



**POLICIES & PROCEDURES
FOR GOVERNMENT ACCESS PROGRAMMING
Village of Oak Park Television Channel 6
VOP-TV6**

Approved by the Village Board, January 19, 2000

Contents

- I. Relation to Cable Access Rules adopted by the Oak Park Access Corporation/Commission on August 19, 1991, entitled "Access Rules"
- II. Mission Statement
- III. Telecommunications Commission
- IV. Regulations Governing use of VOP-TV6
 - A. Purpose
 - B. Objectives
 - C. Channel Administration
 - D. Programming Statement
 - E. Program Type & Scheduling Priority
 - F. Programming Restrictions
 - G. Political Broadcasts
 - H. Access Policy

I. RELATION TO CABLE ACCESS RULES ADOPTED BY THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK ON AUGUST 19, 1991

The Access Rules adopted by the Village of Oak Park on August 19, 1991 are incorporated herein by this reference thereto, and the terms of the Access Rules shall apply hereto as if fully set forth herein. Notwithstanding the foregoing sentence, however, in the event of any conflict or discrepancy between the terms hereof and the terms of the Access Rules, the terms hereof shall govern and shall supersede the terms of the Access Rules.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of VOP-TV6, the Government Access Channel for the Village of Oak Park, is to provide the citizens of Oak Park with information about their government, community and quality of life.

III. TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

The Telecommunications Commission consists of representatives appointed by the Village of Oak Park Board of Trustees. VOP-TV6 staff works with the Commission to develop programming for the Government Access Channel. Commission members, all of whom are Oak Park residents, will also serve as liaisons between the citizens of the Village of Oak Park and VOP-TV6 to encourage use and viewing of the channel.

Issues concerning exceptions, variations, or modifications to this policy statement should be appealed to the Telecommunications Commission in accordance with the established dispute resolution procedures adopted by Village and the cable provider.

IV. REGULATIONS GOVERNING USE

A. Purpose

The purpose of these regulations is to provide guidelines for the use of VOP-TV6, the Government Access Channel provided by Oak Park's cable provider and to describe its use by the Village of Oak Park. VOP-TV6 is a government channel as provided for in the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984. This Federal legislation establishes government channels, educational channels and public channels for use by each of the corresponding broad groups. Because VOP-TV6 is a government channel, there is no legal requirement to broadcast any type of programming that is not government-sponsored. VOP-TV6 is committed to programming that helps residents learn more about Village programs, services, their neighbors and about important issues facing the area in general.

B. Objectives

1. To serve as an on-going source of government information for the citizens of Oak Park.
2. To increase public knowledge of the functions and responsibilities of Village government, and of the functions of the various departments, Commissions, Committees and Board.

3. To serve as an information center in the case of a local emergency situation; *i.e.*, weather, fire, crime, etc.
4. To supplement the ongoing communications between the Village of Oak Park and its audiences.

C. Channel Administration

VOP-TV6 is an operating branch of the Village Manager's Office. The Village Communications Director is responsible for programming activities and program schedules, which are established based on direction from the Village Manager and in accordance with guidelines recommended by the Telecommunications Commission and adopted by the Village Board.

D. Programming Statement

VOP-TV6 will provide information to the citizens of Oak Park concerning the functions, activities, programs and issues of the Village. The channel is not intended to be used as a political forum by an individual or group, nor as a mechanism for building exclusive support for a particular person, program or issue. Use of the channel shall be governed by the operating procedures as set forth herein, and by the rules of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as they may apply to operations of VOP-TV6.

The Communications Director reserves the right to review all programs, proposed and/or completed, to determine compliance with Programming Regulations and Channel Purpose, Objectives, Priorities, Restrictions, and Access Policy. Any program under consideration may be accepted as presented, may be turned down completely, or may be given conditional approval. In the case of conditional approval, a program may be deemed appropriate and worthy, except for stated objectionable or offensive program portions, which will be listed as needing revision or deletion from the program. The presenter of the program will then have the option of making all specified changes or withdrawing the program from consideration altogether. All submitted material must be provided in broad cast quality in technical standards determined by the Communications Director, and be accompanied by fully completed forms whenever applicable.

E. Program Type & Scheduling Priority

Programming on VOP-TV6 will fall into one of the following programming categories, listed by scheduling priority:

1. Emergency
May consist of live, taped or Alpha Numeric programming, shown at any time, as emergency dictates. The purpose of this programming will be to inform residents of emergency situations, and to instruct viewers in evacuation, detour, notification and escape procedures. In the case of an emergency, regularly scheduled programming may be interrupted or canceled. The content and scheduling of any emergency programming must be approved by the Village Manager.

2. **Broadcast of Village of Oak Park Board Meetings**
Live coverage of Village of Oak Park Board meetings takes place on a biweekly basis, or more often or less often as necessary. Meetings are aired gavel-to-gavel without editing or editorial comment, and may be rebroadcast.
3. **Broadcast of Village of Oak Park Advisory Commissions and Committee Meetings**
Live coverage of Village Board Advisory Commissions and Committee Meetings will be aired periodically based on location and staff and equipment availability. Meetings are aired gavel-to-gavel without editing or editorial comment and may be rebroadcast.
4. **Village of Oak Park Programming**
Includes programs and series produced or bought by the Village of Oak Park. Programs will be directly related to Village issues or Village government sponsored programs and services. Programs will be informative in nature.
5. **Oak Park Taxing Bodies and Quasi-Governmental Entities Programming**
Includes programs and series produced or bought by taxing bodies located in Oak Park and Oak Park quasi-governmental entities except educational institutions. Programs will be directly related to Village issues or local taxing bodies or quasi-governmental sponsored programs and services. Programs will be informative in nature. Oak Park taxing bodies and quasi-governmental entities are: Oak Park Township, Oak Park Park District, Oak Park Library, Oak Park Visitors Bureau, Oak Park Arts Council, Oak Park Development Corporation, Oak Park Housing Authority/Residence Corporation, and Oak Park Regional Housing Center.
7. **County, Regional, State and National Governmental Programming**
Includes programs and series produced or bought by county, regional, state and national governments. Programs will be directly related to Village of Oak Park issues or governmentally sponsored programs and services available to Oak Parkers. Programs will be informative in nature.
8. **Other Government Related Programming**
Other government related programming from outside sources may be telecast on VOP-TV6. Such programming will be screened for suitability and compliance with channel purpose, objectives, access regulations, and programming restrictions, and is subject to approval by the Communications Director for scheduling on VOP-TV6. Programs will be directly related to Village issues or governmental sponsored programs and services. Programming by any individual or entity not an official branch of the Village of Oak Park may be allowed if the event or program to be taped or shown is co-sponsored by the Village of Oak Park or other Oak Park governmental bodies. Examples of additional eligible sources of other government programming include National

League of Cities, National Fire Prevention Association, and the Chicago Transit Authority.

9. VOP-TV6 Bulletin Board

Alpha-numeric is a bulletin board style service used to display Village government related messages to the public. Message content and decisions on message suitability will be governed by channel purpose, objectives, access regulations and programming regulations and is subject to approval by the Communications Director.

F. Programming Restrictions

1. The Village of Oak Park recognizes the programming content restrictions imposed on VOP-TV6 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Regulations, by prevailing community standards, and by applicable Federal, state and local laws. In particular, VOP-TV6 will not cast, or allow to be cable-cast, any programming containing the following:

- a. Paid advertising material in which commercial appeals for funds are made. Grants for programming purposes shall not be considered as advertising. Paid advertising material includes, but is not limited to, advertising by or on behalf of a candidate for public office or program material made available without charge by persons, corporations, or institutions which have a commercial interest in the subject matter. This provision shall not prevent the identification of persons or institutions providing grants or contributions to underwrite the cost of programs unrelated to the commercial interests of the donor or to programs which have a public interest overriding the private commercial interests.
- b. Copyrighted material, unless clearances for use have been obtained, and written proof of such clearance can be presented.
- c. Programming which is prohibited by applicable Federal, state or local laws.

2. In the case of programs deemed to be worthy of social or artistic value, but also containing some program content or language that may be considered offensive to some viewers, the following message may be run prior to the program, and during any natural program break:

“The following program has been deemed worthy of cable-cast on VOP-TV6, but contains language or other program content that may be offensive to some viewers. Viewer discretion and parental guidance are advised.”

G. Political Broadcasts

1. Declared candidates for any elective public office, political incumbents and persons advocating any cause, viewpoint or policy, proposed or otherwise, will not be eligible to appear on VOP-TV6. Candidate forums, candidate debate/discussions, and “town hall” meetings will not be aired on VOP-TV6. Candidates for public office or incumbents may appear on VOP-TV6 if the appearance is incidental to presentation of the subject matter; or in coverage of official Village meetings such as Village Board, Village Advisory Commissions or Committees. VOP-TV6 and the Communications Director will make every effort to ensure that any appearance by any political candidate or incumbent on VOP-TV6 will abide by these restrictions, and will tailor such appearances so as to minimize the fact of their candidacy.

H. Access Policy

VOP-TV6 is a Government Access Channel, as outlined in the Federal Cable Communications Act of 1984, created for the dissemination of government-related information to the viewing public. Access to the channel may range from submitting a public service announcement for the VOP-TV6 billboard, to putting in a request for event coverage, to working side-by-side with VOP-TV6 to produce a program or program series. In each case, proper procedures must be followed before access will be provided.

1. VOP-TV6 Bulletin board Procedures
 - a. All Village departments may submit public service messages to be displayed in alpha-numeric form on VOP-TV6 during non-programming hours. All messages must be submitted in writing, and must be submitted at least five working days prior to the requested start date. Publicity Request Forms for this service are available from the Communications Director.
 - b. Messages submitted by a Village department must be approved by the Communications Director.
 - c. Messages are input by the VOP-TV6 staff on a “character generator” and appear on the TV screen a “page” at a time. Messages should be concise, and should contain basic information concerning what, when, where, how, and how much. Messages should be limited to approximately eight brief lines. If necessary, the VOP-TV6 staff will edit the message to improve readability, to make it fit on one page, or to insure message is grammatically correct.
 - d. All submitted messages must be accompanied by the name and phone number of a contact person, and whether or not that information is to appear in the

message. Submissions should include desired start and end dates.

- e. No classified ads or commercial messages will be allowed.
- f. Submission of a public service message request does not in any way guarantee its appearance on VOP-TV6. Suitability for this channel and compliance with Village policies will be determined by the Communications Director. The date of input and the length of run of any message will be determined by staff availability and channel capacity.
- g. Every attempt will be made to input all messages received by VOP-TV6 from Village departments. In the case that channel capacity is at a peak, messages will be carried a maximum of three days each, and on a first-come, first-served basis, with the following priorities:
 - i. Emergency and public service notification messages, originated by Police, Fire or Village Manager's Office;
 - ii. Announcements ordered by the Village Board;
 - iii. Announcements ordered by the Village Manager;
 - iv. Announcements submitted by Village Department Heads,
 - v. Announcements submitted by Village Advisory Commissions or Committees

2. Event Coverage Procedure

- a. To request live or taped coverage of an event by VOP-TV6, the applicant must contact the Communications Director for a VOP-TV6 Project Request Form.
- b. Applicant will be required to provide the name, date, location and purpose of the event. They must also provide details that the taping crew will need to know in advance about the location, activity, etc., and whether or not the event will further the channel objectives and guidelines.
- c. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all on-site approvals and off-site permissions for taping. This includes permission from property or business owners, performers, event coordinators, etc. Approvals should all be obtained in writing prior to submitting the VOP-TV6

Project Request Form. The Communications Director may ask for proof of approvals prior to considering the request, and will require applicant to sign a statement that necessary clearances have been secured. The project request form must be approved by the Village Manager, including approval of the production costs to be incurred by VOP-TV6.

- d. It will be the applicant's responsibility to pay any extra costs incurred by the production, including, but not limited to, all admittance fees, artwork and graphics, union or other professional association fees, clearance fees, royalties and permission fees.
- e. The VOP-TV6 Project Request Form should be submitted a minimum of twenty (20) working days prior to the scheduled event.
- f. A request originating from any Village department must be approved by the Village Manager.
- h. Submission of a VOP-TV6 Project Request Form does not in any way guarantee approval of applicant's request.
- i. Completed programs and all work footage shall be the sole property of the Village of Oak Park.

3. Village Hall, Council Chambers and Control Room/Studio Usage Procedures

- a. Video Equipment in Village Hall, Council Chambers and Control Room/Studio may only be used by trained personnel, with the permission of Communications Director. A Project Request Form must be submitted in advance.
- b. Allowed use of Village Hall or Council Chambers for meetings, discussions, informational sessions or other forums, when granted by the Village's policy regarding the use of Village Hall does not include or imply use of video equipment for broadcast or taping. To request coverage for activities held in Village Hall or Council Chambers, applicants must follow Event Coverage Procedures as outlined under Article IV (Regulations Governing Use), Section H (Access Policy), Item 2 (Event Coverage Procedures).

4. Portable Equipment Usage Procedure

Only trained personnel may use portable video equipment with the approval of the Communications Director. Portable equipment owned

by the Village of Oak Park is not available for public use. A VOP-TV6 Project Request Form must be submitted a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the date requested for use.

5. The Communications Director will consider each Bulletin Board, Event Coverage, or Usage Request based on:
 - i. Compliance with Village policies including all VOP-TV6 Policies and Procedures;
 - ii. News or entertainment value;
 - iii. Availability of staff and resources;
 - iv. Availability of equipment and facilities;
 - v. Capabilities of staff and equipment

6. Emergency Procedures

Emergency programming is to be originated by the Village Manager's Office, Police, Fire, Public Works or other emergency personnel and authorized only by the Village Manager or designee. Only trained personnel are allowed to access the equipment to broadcast an authorized emergency bulletin. Under no circumstances will access to VOP-TV6 for emergency communication be granted to anyone who does not have the proper authority to initiate procedures.