

Social Media Policy

Purpose

The following policy pertains to official (“Town”) and non-official (“Personal”) use of social media services and tools.

The Town permits the use of social media sites as a means to disseminate information from the Town to the members of the public. Consequently, the Town has both an expectation and a responsibility regarding the integrity and presentation of information posted on its social media sites and the content that is attributed to the Town, its Departments and its officials.

Definitions

“Social media sites” means content created by individuals using publishing technologies through and on the internet. The types of content and examples of services to which this policy applies include, but are not limited to:

- Media Sharing - Examples: YouTube, Flickr, iTunes
- Blogging/Microblogging - Examples: WordPress, Blogger, Twitter
- Social Networking - Examples: Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Ning
- Document and Data Sharing Repositories - Examples: Scribd, SlideShare, Socrata
- Social Bookmarking - Delicious, Digg, Reddit
- Widgets - Examples: Google Maps, AddThis, Facebook "Like"

“Town social media sites” means social media sites and content which the Town establishes and maintains, with the exception of content from advertisements or hyperlinks provided by the social media site’s owners, vendors, or partners. Town social media sites do not replace the Town’s required notices and standard methods of communication.

“Posts” or “postings” means the content, information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication posted on a Town social media site.

Guidelines

1. The establishment of Town social media sites is subject to approval by the Department Head, the Town Manager or his/her designee.
2. The Town reserves the right to edit the content of or terminate any Town social media site at any time without notice.
3. The content of Town social media sites shall only pertain to Town-sponsored or Town-endorsed programs, services, and events. Content includes, but is not limited to, information, photographs, videos, and hyperlinks.
4. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies. This includes, but is not limited to laws pertaining to Copyright and Fair Use.
5. Any content maintained on a Town social media site that is related to Town business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be considered a public record.
6. Employees representing the Town on Town social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative of the Town and in accordance with all Town policies. These policies include but are not limited to the Town’s Ethics Policy and the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention policy.

7. Postings must contain information that is freely available to the public and not be proprietary or confidential as defined by any Town policy or state or federal law.
8. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the Town's social media sites shall review, be familiar with, and comply with the social media site's use policies and terms and conditions.
9. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the Town's social media sites shall not express his or her own personal views or concerns through such postings. Postings shall only reflect the views of the Town.
10. Town social media sites should use authorized Town contact information for account set-up, monitoring and access. The use of personal email accounts or phone numbers by any Town employee is not allowed for the purpose of setting-up, monitoring, or accessing a Town social media site.
11. Absent prior authorization, postings to Town social media sites shall NOT contain any of the following:
 - Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or ballot measures;
 - Profane language or content;
 - Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, military services, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws;
 - Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - Solicitations of commerce;
 - Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

Non-official/personal use

Town employees who use social media and social networking services and tools for strictly personal use outside of the workplace do not require approval to do so. However, the Town recognizes that these types of tools can sometimes blur the line between professional and personal interactions. Therefore, employees are reminded that as representatives of the Town of Reading the above rules and guidelines must be taken into consideration when participating in these services at any time, particularly when identifying themselves as employees of the Town or when context might lead to that conclusion. Employees should use discretion and common sense when employing social media to help prevent inadvertently compromising professional, legal, or ethical standards.

Employees should refrain from using social media services and tools for personal use while on work time or when using Town provided equipment, unless it is work-related as authorized by the Department Head. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using social media sites at the workplace, or when using Town computers, systems or other technology. The Town reserves the right to access, view and act upon any information on its computers, systems or other technology without notice.

In a publicly accessible forum, Town employees may not disclose any Town-related information that is not already considered public information. This rule applies even in circumstances where password or other privacy controls are implemented. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action. This policy does not, however, prevent Town employees from discussing the terms or conditions of their employment, unfair labor practices, or otherwise exercising their rights to collective bargaining.

Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy may result in any or all of the following:

- Limitation or revocation of individual or unit rights to use or participate in Town-related social media;
- Removal of posts or social media accounts; and/or
- Corrective or disciplinary actions and sanctions, as defined in the Town Personnel Policies

Policy Changes

The Town reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.

Adopted by the Town Manager 2-19-13