

Official ARRL Field Organization Appointment Description

Public Information Officer:

Public Information Officers (PIOs) are appointed by and report to the ARRL section Public Information Coordinator (PIC) generally upon the recommendation of an affiliated club and with the approval of the Section Manager (SM). Training for PIOs should be provided regularly on a sectional or regional basis by the PIC and/or other qualified people.

Good "grassroots" public relations activities involve regular and frequent publicizing of amateur activities through local news media plus community activities; school programs; presentations to service clubs and community organizations; exhibits and demonstrations; and other efforts that create a positive public image for Amateur Radio.

The purpose of public relations goes beyond column inches and minutes of airtime. Those are a means to an end generally, telling a specific story about hams, ham radio, or ham-related activities for a specific purpose. Goals may range from recruiting potential hams for a licensing course to improving public awareness of amateurs' service to the community. Likewise, success is measured not in column inches or airtime, but in how well that story gets across and how effectively it generates the desired results.

For this reason, public relations are not conducted in a vacuum. Even the best PR is wasted without effective follow-up. To do this best, PR activities must be well-timed and well-coordinated within the amateur community, so that clubs, mentors, instructors, and so on are prepared to deal with the interest the PR generates.

Requirements

1. Must be an ARRL full member
2. Usually club publicity chairpersons

Responsibilities

1. Establishes and maintains a list of media contacts in the local area; strives to establish and maintain personal contacts with appropriate representatives of those media (e.g., editors, news directors, science reporters, etc.).
2. Become a contact for the local media and ensure that editors/reporters who need information about Amateur Radio know where to find it.
3. Works with Local Government Liaisons to establish personal contacts with local government officials where possible and explain to them, briefly and non-technically, about Amateur Radio and how it can help their communities.

4. Keeps informed of activities by local hams and identifies and publicizes those that are newsworthy or carry human interest appeal. (This is usually done through news releases or suggestions for interviews or feature stories).
5. Attempts to deal with and minimize any negative publicity about Amateur Radio and to correct any negative stories that are incorrectly ascribed to Amateur Radio operators.
6. Generates advance publicity through the local media of scheduled activities of interest to the general public, including licensing classes, hamfests, club meetings, Field Day operations, etc.
7. Works with the section PIC to identify and publicize ARRL related stories of local news interest, including election and appointment of local hams to leadership positions, *QST* articles by local authors, or local achievements noted or featured in *QST*.
8. Maintains contact with other ARRL officials in the local area, particularly the Emergency Coordinator and/or District Emergency Coordinator. The PIC helps prepare an emergency response PR kit, including general brochures on Amateur Radio and specific information about local clubs. Distribute them to ECs and DECAs before an emergency occurs. During emergencies, these kits should be made available to reporters at the scene or at command post. The PIO should help summarize Amateur Radio's activity in an ongoing situation and follow up on any significant emergency communications activities with prompt reporting to the media of the extent and nature of Amateur Radio's involvement.
9. Assists the section PIC in recruiting hams for the section's Speakers Bureau; promotes interest among community and service organizations in finding out more about Amateur Radio through the bureau and relays requests to the PIC.
10. Helps individual hams and radio clubs to develop and promote good ideas for community projects and special events to display Amateur Radio to the public in a positive light.
11. Attends regional training sessions sponsored by section PICs.
12. Becomes familiar with ARRL Public Service Announcements (PSAs), brochures, and audiovisual materials; contacts local radio and TV stations to arrange airing of Amateur Radio PSAs; secures appropriate brochures and audiovisual materials for use in conjunction with planned activities.
13. Keeps the section PIC fully informed on activities and places PIC on the news release mailing list.

Recruitment of new hams and ARRL members is an integral part of the job of every ARRL appointee. Appointees should take advantage of every opportunity to recruit a new ham or member to foster growth of Field Organization programs, and our abilities to serve the public.