

# Ethics Commission Fact Sheet:

## Lobbyist Contacts



**This fact sheet describes “lobbying contacts” under the San Francisco Lobbyist Ordinance and explains how to count them. Understanding lobbying contacts helps in determining whether to register as a lobbyist and what to disclose in monthly lobbyist reports filed with the Ethics Commission.**

### Modes of Communication

A lobbying contact is any communication with a City officer to influence a local legislative or administrative action for which you are paid. All modes of communication are covered:

- In-person meetings, telephone calls, video conferences, texts, letters, faxes, and emails; and
- Communications with City staffers who you should expect will relay the conversation to the City officer, including departmental deputies and legislative aides.

### Exceptions

Some communications with City officers are not considered contacts. For example, it is not a contact when you are:

- Making public comment or providing written testimony for a public hearing;
- Requesting to meet with a City officer, without making an attempt to influence;
- Making statements or providing testimony, as compelled by law;
- Providing information to the public by making a speech, appearing on TV, etc.
- Distributing information to members of your organization;
- Responding to RFPs or RFQs, without other contacts; or
- Communicating on behalf of a labor union for City employees regarding a collective bargaining agreement.

For a complete list of exceptions, see the Ethics Commission’s [Lobbyist Manual](#).

### Counting Contacts

Lobbyists must disclose each lobbying contact on their quarterly reports; therefore, it is important to count such contacts accurately. Generally, the number of contacts depends on:

- How many legislative or administrative actions are discussed;
- How many people you are meeting or otherwise communicating with; and
- When the communication is made.

Each communication to influence local legislative or administrative action can generally be considered a contact. Specifically:

- Each time you meet with ONE City officer regarding ONE local legislative or administrative action counts as ONE contact (i.e., 1 Action/1 Officer = 1 Contact; 2 Actions/1 Officer = 2 Contacts, etc.).

Exception: a meeting with a City officer several times in one day about the same local legislative or administrative action will still count as ONE contact.

- Each City officer you meet about ONE local legislative or administrative action counts as ONE contact (i.e., 1 Action/1 Officer = 1 Contact; 1 Action/2 Officers = 2 Contacts, etc.).

Exception: a meeting with a City officer and his or her staff member(s) about ONE local legislative or administrative action will still count as ONE contact.

NOTE: a communication about ONE real estate project is considered ONE local legislative or administrative contact.

Last Updated 12/8/14