




City of Concord
Policy Memorandum

Subject: Social Media Use Policy

Date: January 13, 2012

Distribution: All City Employees

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Approved: 
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Purpose of Policy

Social Media allows the City of Concord to reach citizens and inform them of services provided in a new way as well as creating a mechanism for immediate feedback. However, the City has a responsibility to manage the conduct of its employees when the conduct occurs in the course of employment. Employees may have legitimate City business-related reasons to utilize social media and in order to protect the interests of the City of Concord and its employees; the following standards have been established.

Applicability

This policy applies to every employee, whether full-time, permanent part-time, part-time, seasonal or in a volunteer capacity, currently employed by the City.

For purposes of this policy, social media sites are defined as third party hosted online technologies that facilitate social interaction and dialogue, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, RSS, My Space, Flickr, Linked In, You Tube.

City-Owned or Created Social Media

- All City Department social media sites directly or indirectly representing to be an official statement of the City must be created pursuant to this policy and be approved by the City Manager or his/her designee.

- The Department head is responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites created pursuant to this policy.
- The City's primary and predominant internet presence shall remain www.concordnh.gov and no other Web site, blog or social media site shall characterize itself as such. Whenever possible a social media site shall link or otherwise refer visitors to the City's main Web site.
- Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is a public service to provide information about City programs, services, projects, issues, events and activities.
- The Departments shall not discriminate against public speech on its social media sites based on content or viewpoint. However, Departments shall remove the following prohibited content from City social media sites when possible:
 1. Comments not topically related to City programs, services, projects, issues, events and activities, or the particular post being commented upon
 2. Posts and comments that promote or advertise commercial services, entities or products except as provided for in the City's enterprise funds and determined by the City to be essential to economic development
 3. Political statements, including comments that endorse or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions
 4. Religious statements, including comments that endorse or oppose any type of religious opinions or activities
 5. Posts and comments that promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, ethnic/national origin, citizenship, pregnancy, veteran's status, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
 6. Posts and comments that include vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language, personal attacks or unsupported accusations
 7. Obscene or sexual content or links to obscene or sexual content Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity
 8. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party

The Departments shall display these guidelines to users or make them available by hyperlink. **CAUTION:** Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available.

**If it is not technically feasible to remove the content, the Department shall monitor and shall take appropriate action.*

- All City Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal and state laws. This includes adherence to

established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention and privacy laws.

- An employee may not characterize him or herself as representing the City, directly or indirectly, in any online posting unless pursuant to a written policy of the City or the direction of a supervisor.
- Employees representing the City via its social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City. Employees should use their names and the City Department which they represent, unless otherwise approved to post using a pseudonym or alias.
- In addition to this policy, Employees representing the City shall comply with any and every other applicable City policy including but not limited to:
 1. Internet/Email Policy
 2. Prevention of Harassment and Illegal Discrimination Policy
- Employees that fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to discipline.
- Employees are required to speak with their supervisor before responding to media inquiries about postings on the Department's social media site.
- All social media sites will be administered as follows:
 1. The Information Technology Director will maintain a list of all city social media sites, including login and password information.
 2. Employees and officials will inform the Information Technology Director of any new social media sites or administrative changes to existing sites.

Non-City Social Media Sites:

- An employee may not characterize him or herself as representing the City, directly or indirectly, in any online posting unless authorized by a Department Head.
- The use of a City email address, job title, official City name, seal or logo shall be deemed an attempt to represent the city in an official capacity. Other communications leading an average viewer to conclude that a posting was made in an official capacity shall also be deemed an attempt to represent the city in an official capacity.

- In the event an employee chooses to identify him or herself as a City employee in a personal posting, or the identity of an employee on a social media site is apparent, the employee or official should clearly state that he or she is posting in a private capacity. Please understand that some readers may nonetheless view the employee as a spokesperson for the City. Because of this possibility, employees are asked to use a disclaimer anywhere there may be uncertainty about the capacity in which they are acting. A sample disclaimer is as follows: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent the views or opinions of my employer" can help protect the employee.
- Employees posting on a social media site shall take reasonable care not to disclose any privileged, proprietary, confidential, sensitive or personally identifiable information acquired by the employee by reason of the employee's employment or City intellectual property on social media websites. All laws and regulations with regard to protected health information, patient privacy, and the conduct of criminal investigations must also be strictly followed. Employees assume all liability and risk associated with their personal use of social media sites, including but not limited to claims for defamation and harassment.
- Employees' personal social-networking sites must remain personal in nature and shall not be used for work-related purposes. Employees shall not use the City's e-mail account in conjunction with a personal social networking account.
- It is not the intent of these provisions to prohibit employees from discussing with one another wages, hours and other terms and conditions of their own employment.
- An employee's use of social media sites may not violate the City's policies, including but not limited to:
 1. Internet/Email Policy
 2. Prevention of Harassment and Illegal Discrimination Policy

Any violations must be reported to supervisors, managers or the Human Resources Department in accordance with the City's policies. Supervisory staff must use particular caution when interacting with employees on social media sites to ensure that direct/indirect notice of violations received by the supervisor are reported in accordance with the City's policies.

- Employees may not post photographs of other employees, clients, vendors or suppliers, as well as photographs of the organization's business or at organizational events on social networking sites, except

where the events occur in public settings where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy or the subjects photographed have granted express authorization.

- Members of supervisory staff are permitted to utilize social media as part of a background check on potential candidates for employment with express authorization by the Director of Human Resources or the City Manager.

Personal Use of Social Media Policy During Work Hours

The occasional personal use of social media during work hours is acceptable, so long as it is not excessive or unreasonable and it conforms to all other city policies, including the internet/email policy and harassment/illegal discrimination policy.

Discipline for Violations

All violations of this policy should be reported to supervisors, managers or the Human Resources Department. The City reviews reports of violations of the social networking policy and other related policies. Violation of the organization's social networking policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Discipline or termination will be determined based on the nature and factors of any social networking post. The City of Concord reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in prohibited or unlawful conduct. If you have any questions about this policy or a specific posting on the web, please contact Human Resources.

Training and Acknowledgment

Employees are required to sign a written acknowledgement that they have received, read, understood and agreed to comply with the organization's social networking policy and any other related policy.

Training shall be conducted at time of hire, at any time this policy is modified, and at implementation.