



CITY OF WATAUGA – PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY TITLE	Social Media
INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE	July 25, 2016
LAST REVISION DATE	Replaces <i>Section 27.12</i> of the Personnel, Administration and Financial Policies and Procedures Manual approved on February 24, 2014.
POLICY NUMBER	14.03

OBJECTIVE

The City endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange, streamline processes, and foster productivity. This policy establishes the City’s position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

SCOPE This policy applies to all employees.

POLICY

Social media provides a new and potentially valuable means of assisting the City and its personnel in meeting community outreach, problem-solving, investigative, crime prevention, and related objectives. This policy identifies potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by administrative and supervisory personnel. The City also recognizes the role that these tools play in the personal lives of some City personnel. The personal use of social media can have a bearing on City personnel in their official capacity. As such, this policy provides information of a precautionary nature as well as prohibitions on the use of social media by City personnel.

A. Definitions

1. **Designated Administrator:** The Chief Information Officer is designated as the city-wide administrator of all social media sites.
2. **Blog:** A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions or comments. The term is short for “Web log.”
3. **Page:** The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

4. **Post:** Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
5. **Profile:** Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.
6. **Social Media:** A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat), micro-blogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo- and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).
7. **Social Networks:** Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information and socialize with others using a range of technologies.
8. **Speech:** Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape or other related forms of communication.
9. **Web 2.0:** The second generation of the World Wide Web focused on shareable user-generated content rather than static web pages. Some use this term interchangeably with social media.
10. **Wiki:** Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.
11. **Department personnel:** Any City employee or volunteer who is representing the City or a Department of the City in any capacity.

B. Department Use of Social Media

1. Set Up Requirements
 - a. Where possible, each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the department's presence on the website.
 - b. Where possible, the page(s) shall link to the individual department's official website or to the City's main website
 - c. Where possible, the City's standard logo shall be used. Derivatives of the logo are not allowed.
 - d. Where possible, the City's standard slogan shall be used. Derivatives of the slogan are not allowed.
 - e. Social media page(s) shall be designed specifically for the target audience.
2. Procedures

- a. All department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the City Manager or his or her designee before being activated.
 - b. A department social media site shall be maintained by a departmental designee, designated in writing by the Department Manager.
 - c. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the department and shall have department contact information prominently displayed.
 - d. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations and policies, including all information technology and records retention policies. Content is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the Texas Public Information Act. Relevant records retention schedules apply to social media content. Content must be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with open records laws and e-discovery laws and policies.
 - e. Whenever possible, social media pages shall maintain a one-way form of communication (City to public) wherein a visitor's ability to post comments is disallowed.
- 3. Department personnel representing a department via social media outlets shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the department and City, and accordingly, shall adhere to all department and City standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
 - 4. Department personnel shall identify themselves as members of the department and City.
 - 5. Department personnel shall not disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos without the express written permission of the Department Head and/or City Manager.
 - 6. Department personnel shall not conduct political activities or private business on City social media, websites, pages, blogs, or any similar digital medium. Department personnel shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark and service mark restrictions when posting materials. If in doubt, contact the Chief Information Officer.

C. Personal Use of Social Media

- 1. Barring state or federal law, or binding employee contracts to the contrary, City personnel shall abide by the following when using social media.
- 2. Employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of the City for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the City.
- 3. As public employees, City personnel are cautioned that speech on or off duty, made pursuant to their official duties – that is, that owes its existence to the employee's

professional duties and responsibilities – is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the City. City personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and the City.

4. Employees shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information or any confidential information to which they have access solely as a result of their employment without written permission from the City Manager or his or her designee. For safety and security reasons, City personnel are cautioned not to disclose their employment with the City and are cautioned not to post information pertaining to any member of the City without their permission. This includes the use of the City logo, uniforms, or other similar identifying items on personal social media pages.
5. Employees shall adhere to the City's "Code of Ethics" Ordinance when posting to personal social media pages.
6. Employees may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority, make any statements, speeches, appearances or endorsements, or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of the City without express authorization.
7. Employees should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the City at any time without prior notice.
8. City time and equipment should not be used for updating social media sites, including updating personal pages or profiles. Time spent on social media sites should be limited in the same manner as time spent on the telephone or internet when conducting personal business.
9. Employees may not use the City's logo, letterhead or other identifying material including pictures of themselves or co-workers wearing or displaying the City's logo.
10. Employees may not post discriminatory, defamatory, libelous, or slanderous comments when discussing the City, its governing body, supervisors, and employees.
11. Employees must comply with City policies and personal sites may be monitored to determine compliance with City policies.

D. Violations and Misuse

Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.