

POLICY MANUAL

Title: Social Media	Policy No: 30.10 (Rev. 3) Supersedes: Rev. 2 (Oct. 31/14)
Authority: <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational Approval: <input type="checkbox"/> Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CMT <input type="checkbox"/> General Manager	Effective Date: March 15, 2021 Review Date: March 15, 2022
<p>Background Statement:</p> <p>The City of Maple Ridge seeks to engage citizens and provide information through a variety of print and digital channels. The City understands that Social Media, in its many forms, has become a common form of engagement and communication that citizens are using to interact with each other, and their City.</p> <p>The term ‘Social Media’ describes the use of digital communications tools that focus on interactivity, immediacy, user participation and information sharing in multiple ways. Citizens have increasingly adopted social media on their portable devices to interact and receive information dynamically throughout the day.</p> <p>The launch of the City of Maple Ridge website, www.mapleridge.ca, and the use of email has created news ways for citizens to interact with elected representatives and City staff. The City uses social media assets to inform, educate and engage with citizens on the day-to-day operation of the City and to seek input on policy and program development.</p> <p>By participating in Social Media conversations, the City can engage citizens in real time and amplify important messages from the City and other levels of government. By adding Social Media to the communications and engagement tools used by the City, we can improve the quality of service to citizens by increasing transparency of operations and immediacy of responses to questions, requests and comments. Social Media also offers the capacity to deliver time sensitive information widely and quickly (i.e. emergency communications).</p> <p>This Policy seeks to define how the organization will manage interactions on social media as well as define the accountability for City staff in their interactions on social media.</p>	

Purpose:

This Policy applies to City employees with regard to their participation in City Social Media sites or any Social Media conversation related to the business of the City of Maple Ridge, or to the professional portfolio of the employee. It also sets out guidelines for curation and oversight of conversations on City sites.

Key Principles:

- 1 The City's social media interactions will show **respect** for our citizens' privacy and rights;
- 2 The City will keep the interactions **factual**;
- 3 The City will be **transparent, open** and **objective** in our interactions;
- 4 The City will provide links to **credible** and more detailed sources of information to support our interactions when possible;
- 5 The City will publicly **correct** any information that we have communicated that is later found to be in error, and do so in a way that acknowledges the error;
- 6 The City will be **forthright** about our relationships, opinions and identity;
- 7 The City will **respect the rules and terms of use guidelines of the Social Media platform** (i.e. Facebook Terms of Use, Twitter Terms of Use, etc.);
- 8 The City will **protect privacy and permissions** and move interactions off line to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of citizens;
- 9 When the City moderates interactions, a poster's **opinion will be respected and accepted** regardless of whether it is positive or negative, provided that the opinion is 'on topic' and not offensive, denigrating, or out of context;
- 10 Employees of the City will conduct themselves in accordance with the 'City of Maple Ridge Employee Guidelines on Social Media Use' (Appendix A). Employees are required, as a condition of employment, to adhere to these Guidelines and the City's Human Resources Department will ensure that employees are briefed on these guidelines and implications of non-compliance; and
- 11 The City reserves the right to immediately restrict or remove any content or users deemed in violation of this Policy or any applicable law.

Harmonizing Social Media Activity With Other Communications Channels:

The City of Maple Ridge website, www.mapleridge.ca, will remain the City's primary and dominant digital communications and engagement platform.

Content provided to the Social Media Site Administrator should, when possible, refer users to links at www.mapleridge.ca so that the public can access detailed information, relevant forms and other documents related to the post. Content on Social Media posts should be consistent with information provided through other communications channels such as print advertising, media releases or publications available to the public. Links and content from external sources will, as much as possible, be aggregated to the City website.

Definitions:

City means the City of Maple Ridge.

Employees means the employees of the City of Maple Ridge.

Partner Organization refers to groups whose work is funded in whole or in part by the City of Maple Ridge or groups that work under the umbrella of the Community Festival Network.

Post means the term used to describe a message that is placed on a social media site.

Posters means anyone who places text on the City's Social Media sites.

Social Media means Internet and mobile-based tools used for sharing and discussing information, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Social Media describes the convergence of telecommunications, computing and social interaction to allow people to interact and share their opinions, photographs, videos and links to material from a wide variety of sources. The broad definition of Social Media currently includes message boards, blogs, video posting sites, photo posting sites, social networks, forums and online customer chat sites.

Social Media Sites used by the City of Maple Ridge currently include Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram and YouTube.

Social Media Site Administrator means the individual responsible for the oversight of the City's Social media policy and is designated to approve posting of material on the City's Social Media sites.

Social Media Moderators means the employees of the City of Maple Ridge who have been appointed to speak on behalf of the City and post content on the City's Social Media sites. The Social Media Moderators will be identified as 'organizational' users on Social Media sites making it clear that they are speaking on behalf of the City.

Staff means an employee of the City of Maple Ridge.

City Social Media Site Postings

Postings will consist of communications that support the City's Vision, Mission, Value Statements and Council's Strategic Priorities.

Social Media sites may be used for:

- 1 Announcements, such as community or public events organized by the City or partner agencies/organizations, and engagement not subject to legal processes as defined by the Municipal Act (e.g. the Public Hearing process);
- 2 Links to information or media releases relating to programs and initiatives of the City;
- 3 Photo or video galleries of community events or gatherings;
- 4 Information on volunteer opportunities and programs from partner agencies/organizations of the City;
- 5 Links to career postings for employment at the City; and
- 6 Public safety information from the RCMP, Maple Ridge Fire Department or Emergency Operations personnel as approved by Site Administrators.

Social Media sites will not be used for:

- 1 Hosting of conversations relating to issues that will be dealt with through public hearings or other official consultations. These processes are subject to specific legislative processes and have statutory conditions and obligations.
- 2 Platforms for campaigning during local, provincial or national elections or referendums. Postings by elected officials, prospective or declared candidates or their supporters will be removed immediately for the period of 60 days prior to the relevant election.

The City will post 'Terms of Use' statements on Social Media sites, where possible, to ensure the content guidelines described above are clearly understood. Where there is no 'terms of use' or 'about' section for a social media platform, this policy will serve as the default 'terms of use' (see **section Moderation of Social Media Content & Terms of Use Statement**).

The Social Media Site Administrator and Social Media Moderators may disclose titles and roles within the City, as well as 'official' contact information, such as City telephone numbers and email addresses, as is the practice in media releases and print advertising. Personal contact information for City staff will never be posted on Social Media sites.

Posters must understand that any comment posted online is permanently available to the public and open to being reposted or published in other media. Personal privacy, libel, copyright and private-sector data protection laws apply.

If an error is made on a post, accurate information will be reposted by a Social Media site administrator or Social Media moderator as quickly as possible with an acknowledgment of the error. It is critical that City interactions are transparent and honest. Using the term 'UPDATE' or 'REVISED' in front of a re-post, as well as a comment post to indicate that information has been updated is a respectful and 'best practice' for interacting with the public.

Employees who have more than one identity on Social Media sites (i.e. a 'work' identity and a 'personal' identity) must understand that they are bound by their obligations of confidentiality and accountability for ALL comments made in Social Media, not just those made on 'official' City Social Media outlets. All employees should be aware that personal comments may be misinterpreted as official City comments and therefore use social media responsibly. See the 'City of Maple Ridge Employee Guidelines on Social Media Use' attached to this policy for clarification. Concerns involving inappropriate interactions by a member of Council are dealt with as part of the Council Conduct Bylaw process.

Moderation of Social Media Content & Terms of Use Statement

Comments on the City's Social Media site posts are welcome. The Social Media Site Administrator monitors all posts.

The Social Media Site Administrator or Social Media Moderators will respond to comments as quickly as possible.

Comments or Posts containing the following forms of content will be reviewed and may be removed at the discretion of the Social Media Site Administrator or Moderators.

The following points will serve as the City's 'Terms of Use Statement' for social media sites and serve as the guidelines for site moderation:

- 1 Comments not topically related;
- 2 Profane language or inappropriate emojis, gifs or other content;
- 3 Content that violates the City of Maple Ridge *Respectful Workplace Policy No. 30.11* or violates the *British Columbia Human Rights Code*;
- 4 Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- 5 Solicitations of commerce unrelated to the work of the City or partner organizations;
- 6 Repetitive, multiple postings or 'spam' by the same user;
- 7 Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- 8 Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- 9 Content that violates the legal ownership interest of any party;
- 10 Comments that contain insults or disparaging comments about the general public, other posters, City staff or Council members;
- 11 Content that violates our Public Hearing rules or other official consultations that are part of defined legislative processes; and
- 12 Comments that cannot be attributed to an individual, where the identity of the person writing the post is obscured or unclear.

If a discussion is moved off the Social Media site due to privacy matters, a post will be made to inform others that the matter has been dealt with.

The City of Maple Ridge moderates the interactions on all social media sites and moves quickly to remove content that violates the 'Terms of Use Statement' thereby ensuring that our channels model the highest values of respectful engagement. Each site has different tools to moderate conversations. Where the capacity exists, the City will enable automatic tools to remove posts with profanity and words and phrases that are inconsistent with the 'Key Principles' outlined in the policy. Where moderators find inappropriate content they will take immediate action to remove the offending content, and if the content is particularly egregious, the user may be banned.

If a person finds that their post has been removed or hidden, they are encouraged to email communications@mapleridge.ca for an explanation.

If a person is banned from a City social media site they are encouraged to contact the City of Maple Ridge at communications@mapleridge.ca for an explanation. A person may have their ability to interact with City social media sites restored if they agree, in writing, to abide by the Terms of Use Statement guidelines in their future interactions. A second violation of the terms may result in a permanent ban from the City's social media sites.

Post threads relating to service delivery questions or issues of concern to citizens should be brought to the attention of the Social Media Site Administrator, Manager of Corporate Communications and General Manager as quickly as possible for review to determine if any action needs to be taken.

Key Areas of Responsibility

Action to Take

- | Action to Take | Responsibility |
|--|---|
| 1 Users of the City's Social Media sites will be provided with training to ensure compliance with and adherence to: | All Staff |
| a All applicable federal and provincial laws, regulations and policies including copyright and privacy provisions; | All Staff |
| b The Terms of Use posted on each of the City's Social Media sites; | All Staff |
| c City policies, guidelines and guiding principles; and | All Staff |
| d Observation of the City's Information Technology security protocols in all Social Media interactions. | All Staff |
| 2 Establish corporate standards for online communication on Social Media. | By This Policy |
| 3 Understand and adhere to the City's Social Media Policy and Employee Guiding Principles. | All Staff |
| 4 Assignment of a Social Media Site Administrator to speak on behalf of the City of Maple Ridge. | CAO or designate |
| 5 Train and manage the team of Social Media Moderators. | Manager of Communications |
| 6 Assignment of Social Media Moderators to assist in the monitoring of City Social Media Sites and make posts and respond to enquiries consistent with this Policy. | Manager of Communications |
| 7 Coordinate training sessions for Social Media Moderators and other related employees on use of the City's Social Media sites. | Social Media Site Administrator in collaboration Manager of Communications |
| 8 Ensure that all employees using the City's Social Media sites are aware of this Policy and Employee Guiding Principles. | Human Resources ED or designate |
| 9 Approval of all content that will be put on City Social Media sites including posts, photos, video and links. | Social Media Site Administrator or designates |
| 10 Monitor feedback and participation on Social Media sites, and respond to posts in a timely and appropriate manner in accordance with this Policy and Employee Guiding Principles. | Social Media Site Administrator and/or Social Media Moderators |
| 11 Maintain the security of the City's Social Media tools with respect to login information and passwords, proprietary information, content and confidentiality in accordance with policies set out by the City Information Technology Department. | Chief Information Officer |

<p>12 Imbed contact information for the City, and ensure this information is prominently displayed at all times on all City Social Media sites.</p>	<p>Social Media Site Administrator</p>
<p>13 Imbed Terms of Use statements, which outline the terms of use as noted in this Policy, on all Social Media sites as there is the capacity to do so.</p>	<p>Social Media Site Administrator and Social Media Moderators</p>
<p>14 Daily review of the City's Social Media sites (a minimum of once a day) to ensure posts are in compliance with this Policy and Employee Guiding Principles.</p>	<p>Social Media Site Administrator or designate</p>
<p>15 Approval of surveys or solicitations for input from the public on non-legislative issues.</p>	<p>Manager of Communications</p>
<p>16 Posting to the City's Social Media Sites, will, as much as possible, be done by the Social Media Moderator who has the greatest knowledge of a topic.</p>	<p>Social Media Site Administrator Social Media Moderators</p>
<p>17 Decision making on limiting access or banning users from interacting on City Social Media Sites.</p>	<p>Manager of Communications and Social Media Site Administrator</p>
<p>18 Working with citizens who have been banned from City Social Media sites to restore access based on compliance with this policy.</p>	<p>Manager of Communications</p>

APPENDIX A

City of Maple Ridge Employee Guiding Principles on Social Media Use

Purpose

The purpose of the City of Maple Ridge Employee Guiding Principles on Social Media Use is to provide greater guidance on the appropriate behaviour and ensure that an employee's posts will not expose the City to legal problems or public embarrassment. These guiding principles provide specific expectations around the core values and principles outlined in the City's Social Media Policy 30.10.

The City of Maple Ridge monitors the social media channels in the community as a regular function of the day-to-day Communications and Community Engagement work for the Policy and Leadership teams of the City of Maple Ridge. To ensure appropriate use of social media by employees, the employer may monitor employee social media use.

These guiding principles do not provide an exhaustive list of every activity that is permitted or not – no such list could cover the complexity of employees' social media activity. Employees are expected to make ethical choices, use their best judgment as it relates to the use of social media both personally and in the course of their employment. If an employee is unclear regarding a specific situation then the employee should seek the advice and direction of their supervisor or manager. Employees should also ensure all social media activities are consistent with the expectations outlined in the City's Code of Conduct and use common sense in any online activity that might impact their employment commitments to the City or their role as a representative of the City.

Key Principles

As employees and as individuals, our social media activity for official business and for personal matters, may impact public trust and confidence in the individual as well as the City. It's important for the public to be confident that employees are delivering their work in an ethical, non-partisan and professional way. For these reasons, we all have a shared responsibility to ensure our presence online separates personal interests from professional obligations to avoid conflict and support the work of the City and reflects well on our fellow employees, our leadership group, our elected representatives and our fellow residents.

Employees' social media activity can affect the employer's reputation, image and the respect of the community towards our peers. Employee statements on social media can result in employer liability related to a number of issues including defamation, harassment, discrimination, access to inappropriate or illegal material such as pornography and, in some cases, workplace injury. If an employee's conduct harms the employer's reputation or significantly impairs the employment relationship, such conduct may be deemed to be misconduct and the employee could be subject to discipline, up to and including, termination of employment.

Social Media

Social media encompasses a broad range of online sites, services and activities. Social media includes a variety of blogs, as well as sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram

and Pinterest. Social media use and activity plays a role in the personal and professional lives of most employees in one form or another.

Your Online Identity

In many cases, the line between personal and professional use of social media can become blurry. Furthermore, once an item or activity is captured in the social media sphere, it may be accessible indefinitely. Interactions on social media channels, even in closed groups, should be treated as public interactions. This is one of the reasons it is so important for employees to ensure they are professional, courteous and respectful at all times.

Employees need to remember that:

Referencing the City's name or attaching your City email address to any post or communication may imply that you are acting on the City's behalf.

Listing work affiliation on a social network site automatically requires the employee to ensure all communications and postings on that network are professional and appropriate in the context of the work as being professional in nature and governed by this and other City policies.

Remember that, in many cases, there may not be a clear line between your work life and your personal life. Always be honest and respectful in both capacities.

Your Personal Social Media

Personal social media use includes:

- While at work (on work time) for personal use (e.g. using Facebook during work hours);
- While outside of work hours on your own computer or device (off duty conduct);
- Posting about your work or coworkers on your personal social media accounts;
- Using work equipment (e.g. social networking using your work-issued computer or cell phone) even if it is for personal use;
- Using workplace social media (e.g. intranets).

Your Social Media Conduct

When an employee's conduct either "on or off the clock" negatively impacts the employer or its employees, it then becomes the employer's business. Employers have a right to protect their assets, investments, reputation and brand, and they have a duty to provide a safe and harassment free working environment and to ensure employees are not engaged in behavior inconsistent with the Code of Conduct including conflict of interest.

Examples of social media misuse by employees:

- Venting about their work experiences on their social media profiles;
- Privacy and confidentiality breaches;
- Workplace policy breaches;

- Human rights violations (such as discriminatory, insulting, or inflammatory comments in relation to racial, religious, gender or sexual orientation-related content);
- Workplace harassment and violence incidents;
- Threats to an employer's business and reputation;
- Insubordination;
- Dishonesty;
- Actions undermining the employer or the employment relationship;
- Actions creating defamation exposures and breaches of intellectual property rights.

Social media conversations are expected to follow the conventions of polite discourse. They should be carried on in a constructive and good-natured manner and should focus on the issues being discussed rather than the individual making the comment. Personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Employee Responsibilities

It is up to you whom you choose to add as connections on social media, most particularly during personal time. These are personal choices and vary widely between individuals. If your own personal policy is to not add work colleagues or to keep your social media circle small, politely communicating that may be helpful but it is not required.

If employees interact with colleagues on social media (for example, by having people as “friends” or “contacts” in their social media account), they should consider the impact those interactions may have on the workplace environment and the City’s commitment to maintaining a respectful workplace. You need to determine whether your interactions with colleagues are meeting acceptable social standards that contribute to a positive and respectful workplace for everyone.

Things to Consider

Even where an employee attempts to separate their personal online activities from their professional identity, an employee may not be able to control the actions of others and what they do, or how they comment on social media. In making choices about social media use, employees are expected to use common sense in any online activity. These activities may impact their employment commitments to the City. Remember, too, that expectations for employees, such as those regarding confidentiality and respectful workplace, will apply regardless of the size of the audience you’re talking to.

Employees should be mindful that online pseudonym are often easily connected to the individual’s real identity. People often underestimate how easily this can happen and the consequences. Employees should also not rely on the privacy settings of third party sites like Facebook, over which they have limited control and which may change over time.

Employees should also use the upmost of caution as it relates to settings such as “tagging” to ensure any material posted about or involving you is appropriate before granting permission.

Questions and/or Concerns

It is important to speak up if you have a question or concern. How you do that may depend on the situation.

If you have a concern or need additional guidance about your personal or professional use of social media, speak with your supervisor or Human Resources. The best approach is to exercise caution and take a conservative approach....if in doubt, stop and seek clarification.

Conclusion

Social media can be an excellent way of connecting with the community and colleagues. Your interactions on social media create a digital footprint for you that will follow you from the time you began engaging on social media until the end of your career.

In that context you should look at what you are saying and reflect on how the things that you say or do on social media will be viewed as you move forward in your personal and professional life. Think of your digital footprint as an online resume that you are curating with each interaction. Look on your social media from the lens of 'does this reflect my values and aspirations as a person?' How do my interactions reflect on my family, my friends and my coworkers?

Accountability is the cornerstone of these guiding principles. Your City has invested in your training and professional development. You are a valued member of this team and these guiding principles are intended to protect the City's investment in you, your skills, your talents and your service.