

City of Waco

A. Purpose

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, City of Waco departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

The City of Waco has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of City Social Media Sites.

B. Scope

This policy applies to all civil service, full-time regular, part-time, temporary and seasonal employees as defined in City of Waco Policy CMP-1.

C. Definitions

1. **SOCIAL MEDIA SITES** – Third party websites which allow for the creation of content and dialogue around a specific issue or area of interest, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
2. **CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES** – Those pages, sections, or posting locations in Social Media that are established or maintained by an employee of the City who is authorized to do so as part of the employee's job and that are used to conduct City business, communicate with office holders, or city staff, and/or communicate with or gather feedback from residents and other interested persons.
3. **CITY SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT** – Information, images, or photographs posted or provided to a City Social Media Site by a City employee or authorized representative when such activity is a part of the employee's job duties.
4. **SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT** -- Information, images, or photographs posted or provided to a Social Media Site.

D. Policy

1. **CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITE**
City Social Media Sites may contain information that represents, or may create the appearance of representing, the City's position on policy issues and/or the positions of its leadership. No employee may create or maintain a Social Media Site that purports or appears to be a City Social Media Site without the permission of that employee's department director and the Municipal Information Office. Before any employee or department representative creates a City Social Media Site, approval must be sought

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from the Municipal Information Office. The request must state the business necessity for the City Social Media Site. For any City Social Media Sites currently in existence, the department must submit a request within 30 days of the effective date of this policy.

Once a City Social Media Site is approved by the Municipal Information Office, the following information must be shared with the Municipal Information Office:

- a. All City Social Media Site login and password information (in the case of Facebook, you may make the Municipal Information Office an administrator of the site instead of providing the password);
- b. Any changes to the login and password; and
- c. The names of any employees who are authorized to maintain the City Social Media Site or to post City Social Media Content ("Administrators").

The Municipal Information Office may disable a City Social Media Site and prohibit posting of any City Social Media Content to a site any time and for any reason, including any violation of this policy, unprofessional use of this resources, lack of use or disinterest by the public, or a department's failure to maintain the site.

2. PUBLIC RECORDS

City Social Media Sites create city records that are subject to the Texas Public Information Act and document retention rules of the state of Texas. Each departmental records administrator shall ensure that such records are retained and archived in conformance with Texas law.

3. POSTING ON CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Employees creating, maintaining, or posting Social Media Content on the City Social Media Site:

- a. Must at all times conduct themselves as representatives of the City of Waco and in accord with all the City of Waco Employee Policies and Procedures and other departmental or management rules or directives;
- b. Will follow these guiding principles:
 - i. Unless the employee is posting or responding as the City Social Media Site Administrator, the employee should maintain transparency by using his/her given name and job title and clearly stating the employee's role regarding the subject;
 - ii. Use correct grammar and spelling;
 - iii. Avoid jargon;
 - iv. Write and post only about the employee's area of expertise;
 - v. Keep postings factual and accurate;

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- vi. Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. When disagreeing with others' opinions or providing comments, do so in a meaningful, respectful, and relevant manner;
- vii. Understand that postings are widely accessible, not retractable, and retained or referenced for a long period of time; all content should be carefully considered;
- viii. Ensure that Social Media Content does not violate another person's privacy interests;
- ix. Refrain from posting Social Media Content that is proprietary, copyrighted, attorney-client privileged, subject to state or federal privacy laws, and information not subject to the Texas Public Information Act;
- x. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties with whom the City may be in litigation without the approval of the City Attorney or the City Manager;
- xi. Refrain from the expression of personal opinions or positions regarding:
 - (a) programs or practices of other public agencies, political organizations, private companies, or non-profit groups;
 - (b) political campaigns; or
 - (c) Religion.

4. DESIGN AND CONTENT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Membership by the public in a City Social Media Site should not be required in order for the public to post on the site. If this is not possible on a particular City Social Media Site, then a City e-mail contact must be posted as an alternative for posting comments.

City Social Media Sites should be focused and limited in scope and topic. Sites that are limited in scope and topic are "limited forum" sites. Sites that do not limit the topic of discussion are "open forum" sites.

- a. The following should be clearly posted on any City Social Media Site:
 - i. A clear statement of the intent, purpose, and subject matter of the site;
 - ii. City contact information; and
 - iii. The link to the City of Waco website.
- b. In addition, City Social Media Sites that permit interactivity with the public, comments, or postings should post clear statements of the following:
 - i. All content and postings are subject to public disclosure;
 - ii. Disclaimer that postings do not necessarily reflect the views or position of the City;

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- iii. The site is not monitored 24 hours a day and that in case of an emergency the public should call 911;
- iv. The City reserves the right to delete completely or hide, when necessary and as soon as is feasible, any posting that involves:
 - (a) Advertisements or content that is commercial in nature;
 - (b) Obscenity or profanity;
 - (c) Content that promotes, perpetuates, or fosters discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital status, and/or gender identity;
 - (d) Sexual content;
 - (e) Content that implies, promotes, or encourages illegal activity;
 - (f) Content that is contrary to the safety of City employees or the public;
 - (g) Content that opposes or supports political candidates or propositions;
 - (h) Content unrelated to a particular posting by the City; or
 - (i) Content that violates the legal ownership of another party.
- c. In addition, for City Social Media Sites that are limited forum sites and permit interactivity with the public, comments, or postings, the following statement should be clearly posted:

The City reserves the right to delete completely or hide, when necessary and as soon as is feasible, any posting unrelated to the purpose and topical scope of the page.

Each posting on a City Social Media Site shall contain a clear statement of the discussion topic introduced for public comment so that the public is aware of the limited nature of the discussion.

Links placed on City Social Media Sites should only be to a resource on the City's website, a city-owned website, a state, federal or local government site, an educational website, or an organization with an official partnership or supportive business relationship with the City. Exceptions to this rule will be at the discretion of the Municipal Information Office.

5. EMPLOYEE TIME SPENT MAINTAINING OR CREATING CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Non-exempt employees who serve as City Social Media Site Administrators shall work on the City Social Media Site (monitoring, creating, maintaining, or posting) only during normal office hours unless specifically pre-approved in writing by the employee's supervisor. Any time spent in excess of a 40-hour work week by a City Social Media Site Administrator monitoring, creating,

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maintaining or posting on a City Social Media Site will be paid overtime in compliance with federal law and City policy.

6. USE BY BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS

Due to open meetings requirements, individual members of a city board or commission are prohibited from participating in postings or discussion threads on City Social Media Sites created and maintained by the department or group of which they advise.

With permission of the City Attorney or the City Manager, a department may set up an online message board or similar Internet application that complies with Texas Government Code Section 551.006. If such an online message board or similar Internet application is created and after training of that board and commission on use of the site, members of that board or commission may post on that site in compliance with Texas Government Code Section 551.006.

Failure to comply with any aspect of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.

E. Responsibilities

1. Department Heads are responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring that employees are aware of this policy for creating and maintaining City Social Media Sites;
 - b. Deciding who is authorized to serve as a City Social Media Site Administrator and designating appropriate access levels;
 - c. Ensuring that content that is inappropriate or violates this Policy is not posted on the City Social Media Site established and maintained by the Department; and
 - d. Ensuring that approval is sought from the Municipal Information Office prior to the creation of a City Social Media Site.
2. Employees are responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring that all contributions to City Social Media Sites adhere to this policy.

F. Procedures

Procedures located in the policy section above.

G. Revision History

New Policy