

# **SABINE COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT**



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN**

**P O BOX 137  
HEMPHILL, TEXAS 75948  
PHONE: 409-787-2777  
[www.sabine-cad.org](http://www.sabine-cad.org)**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**To provide a well-managed office that will serve the public and taxing authorities with expert, qualified staff that will result in:**

- 1) Assessment of the taxpayer's property to be fair and uniform**
- 2) Providing taxing authorities with a well maintained appraisal roll**
- 3) Meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Texas Property Tax Code for all levels of assessment and uniformity.**

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARD**

A proactive public relations program is essential to public awareness of the assessment process and of the importance of the property tax in funding local government services.

IAAO's Standard on Public Relations is the basis for the Sabine County Appraisal District Public Relations Plan. This standard outlines the requirements for developing and maintaining an effective plan.

"The International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) is the internationally recognized leader and preeminent source for innovation, education, and research in property appraisal, assessment, administration, and property tax policy."

<http://www.iaao.org>

## **SPOKESPERSON(S) FOR MEDIA**

Chief Appraiser:	Tom Ince	<a href="mailto:tomince@windstream.net">tomince@windstream.net</a>
	1920 Worth St.	409-787-2777 ext. 22
	Hemphill, Tx. 75948	

## **PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES**

### **HOW TO HANDLE BAD PRESS**

There may be a time when the Sabine County Appraisal District is confronted with an unflattering article. Whether the district deserves it or not, the negativity reflects badly on the appraisal districts image and could affect the attitudes of the taxpayers towards the district.

### **WHAT TO DO WHEN A CRISIS OCCURS**

One would hope that it all would die down. Sometimes bad press isn't quite as bad as one might think. Then again, if the district shoots off a reply it could end up making the situation worse by adding fuel to the flames. Keep a cool head and follow procedures to deal with the situation most effectively.

## **PROCEDURES**

- 1 Determine who is to receive all communication with the media.
- 2 Express your regret concerning the crisis. Taxpayers do not want to see the appraisal district pointing fingers during a crisis. Be confident in that the district understands what is at stake, apologize, and take action before being forced to do so by legal means.
- 3 Explain to the public what your plans are and let the taxpayers know how you are going to rectify the damage.
- 4 Plan a structure to disseminate your message to the media. Send your media press releases out all at once, and if the releases will be ongoing, send them out at the same time every day.

It is crucial that a spokesperson or persons be assigned the responsibility of all communication with the media. The spokesperson for the Sabine County Appraisal District is in the order below.

If a story has reached the taxpayers and looks as if it is doing some damage, a good way to counter is to compose our own response. Try not to get emotionally involved-this is unprofessional and the district might say something it might later regret. The media likes objective facts and statements, so they're also more likely to print something that is calm and to the point.

Stick to all the facts involved and address each negative point of the original bad PR piece. Explain why the appraisal district made the mistake (if the district made one) and how the district is going to correct the problem-give the taxpayer a reason to trust us.

**"IF YOU MESS UP, FESS UP."**

Good communication is always the key, so prepare your answers and deliver them in a timely, reassuring manner.

## **Dealing with Hostile / Angry Customers**

Customer service isn't always a cheery interaction, and almost anyone who serves the public occasionally faces an angry or rude customer. Whether the blame falls on the appraisal district actions, issues over values, or just a bad day, how the district handles a problem customers can make a bad situation worse.

## **Public Safety Navigation**

Some Sabine County Appraisal District employees and guests can react with anger because of difficulty finding help with their situations, emotional pain or discomfort, fear, and anxiety.

- 1 React and respond to the individual in a calm but firm manner.
- 2 Use lower volume of voice to help the customer calm down.
- 3 Listen to all demands.
- 4 Do not tolerate abusive behavior.
- 5 Make command statements in a firm but non-challenging tone, saying what you want or do not want.

“I understand that you are upset.” “It sounds like you really are angry about this.” “I do not want to argue with you.” “I want you to leave.”

6. Think over situations that could occur and how you would react. Go through the movements you would need to make to get help or get out of the situation.

Practice. One strategy might be to keep a desk, chair, or other object between you and the person to keep distance.

7. If you anticipate problems with an individual let co-workers/Sheriff's Dept. / Police Department know about it ahead of time.
8. If you feel you may be in jeopardy, remove yourself from the danger, providing it is safe to do so, and notify Hemphill City Police or Sheriff's office @ 409-787-2266
9. If you observe a hostile confrontation in progress, do not get involved. Calmly move away from the area, providing it is safe to do so. Once clear of it, call Police or Sheriff at 409-787-2266 or 9-1-1 if necessary.
10. Completely describe what you observed, how many individuals are involved, physical descriptions of those individuals and the exact location of the activity.
11. Attempt to bring the person to an isolated area or room.
12. Have at least two people remain with the person at all times until he/she calms down or professional assistance arrives. **DO NOT TRY TO PHYSICALLY RESTRAIN THE PERSON.**
13. Be prepared to seek protection under desks and behind solid walls.

If the taxpayer wishes to file a complaint, have them fill out the Complaint form.

# Complaint from the Public

Sabine County Appraisal District  
Hemphill, Texas 75948

## TO BE COMPLETED BY THE COMPLAINANT

Name:		Phone:	
Last First _____	_____		Home /Work _____
Address _____			
Street _____	City _____	State _____	Zip _____
E-mail address _____		Cell Phone# _____	

STATE COMPLAINT (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Signature, Complainant Date

### LEVEL: 1 – To be completed by the Chief Appraiser

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Date Contact Made \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION ON COMPLAINT: \_\_\_\_\_ Granted \_\_\_\_\_ Denied

REASON: (Must be completed if denied.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ - - - / - - / - -

Signature, Chief Appraiser

**If you wish to request a review of the decision of the Chief Appraiser, you may do so by forwarding this completed form with a note explaining your reason for disagreeing with the decision of the Sabine County Chairman Board of Directors.**

**LEVEL: 2 – To be completed by the Chairman, Sabine County Board of Directors**

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

ACTION ON COMPLAINT: \_\_\_\_\_ Granted \_\_\_\_\_ Denied

REASON: (Must be completed if denied.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Chairman Board of Directors

## Complaint from the Public

1. The board of directors provides for public complaints or grievances on any matter within the jurisdiction of the board of directors about policies and procedures against the Sabine County Appraisal District, Appraisal Review Board and the Board of Directors. Complaints may not be addressed to any of the grounds for challenge and protest before the appraisal review board as set out in Section 41.03 and 41.41, Tax Code. The board intends that, whenever feasible, complaints and grievances are resolved at the lowest possible administrative level.

2. Correspondence shall be mailed to:  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
Sabine County Appraisal District  
P O Box 137 Hemphill, Texas 75948

(1) The complaint/grievance should be in writing, request placement on the board agenda, along with all documentation, and specify the subject matter to be considered. The request must state who will make the presentation.

(2) The complaint/grievance should be filed within 15 days of the event or series of events of which the complaint/grievance is alleged.

(3) The chief appraiser shall have 10 days following the receipt of the complaint to notify the individuals, delegations, or complainants of the date, time and place of the meeting.

(4) The chief appraiser shall provide the Board with copies of the original complaint/grievance, all responses, and any written documentation previously submitted by the individuals, delegations, complainants, and the administration.



The board is not required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously stated.

(5) The board's deliberations at its meetings with respect to complaints shall occur in open session, as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Article 6252-17, Tex.Rev.Civ.Stats.

(6) The chairman of the board of directors may set reasonable time limits. The Board shall hear the complaint/grievance and may request a response from the appraisal district. The District shall make an audio tape recording before the Board. The Board shall then make and communicate its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

**Exception:** However, if the grievance involves a complaint or charge against another District employee or Board member, it shall be heard in a closed meeting unless an open hearing is requested in writing by the employee or Board member against whom the complaint or charge is brought. The employee will have to follow the guidelines set out in the Employee Handbook adopted by the Board of Directors.

The board of directors shall make to the public and taxing jurisdictions information of public interest describing the functions of the board and procedures for filing and resolving complaints by the board.

The board of directors, at least quarterly and until final disposition of any complaint filed, shall notify the parties to the complaint the status of the complaint unless notice would jeopardize and undercover investigation.

Citizens will not be permitted to enter into discussion or debate as other agenda items are being considered by the board.

# **BOMB THREAT LEVEL I**

**Situation arises where no suspicious package or device has been found and the following facts are known:**

- 1 SCAD has not been vandalized, broken into and no alarms were set off the night or weekend of the bomb threat.
- 2 No known threats have been made against the district, administrators or staff members in the recent past.
- 3 The bomb threat sounded unrealistic, giggling or laughing was heard in the background.
- 4 The bomb threat call was short with no follow up calls.

## **Staff Member Answering the Call**

- 1 Document the bomb threat using the Bomb Threat Check List to identify voice, background noises, etc.
- 2 While caller is on the phone signal co-worker (with a pre-arranged signal) to alert the Chief Appraiser.

## **When a threatening call is received, ask the caller the following**

(You may catch them off-guard and they may answer some of the questions)

- 1 When is the bomb going to explode?
- 2 Where is it right now?
- 3 What does it look like?
- 4 What will cause it to explode?
- 5 Did you place the bomb yourself or did someone do it for you?
- 6 Why was it put in the building?
- 7 What is your name?
- 8 What is your address?

## **Chief Appraiser or Designee**

1. Notify the Hemphill Police Department **409-787-2777** from a different extension number or cell phone line.

## **Chief Appraiser or Designee**

- 1 Conduct a visual search of the common areas; restrooms, storage areas, etc to identify suspicious packages or devices.
- 2 If bomb threat calls continue to come in or circumstances develop that indicates a further developing threat go to **BOMB THREAT LEVEL II**
- 3 If a suspicious package or device is found contact the chief appraiser and the local police.
- 4 After search has been conducted and nothing has been found, return to normal functions.

**Cellular Phones, Pagers, Two Way Radios, Microwaves and/or other electronic devices are to be turned off and not used in the vicinity of the building.**

Bomb threats are delivered in a variety of ways. The majority of threats are called in to the target. Occasionally these calls are through a third party. Sometimes a threat is communicated in writing or by a recording. Statistics indicate if the caller is female, there is a greater chance the call **is not** a prank.

### **Two logical explanations for calling in a bomb threat are:**

- 1 The caller has definite knowledge or believes that an explosive or incendiary bomb has been or will be placed and he/she wants to minimize personal injury or property damage. The caller may be the person who has placed the device or someone who has become aware of such information.
- 2 The caller wants to create an atmosphere of anxiety and panic which will, in turn, result in a disruption of the normal activities at the facility where the device is purportedly placed.

Whatever the reason for the report, there will certainly be a reaction to it. Through property training, the wide variety of potentially uncontrollable reactions can be greatly reduced.

Experience shows a majority of bomb threats are perpetrated as a hoax and result in nothing more than a disruption of our routine. **However**, there is always a chance a threat may be authentic and appropriate action must be taken in each case.

All personnel, especially those who answer the telephone, must be instructed of the sequence of actions to be followed in the event a bomb threat is received.

Keep the caller on the line as long as possible and try to determine as many facts as possible.

## **BOMB THREAT LEVEL II**

Situation arises where no bomb or suspicious package has been found but recent development may put administrator on a higher level of alert; such as the following factors or combination of facts:

- 1 The CAD has been vandalized or broken into (alarm set off) the night or weekend before the bomb threat.
- 2 Known threats have been made against the CAD, administrator or staff member in the very recent past.
- 3 A detailed bomb threat is called in with extra follow up calls.

### **Staff Member Answering the Call**

- 1 Document the bomb threat using the Bomb Threat Report/Check List Form to identify voice, background noises, etc.
- 2 While caller is on the phone signal co-worker (with a pre-arranged signal) to alert the Chief Appraiser or Designee.

### **Chief Appraiser or Designee**

1. Notify Hemphill Police Department at **409-787-2266** from a different extension number or phone line.

### **Chief Appraiser or Designee**

1. Conduct a visual search of the common areas; restrooms, storage areas, etc to identify suspicious packages or devices.
2. If a suspicious package or device is found contact the police.
3. Evacuate the building or Shelter – In – Place.
4. Advise emergency personnel of the situation and follow their instructions. The Hemphill Police will notify Fire Department and/or bomb squads if necessary.

5. Upon review of conditions, police, fire and chief appraiser will determine when control of the building or parts of the building will be returned to normal conditions.

## BOMB THREAT REPORT FORM

**These questions are designed to keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Continue to ask the caller questions and wait for answers. Ask the caller to clarify his/her answers. Questions To Ask:**

Date call received: \_\_\_\_\_ Time call received: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number at which call was received: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Person making the report: \_\_\_\_\_ Job/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Did the voice sound Familiar? { } yes { } no If yes, who did it sound like:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Caller's**

### **Mood**

excited  calm  angry

**Caller's Voice**  male  female  loud  soft  raspy  rapid speech  slow speech  crying  laughing  normal  slurred  nasal  whispered  familiar  disguised  deep  accent

### **Background Noises**

music  radio/TV  machinery  street noises  clear/quiet  PA system  motor  local  static  other voices  street  animal  house

**Exact Wording of the Threat:** \_\_\_\_\_

Did the caller seem familiar with the layout of the building?  yes  no

Threatening Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate age of caller: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

# **SHELTER – IN – PLACE**

Sometimes conditions outside of the district office building threaten the safety of the SCAD employees; e.g. a fire creating toxic smoke, a toxic materials spill, etc. During these conditions, the staff should remain inside of the secured building with all of the building's openings sealed.

The purpose of “shelter in place” is to protect the staff by keeping them inside of the building while preventing toxic or hazardous chemicals from entering the building. H.V.A.C. systems should be shut down and tape or other items should be used to seal around doors and windows, etc.

In the event of a chemical release (HAZMAT) you will be contacted by the chief appraiser or designee and/or the police or fire department that a potentially dangerous situation exists and that you may need to shelter – in – place.

- Contact the chief appraiser/designee
- Turn off the HVAC System
- Begin sealing doors and windows where staff will be exposed
- Make an announcement to tell the staff to initiate shelter-in-place procedures.
- Do not allow anyone to leave or enter the building unless authorized by the chief appraiser, police or fire department personnel

## **Pre Shelter – in-Place Procedures**

1. Identify the area where staff will be housed.
2. Have a shelter-in-place kit by each door that will be sealed off.
3. Shelter – In – Place kit contents include
  - a) Pre-cut plastic to cover the doors
  - b) Duct tape
  - c) Towels (wet towels placed under doors to prevent some of chemicals from entering the building)
  - d) Portable radio with extra batteries
  - e) Flashlight

Traffic accidents happen and sometimes these happen with vehicles carrying hazardous materials and/or chemicals. An accident at a chemical plant or hazardous material stored near your building could also take place. If there is a release of a chemical substance into the air that is hazardous to your health and is possible life threatening there are two ways to protect yourself: evacuation or shelter-in - place

You need to be prepared in the event you are told to evacuate the building or are told to shelter - in - place. Having a disaster plan is the beginning to know what to do and knowing how to shelter - in - place. It is an important piece of information that everyone needs to know. The reason for sheltering in place is to ensure that you have the least exposure to any hazardous chemicals and/or materials that could possibly threaten your life and health.

The first and most important part of sheltering in place is finding a suitable room, inside the building with limited exposure to outside air.

When you go to shelter-in -place and after everyone is in the room,, the chief appraiser/designee will cover any windows or doors with plastic sheeting and tape, turn off the air conditioner and/or heater and any ceiling fans and place towels and/or rags around the bottom of the door.

The purpose of sheltering in place is to prevent contaminated air from entering the room. **STAY IN THE ROOM UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD BY THE CHIEF APPRAISER, POLICE OR FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL THAT IT IS SAFE TO COME OUT.**

**SHELTER - IN - PLACE**

**IT IS THAT SIMPLE!**



# **STAFF PUBLIC RELATIONS/CUSTOMER SERVICE**

In many areas customer satisfaction ultimately boils down to the customer's contact with frontline staff.

The Sabine County Appraisal District takes great pride in achieving the best results in public relations with the taxpayers in Sabine County. There will be times, however, when an individual may need to make an inquiry or file a complaint.

## **SELECTING AND PREPARING A GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE STAFF**

The first step for focusing staff on customer service is hiring the right people.

The Sabine County Appraisal District requires that the staff members greeting the public take the Public Relations Seminar along with other personnel that deal with the public. The district also has made available, customer surveys, which also rates the staff on how well the public is being treated. Surveys allow the Sabine County Appraisal District to quickly capture vital information with relatively little expense and effort and confront any problems that may seem to arise. The Sabine County Appraisal District on a monthly basis meets with staff members. The Chief Appraiser will go over any updates, changes, expectations of staff members, and attitudes. This will allow staff members to learn more about the organization and the work from interaction with coworkers.

## **STAFF STANDARDS**

The appraisal district staff believes that in dealing with the public effectively is to be diplomatic.

### **Diplomacy Rule #1: Don't Criticize**

Criticism is futile because it puts a person on the defensive and usually makes them strive to justify himself. Criticism is dangerous, because it wounds a person's precious pride, hurts their sense of importance, and arouses resentment. The bottom line is that criticism makes people feel bad. So don't do it!

The role to the Sabine County Appraisal District staff is to help someone and provide strategies for overcoming problems. That is, the staff will present solutions to the problems.

### **Diplomacy Rule #2: Be Appreciative**

Appreciation should be frequent. It should be both public and within the office atmosphere. Sincere appreciation is always welcome and wanted. Appreciating someone is as simple as saying thanks.

### **Diplomacy Rule #3: See the Other Person's Point of View**

Everyone is entitled to their own, sometime, misguided opinion. Every person has a unique point of view and that it's important to try to figure out WHY they say what they say.

It turns out that if you, the staff, are able to put yourself in the shoes of the taxpayer, it will help you to gain perspective. You'll understand the entire picture just a little better. It will also help you to show genuine concern, which will make the taxpayer feel like you are making an effort to listen and understand their position. Sometimes that's what the taxpayer needs – they just need to feel they have been heard.

After the staff has listened to the taxpayers it is then that the communicator gets their message across without upsetting them. The staff is about being honest without misrepresenting the truth. This means communicating in a way that makes a person feel the interaction was respectful and positive even though they may disagree with what you have told them.

### **Tip #1: Choose Your Words Carefully**

Word choices are extremely important to perceptions. When giving feedback, avoid aggressive language like, "You have to...", "Always...", "Never..." Instead try "You might consider," "I think it might be better if..." and "It looks like." Another strategy is to give your feedback in the form of a question: "Have you thought of changing..."

It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear.

### **Tip #2: Listen, Think, and Be Open**

The appraisal district staff should strive to not let the emotions get the best of them. If the taxpayer's viewpoint offended or angered you, it is important to take a step back, to take a moment to be as objectively as possible assess the situation and if the staff member feels like he/she needs to take a short break from the situation contact the Chief Appraiser to intercede.

### **Tip #3: Relax Your Body and Your Face**

Body language communicates a tremendous amount, so it's important to be relaxed, to be calm, and to have a conversational tone of voice. For those who have expressive faces, you'll need to practice maintaining eye contact with a neutral but pleasant facial expression. Remember to relax any parts of your body that can become tense during difficult discussions, like your hands, shoulders and brows. And finally, avoid waving your hands or pointing at someone, because this is at a minimum distracting, but could be perceived as aggressive.

The appraisal district strives to practice diplomacy wherever it goes whether it is in the office, out in the field and during Appraisal Review Board hearings.

### **Tip #4: Always treat the taxpayer as you yourself would want to be treated.**

## **Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public**

There are times when an individual may make an inquiry with the Sabine County Appraisal District or file a complaint.

When complaints or concerns occur, they should be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level through an informal process of cooperative agreement among the affected individuals. However, when the informal process fails to provide resolution, an individual is entitled to file a formal complaint and seek a review of any administrative decisions made by the Chief Appraiser to the Sabine County Board of Directors.

### **How to proceed with the informal process**

The Sabine County Appraisal District periodically distribute information in the local newspapers and forms that need to be completed regarding, exemptions, special valuations, reappraisal notices etc. Staff members may be contacted for informal help with specific concerns via the phone or at the front counter. All staff members should attempt to resolve the concern as amicably and expeditiously as possible. During this informal stage no records are required to be kept. If the district prepares anything in writing, a copy is kept.

The Sabine County Appraisal District has made available on its website at [www.sabine-cad.org](http://www.sabine-cad.org) additional links, phone numbers and contact information that would be beneficial to the taxpayers in the county.

## How to file a formal complaint

When a concern of complaint is not resolved through the informal process, you may initiate the formal complaint process outlined below.

Correspondence shall be mailed to:

Chairman, Board of Directors  
Sabine County Appraisal District  
P O Box 137 Hemphill, Texas  
75948

(7) The complaint/grievance should be in writing, request placement on the board agenda, along with all documentation, and specify the subject matter to be considered. The request must state who will make the presentation.

(8) The complaint/grievance should be filed within 15 days of the event or series of events of which the complaint/grievance is alleged.

(9) The chief appraiser shall have 10 days following the receipt of the complaint to notify the individuals, delegations, or complainants of the date, time and place of the meeting.

(10) The chief appraiser shall provide the Board with copies of the original complaint/grievance, all responses, and any written documentation previously submitted by the individuals, delegations, complainants, and the administration. The board is not required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously stated.

(11) The board's deliberations at its meetings with respect to complaints shall occur in open session, as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Article 6252-17, Tex.Rev.Civ.Stats.

(12) The chairman of the board of directors may set reasonable time limits. The Board shall hear the complaint/grievance and may request a response from the appraisal district. The District shall make an audio tape recording before the Board. The Board shall then make and communicate its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

The board of directors shall make to the public and taxing jurisdictions information of public interest describing the functions of the board and procedures for filing and resolving complaints by the board.

**Exception:** However, if the grievance involves a complaint or charge against another District employee or Board member, it shall be heard in a closed meeting unless an open hearing is requested in writing by the employee or Board member against whom the complaint or charge is brought. The employee will have to follow the guidelines set out in the Employee Handbook adopted by the Board of Directors.

The board of directors, at least quarterly and until final disposition of any complaint filed, shall notify the parties to the complaint the status of the complaint unless notice would jeopardize and undercover investigation.

Citizens will not be permitted to enter into discussion or debate as other agenda items are being considered by the board.

## **Open Records Request**

### **POLICY**

The Sabine County Appraisal District will fully comply with the Texas Open Records Law and will respond to the public requests as soon as practicable and without unreasonable delay, in the manner described below.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **1. Public records request procedure.**

The Chief Appraiser is responsible for coordinating public records requests made to the Sabine County Appraisal District. The Chief Appraiser and other staff as appropriate in fulfilling timely requests. All formal public records requests must be submitted in writing by fax or e-mail and directed to:

Director of Appraisal Public Records  
Request Attn:  
Tom Ince-Chief Appraiser  
P O Box 137 Hemphill, Texas 75948  
Phone: 409-787-2777 extension 22  
Fax: 409-787-4186 E-Mail: [sabinecad@windstream.net](mailto:sabinecad@windstream.net)

**2. Initial response to public records requests.**

After receiving a request for a public record or document, the Director of Appraisal will respond to the public records request as soon as practicable and without unreasonable delay. The district will respond with one or more of the following.

- A statement that the Sabine County Appraisal District does or does not have custody of the requested documents.
- Copies of all requested public records for which the Sabine County Appraisal District is exempted from disclosure.
- A statement that the Sabine County Appraisal District is the custodian of some responsive records, an estimate of time in which copies will be provided or inspection will be available, and an estimate of the fees the requestor must pay.
- A statement that the Sabine County Appraisal District is uncertain whether it possesses any requested records and that it will search for the requested records and respond as soon as practicable.

**3. Clarification of public records request.**

If the Sabine County Appraisal District receives an unusual request or the scope of the request is unclear, the appraisal district may request additional clarification before responding to the request.

**4. Charging for public records request.**

The Sabine County Appraisal District is allowed to recover their actual costs in fulfilling a public records request. If the estimated fee is greater than \$25, the Sabine County Appraisal District will provide the requestor with written notice of the estimated amount of the fee. In such instances, the public records request coordinator will not fulfill the request until the requestor confirms in writing that the requestor wants to proceed with the request despite the estimated cost.

**SABINE COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT  
OPEN RECORDS REQUEST FORM**

Requestor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_Work Home Mobile \_\_

**(Please provide the best telephone number(s) to reach you between the hours of  
8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Time)**

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby request the following under the PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT pursuant to

TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE Chapter 552:


Submit this request to the Sabine County Appraisal District P O Box 137, Hemphill, Texas, 75948. The fax number is (409) 787-4186. The phone number is (409) 787-2777.

**---Please let us know if you wish to receive your response in a special format or media. --**

NOTE: This form may be copied; however it should not be altered or modified from its existing content. Additionally, certain items requested may be exempted from disclosure under the law and certain costs may be assessed for providing copies of requested information. Please refer to rate schedule on page two.

**THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL Date**

Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Est. Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Records Available \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_

No (Check One) Reason for Unavailability: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Completing Records Request: \_\_\_\_\_

# MEDIA CONTACT LIST

Chief Appraiser: Tom Ince

[sabinecad@windstream.](mailto:sabinecad@windstream.com)

The Sabine County Reporter

409-787-2172

[screporter@yahoo.com](mailto:screporter@yahoo.com)

Toledo Chronicle

409-787-2172

[screporter@yahoo.com](mailto:screporter@yahoo.com)



## PUBLIC RELATIONS EVENTS TIMELINE

MONTH	EVENT
JANUARY TO DECEMBER	THE CHIEF APPRAISER SHALL ATTEND COMMISSIONER'S COURT, CITY COUNCIL, SCHOOL BOARD AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL BODY MEETINGS AND MEETINGS OF PROFESSIONAL GROUPS, NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER CONSTITUENT GROUPS, AS INVITED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND TESTIMONY ON MATTERS RELATED TO PROPERTY TAX POLICY. PICK UP DEEDS RECORDED AT COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE 2 TIMES A WEEK. ELECTRONIC PROPERTY TRANSACTION SUBMISSION DUE TO STATE COMPTROLLER BY THE END OF THE MONTH. REVIEW PRELIMINARY PROPERTY VALUE STUDY RESULTS FROM STATE COMPTROLLER'S WEBSITE
JANUARY	MAIL ANNUAL EXEMPTIONS APPLICATIONS/REAPPLICATIONS REQUESTS. PUBLICIZE UPDATED TAX INFORMATION IN NEWSPAPER. CHIEF APPRAISER TO CONDUCT STAFF MEETINGS ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE. BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING 4TH THURSDAY AND PUBLISH NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING ACCORDING TO PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT. CONTACT ARB MEMBERS AND GIVE THEM INFO ON TRAINING SEMINAR DATE.
FEBRUARY	CONDUCT AN INTERNAL SALES RATIO STUDY AFTER GATHERING SALES INFO FROM QUESTIONNAIRE'S DATA AND MLS SALES. CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE.
MARCH	CONDUCT AN INTERNAL SALES RATIO STUDY AFTER GATHERING SALES INFO FROM QUESTIONNAIRE'S DATA AND MLS SALES. CHECK VALUES ON RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES. CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE.
APRIL	PREPARE AND SUBMIT NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET FOR BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S AND ENTITIES FOR BOD MEETING, USUALLY 4TH THURSDAY IN APRIL AND PUBLISH NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING ACCORDING TO PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT. DEADLINE FOR BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY RENDITION- APRIL 15 <sup>TH</sup> AND AG-USE APPLICATION-APRIL 30 <sup>TH</sup> . CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE.
MAY	APPRAISAL WORK COMPLETE BY MAY 1 <sup>ST</sup> AND MAIL NOTICES OF APPRAISED VALUES TO PROPERTY OWNERS. PUBLISH IN NEWSPAPER ABOUT TAXPAYER PROTEST AND PROCEDURES. CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE.
JUNE	PUBLISH NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET IN NEWSPAPER AND SEND LETTERS TO ALL TAXING ENTITIES INCLUDING THE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND A COPY OF THE BUDGET AND BREAKDOWN TO EACH ENTITY. CONDUCT APPRAISAL REVIEW BOARD HEARING, USUALLY 4 <sup>TH</sup> WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY IN JUNE. POST ARB HEARING NOTICE ACCORDING TO PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT. CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE.
JULY	ARB MUST APPROVE CURRENT YEAR'S RECORDS AND THE CHIEF APPRAISER CERTIFIES TAX ROLL BY JULY 25 <sup>TH</sup> . BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING 4 <sup>TH</sup> THURSDAY AND PUBLISH NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING ACCORDING TO PUBLIC

## PUBLIC RELATIONS EVENTS TIMELINE

MONTH	EVENT
	MEETINGS ACT. CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE.
AUGUST	CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE. ASSIST ENTITIES WITH PREPARING EFFECTIVE TAX RATE WORKSHEETS IF NEEDED. AUGUST IS TYPICALLY THE MONTH THE FIELD APPRAISER TRAVELS IN THE TARGETED ZONES OF THE COUNTY TO INSPECT ALL IMPROVED PROPERTY FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR. ALSO EXPLAINS THE VALUATION PROCESS TO PROPERTY OWNERS, IF AVAILABLE DURING INSPECTION PHASE.
SEPTEMBER	CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE. FIELD APPRAISER CONTINUES IN THE DISCOVERY OF NEW VALUE AND MEASURES/COLLECTING DATA. ALSO EXPLAINS THE VALUATION PROCESS TO PROPERTY OWNERS, IF AVAILABLE DURING INSPECTION PHASE.
OCTOBER	BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING 4 <sup>TH</sup> THURSDAY AND PUBLISH NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING ACCORDING TO PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT. CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE. FIELD APPRAISER CONTINUES IN THE DISCOVERY OF NEW VALUE AND MEASURES/COLLECTING DATA. ALSO EXPLAINS THE VALUATION PROCESS TO PROPERTY OWNERS, IF AVAILABLE DURING INSPECTION PHASE.
NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER	CONDUCT STAFF MEETING ONCE A WEEK TO ENSURE PROPER CUSTOMER SERVICE. FIELD APPRAISER CONTINUES IN THE DISCOVERY OF NEW VALUE AND MEASURES/COLLECTING DATA. ALSO EXPLAINS THE VALUATION PROCESS TO PROPERTY OWNERS, IF AVAILABLE DURING INSPECTION PHASE.