in section 136 of the *Internal By-laws of the OACIQ*, the President and Chief Executive Officer acts as the spokesperson of the Organization.

The spokesperson may appoint substitutes to speak in her or his stead, according to their fields of expertise.

In addition, the principal spokesperson for the Organization's Board of Directors is the Chairman of the Board, as stated in section 121 of the *Internal By-laws of the OACIQ*.

PRESS ATTENDANCE AT OACIQ EVENTS

Media representatives may attend certain OACIQ activities that are also attended by the public and by the Organization's licence holders. The policy will vary then, depending on whether it is a public or private activity.

Public activities:

- Conventions, conferences, seminars.

In the case of public activities, there are no specific restrictions regarding access to the physical premises and to the documents. However, all media input is subject to the oversight of the Communications Department. Unless stipulated otherwise, questions, interviews and other such interactions shall take place at the end of the event or the period.

- Discipline Committee hearings

In the case of a hearing before the Discipline Committee, journalists must inform the Communications Department of their intention to attend, so that they may be given adequate guidance and to facilitate their requests for information. At the hearing, the committee chair may order closed proceedings or issue a publication ban. The OACIQ does not comment or answer any questions about a specific case. Please note that photographing, filming or recording inside the hearing room is prohibited.

Private activities

- Annual general meeting, continuing education and other activities.

Access to the physical premises during private activities is prohibited for both the media and the general public.

COORDINATION OF MEDIA RELATIONS

Inquiries from journalists must be directed to the OACIQ Communications Department.

CONTACTS: medias@oaciq.com

RESPONSE TIME

The Communications Department shall endeavour to gather the necessary information to process the request as soon as possible.

If the scope or complexity of the requested information demands it, the OACIQ shall inform the requester of the additional time required to respond properly.

Interviews shall be granted according to the spokesperson's availability.

Please note that the OACIQ shall always do its best to grant interview requests, but reserves the right to refuse a request.

LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION

The Communications Department has the capability to respond to requests in both French and English.

The OACIQ press releases are usually published in French and in English, except in rare circumstances.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES AND DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

All OACIQ investigations are confidential. The Organization is subject to the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*. As such, the OACIQ may not confirm whether an authorized professional is under investigation or is the object of a complaint filed by the syndic before the Discipline Committee, until and unless a date has been set for a discipline hearing before the Discipline Committee.

The OACIQ does not comment on specific cases. Any comments or explanations that are given shall be limited to general principles of law, in order to promote a better understanding of professional practices.

When a matter is the object of a complaint before the discipline committee, the Organization will not comment and will not intervene unless and until a final judgment has been rendered and the appeal periods have expired.

The judgments rendered become public once they have been signed by the committee chair and served on the respondent. Decisions are made available online at www.jugements.qc.ca.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Since May 1, 2010, the OACIQ has been subject to the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*. For information on how to file a request for access, please visit the "[Access to information](#)" page on the OACIQ website.

THE REPORTER'S TOOLKIT

THE OACIQ.COM SITE

The site oaciq.com is a very useful resource for consumers wishing to:

- Know about the duties and obligations of professionals authorized by the OACIQ;
- Get help when faced with an obstacle in the course of a real estate or mortgage transaction carried out through a professional authorized by the OACIQ;
- Learn more about the process of buying, selling or leasing a property;
- Know how consumers are protected by the *Real Estate Brokerage Act* during their real estate or mortgage transactions.

In the section titled "[Becoming a broker](#)", future brokers will find all of the information they need, from basic training to the licensing procedure, including the certification exams.

PRESSROOM

The "[Pressroom](#)" page on the OACIQ website allows communications professionals, journalists and researchers to quickly obtain information about the Organization, among others through the press releases and media resources placed at their disposal.

PRESS RELEASES

Press releases issued by the OACIQ are available on the website in the "Pressroom" section, under "[Press releases](#)".

USE OF THE OACIQ REAL ESTATE SEAL AND LOGO



The OACIQ seal and logo may be downloaded and used in accordance with their associated graphic standards. The seal, logo and standards are available in the "Pressroom" under "[Media resources](#)".

THE *BUYER'S GUIDE* AND *SELLER'S GUIDE*



The Buyer's Guide and Seller's Guide are quick reference documents loaded with relevant information about the process of buying or selling a residential property.

Developed by the OACIQ with the consumer in mind, you will find practical information on:

- The Promise to purchase;
- the downpayment;
- the Brokerage Contract – Sale;
- the *Declarations by the seller of the immovable* form;
- some of the specifics of co-ownership;
- ... and much more

These guides are only available in digital format and may be downloaded from the "[Brochures, folders and various documents](#)" page in the "Publications" section of the OACIQ website.

STATISTICS

Statistics about professionals authorized by the OACIQ are available on the OACIQ website, in the “About” section, under “[Statistics](#)”.

This page includes the following data:

- Breakdown of professionals by licence type, by administrative region, by gender and by age group;
- Breakdown of authorized professionals acting under franchise;
- Agencies acting independently;
- Number of authorized professionals acting on their own account.

The statistics on the Québec real estate market are compiled by the Quebec Federation of Real Estate Boards (QFREB). Here is the contact information for their Media Relations Department:

Website: fcq.ca

Email: media@fcq.ca

Telephone: 514-762-0212, ext. 130

Toll-free: 1-866-882-0212, ext. 130

ANNUAL REPORTS

The annual reports of the OACIQ present a detailed accounting of the Organization's achievements during the year in question.

In addition to financial statements, you will find a message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors, reports from the President and Chief Executive Officer, the Office of the Syndic, numerous statutory committees, the treasurer and the independent auditor.

These documents are available on the OACIQ website, in the "Publications" section, under "[Annual Reports](#)".