



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PM-62-27

Section: 62-00, MISCELLANEOUS PERSONNEL POLICIES

I. PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for responsible use of websites, blogs, networking sites, and other social media. The purpose of this policy is not to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information, but to minimize the risk to the City of Memphis Government [hereinafter “the City”] and its employees.

This policy applies to all employees and appointees in all City Divisions, its Boards and Agencies regardless of classification or status, and includes all programs that are paid through or receive Federal Grant and/or contract funds; hereinafter collectively referenced as employee.

II. POLICY

All employees are responsible for maintaining the City’s positive reputation and presenting the City in a manner that safeguards its reputation, employees, managers and shareholders. In general, employees who participate in social media are free to publish their own personal information without censorship by the City subject to this policy and other applicable City policies, rules, regulations and guidelines. However, the official spokesperson for the City is the Mayor’s Communications Office. Employees are prohibited from acting as a spokesperson for the City or posting comments as a representative of it.

A. EMPLOYEE PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

The City recognizes the growing importance of online social media as a communication tool and respects the right of employees to use these mediums during their personal time in accordance with City policy.

- Use of these mediums during company time or on company equipment is prohibited.
- Employee posts are subject to all other the City policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines.
- The City is free to view and monitor an employee’s posts, website or web log at any time without consent or previous approval.
- Employees must avoid posting information that could place the City at competitive or legal compliance risk.
- If an employee chooses to identify him or herself as a City employee on any social media, he or she must state in clear terms that the views



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expressed are the employee's alone and that they do not reflect the views of the City.

B. THE CITY SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

The City maintains a presence on social media sites that are deemed appropriate for informing the public. These pages are maintained by Information Services, the Mayor's Communications Office or designated employees; however, employees are encouraged to participate on these pages while representing themselves personally, following the guidelines of this policy.

No social media account or website may be created on behalf of the City of Memphis, including any division, department, agency or Board, without prior authorization from the Mayor's Communications Office. All social media accounts or websites must primarily serve to communicate to the public regarding its purpose and services, and/or to provide information.

Any employee of a division, department, agency or Board who is designated to operate social media accounts or a website is responsible for ensuring its content adheres to all applicable City of Memphis policies. Questions about whether content is appropriate should be directed to the Mayor's Communication Office before blogging/posting.

Administrative access to all social media accounts must be given to the Mayor's Communications Office. No division/department/agency is permitted to share city business/news on social media accounts that is confidential or not appropriate for public viewing.

C. PROHIBITED DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

There are some types of information employees are not permitted to discuss or display online, including information that is confidential or proprietary to the City, or to a third party that has disclosed information to it.

For example:

1. Information about or identifying co-workers; its customers, partners, vendors, and suppliers; or
2. The City intellectual property such as drawings and/or designs, software, ideas, and innovation.



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3. Statements disparaging the City, its employees or citizens in the community it serves.
4. The City's logo on any social media network without permission. Also, images of co-workers and the City premises and property.
5. Statements, comments, or images referencing illegal drugs, criminal activity, or profanity that could be considered obscene.
6. Statements, comments, or images that disparage any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin. Also, any communication that engages in personal or sexual harassment, unfounded accusations, or remarks that would contribute to a hostile work environment (racial, sexual, religious, etc.). As well as, any behavior not in agreement with the City's Standards of Ethical Conduct Policy or general policies.

Nothing in this section shall be interpreted or applied as limiting an employee's right to engage in protected concerted activity as provided by the National Labor Relations Act.

III. PRECEDURE

Following are the guidelines for starting an approved City Social Media Site:

1. All written requests must first be approved by the relevant Division Director(s).
2. Make a written request to the Mayor's Communications Office at communications@memphistn.gov containing
 - a. The relevant division
 - b. The proposed handle or name for the site
 - c. The purpose for the site
 - d. The type of content that will be shared on the site
 - e. The name and contact information for the administrator of the site
3. The Mayor's Communication Office will advise whether request is approved.
4. If approved, the site administrator must provide the Mayor's Communication Office with all pertinent login information including, but not limited to, all user names, passwords, back up emails, etc. within 24 hours of creating the site or changing login information. Also, a City email must be listed as a backup email to the site for purposes of changing or recovering lost or misplaced user names or passwords.



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IV. RESPONSIBILITY

Employees will be subject to discipline for any social media posting that violate this policy or where the City determines the posting is detrimental to it. Employees will be held responsible for the disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or proprietary the City information, information that violates the privacy rights or other rights of a third party, or the content of anything posted on any social media. Further, employees may be liable for monetary damages for such disclosure. The nature of any social media posting and degree of harm to the City will be factors in determining whether discipline will be imposed and the severity of any such discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

V. DEFINITIONS

Social Media: Online, electronic, or Internet media, tools, communicates, and spaces for social interaction, sharing user generated content, or public or semi-public communication. Social media typically uses web-based technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogs. Social media can take many different forms, including Internet forums, blogs, and microblogs, online profiles, wikis, podcasts, pictures and video, email, text, instant messaging, music-sharing, and chat, to name some. Examples of social media include but are not limited to the following: websites, blogs, internet comment sections, LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, Wikipedia, YouTube, Twitter, and Skype.

Blogging/Posting: Making an entry into a online journal or forum that is accessible to users of the forum, blog or Internet.