

Social Media Policy Template

Internal Policy

Purpose

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for **[Municipality]**, to address the quickly-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online. Municipal departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. **[Municipality]** encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the Municipality and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

Personal vs. Professional Guidelines

Personal Use

[Municipality] employees may have personal social media sites. These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. Following this principle helps ensure a distinction between sharing personal and **[Municipality]** views.

[Municipality] employees must never use their **[Municipality]** e-mail account or password in conjunction with a social media site. The following guidance is for **[Municipality]** employees who decide to have a personal social media or who decide to comment on posts about official **[Municipality]** business:

- State your name and, if relevant, role, when discussing **[Municipality]** business;
- Use a disclaimer such as: "The postings on this site are my own and don't reflect or represent the opinions of **[Municipality]** for which I work."

If social media is used for official **[Municipality]** business, the entire **[Municipality]** site, regardless of any personal views, is subject to best practice guidelines and standards.

Professional Use

All official **[Municipality]** -related communication through social media should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with **[Municipality]**'s communications policy, practices, and expectations.

Employees must not use official **[Municipality]** social media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities.

[Municipality] employees should be mindful that inappropriate use of official **[Municipality]** social media can be grounds for disciplinary action.

Only individuals authorized by **[Municipality]** may publish content to a **[Municipality]** website or **[Municipality]** social media account.

Posting

Official social media sites need to be clear, precise and follow industry best practices for posting updates. All content posted to **[Municipality]** social media should be:

- Relevant – Information that engages residents and pertains to their daily lives
- Timely – Pertains to deadlines, upcoming events, or current news. Use dates and avoid terms such as “today”, “tomorrow”, “next week”...
- Actionable – Prompts residents to take action

Please refer to the **[Municipality]** style guide for specific guidelines on content format.

What Not to Post:

[Municipality] employees may not publish content on **[Municipality]** social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information
- Copyrighted material without permission
- Profane, racist, sexist, threatening, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM

Retention

Social media sites are subject to public records laws. Any content produced or maintained on a **[Municipality]** social media site, including communication posted by **[Municipality]** and communication received from citizens, is a public record.

The department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to the relevant records retention schedule in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily producible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.
- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e. ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.
- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.
- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g. PDF).
- Each employee who administers one or more social networking sites on behalf of **[Municipality]** has self-service, read-only access to search and produce relevant social media records to fulfill public information and legal discovery requests as needed.

Registering a New Page

All **[Municipality]** social media sites shall be (1) approved by [contact], (2) published using approved social networking platform and tools, and (3) administered by the contact or their designee.

Deregistering an Existing Page

If a social media page is no longer of use, (1) notify [contact], (2) ensure records have been archived according to **[Municipality]** guidelines, (3) unpublish and delete page.

External Policy

Purpose

To build communication and trust with our residents and visitors, and encourage participation through comments and feedback.

Goals

[Municipality] aims to effectively use Social Media Accounts to:

- Provide information
- Support community engagement and outreach
- Support marketing and promotional campaigns
- Frame the public conversation around **[Municipality]**
- Assist with recruitment efforts

Please be aware that when engaging with **[Municipality]** through Social Media, you agree to the following:

Moderation of Third Party Content

[Municipality] does not necessarily endorse, support, sanction, encourage, verify, or agree with Third Party comments, messages, posts, opinions, advertisements, videos, promoted content, external hyperlinks, linked websites (or the information, products or services contained therein), statements, commercial products, processes, or services posted on any Social Media Site.

[Municipality]'s social media site serves as a limited public forum and all content published is subject to preservation and disclosure in accordance with New Jersey Public Record Law. User-generated posts may be rejected or removed when the content includes any of the following:

- incitement of violence or violent behavior,
- defamation or spread of misinformation,
- copyrighted or commercial material fraudulent material or accusations, or
- obscene or illegal material.

We do not allow information intended to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems. You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.

Retention

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the Agency and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to [applicable public records statute]. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (e.g. digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule.

Emergency Postings

Social media sites are not monitored 24/7. If there is an emergency, contact 911.