

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY #12.0.14**

### POLICY STATEMENT

The County of Wetaskiwin considers social media to be an important and integral part of marketing and communication for the County of Wetaskiwin. Social media will be used to augment traditional communications methods and drive traffic to the County of Wetaskiwin website, which is the main source for information regarding County of Wetaskiwin programs and services.

This policy is administered by the Communications Officer, within the office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

#### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the County's social media procedures and govern social media use by County employees.

Councillors are governed by the Social Media for Council Policy #11.0.6.

#### 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. "County" refers to the County of Wetaskiwin No. 10.

2.2. "Social media" refers to forms of electronic communication, such as websites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. Examples of social media include, but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat.

2.3. "Approved County Social Media Site" refers to social networks that the County Chief Administrative Officer has assessed and approved for use by County Departments.

2.4. "Website" refers to the County's official website.

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## **3. PROCEDURES**

- 3.1. This policy applies to all County employees and specifically to County employees who have been authorized to post information on behalf of the County on designated social media sites.
- 3.2. County departments creating content on the County website will be able to share that content to the approved County Social Media Site. The Communications Officer and/or Information Services staff will review and approve content submitted by the department for upload to the social media site.
- 3.3. Department Directors, or their designates, are responsible for determining who is authorized to update the County website, and thereby the social media site, on behalf of the department, and for designating appropriate access levels via Information Services.
- 3.4. The same standards, principles, policies and guidelines that apply to County employees in the performance of their assigned duties apply to social media use.

## **4. OFFICIAL COUNTY OF WETASKIWIN SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

- 4.1. County Social Media sites shall be created and maintained in accordance with County standards and with identifiable characteristics of an official site which shall include the County logo. County identifiable structures may be permitted and all official sites shall include accurate contact information for the County Administrative Office.
- 4.2. When planning to use a social media channel, equal consideration must be given to the following:
  - 4.2.1. The County’s Vision, Mission and Core Values and alignment with the County’s policies.
  - 4.2.2. Schedule 1, Social Media Best Practices.
  - 4.2.3. The reputation and ability of the social media channel to reach the intended audience.
  - 4.2.4. The approach to be used in content moderation and the moderator tools provided by the social media platform.
  - 4.2.5. Risks and issues regarding Public Relations, including County reputation, Information Management and Technology, freedom of information and protection of privacy, and legal liability, including the protection of copyright and intellectual property, that may be incurred by the County and users accessing the social media channel.
  - 4.2.6. That County content, including images and video will likely be downloaded, shared and re-used in other ways on other sites, altered or re-posted to the same or other sites, and the County will ensure this risk is acceptable for all content posted to these sites.

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- 4.3. The County will post, monitor, respond, contribute to or seek to influence social media conversations in a manner that is identifiable as being made by or on behalf of the County by authorized spokespeople. County Social Media sites will be monitored during regular administration office hours as set out in the Office Hours Policy #12.0.2 and during County emergency situations as determined by Administration.
- 4.4. Visitors and users of County social media channels shall be informed of the rules of engagement or participation standards, with respect to abusive, hateful, defamatory, anonymous and other inappropriate comments or content, including information that jeopardizes the privacy of others. A clear statement shall be posted or linked so that the public is aware that inappropriate posts are subject to removal, including but not limited to the following types of postings regardless of format:
- 4.4.1. Comments not related to the County of Wetaskiwin, its programs or affiliates.
  - 4.4.2. Profane language or content.
  - 4.4.3. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regards to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
  - 4.4.4. Sexual content or links to sexual content.
  - 4.4.5. Unreasonable solicitations of commerce.
  - 4.4.6. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
  - 4.4.7. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
  - 4.4.8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
  - 4.4.9. Comments relating to specific election candidate campaigns, platforms or opinions.
  - 4.4.10. Defamatory comments regarding staff or Council.
  - 4.4.11. Contain spam, advertising or include links to other sites.
  - 4.4.12. Clearly off topic, and/or disruptive.
  - 4.4.13. Promote particular services, products or political organizations.
  - 4.4.14. Infringe on copyrights or trademarks.
  - 4.4.15. Violate any County of Wetaskiwin policies.
  - 4.4.16. Personnel information.
- 4.5. Any content removed based on the guidelines in Section 4.4 must be retained, including the time, date and identity of poster when available.

### **5. EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN**

- 5.1. In their capacity as private citizens, County employees have the same rights of free speech as other citizens. However, they may not represent the County of Wetaskiwin on their own personal social media sites and are reminded that they are bound by the official County policies and procedures and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and must not disclose any County information or content that they are not specifically authorized to disclose.

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Acting as a private citizen, a County employee must use a private email address and make every reasonable effort to make it clear that their contribution to social media sites is as a private individual, and not as a representative of the County.

### **6. LEGAL LIABILITY, COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

- 6.1. Sharing or posting content owned by others will be performed in accordance with copyright, fair use and established laws pertaining to materials owned by others. This includes, but is not limited to, quotes, images, documents, links, and other forms of intellectual property, whether in digital form or otherwise.
- 6.2. Electronic information posted to a social media site by someone authorized by the County, or a member of the public, will be considered a public document or statement.
- 6.3. Content on the County social media sites will not be considered a corporate record as the information posted is transitory in nature.
- 6.4. Information and comments shared through social media channels will comply with the County's Policies and Procedures and shall not disclose confidential or proprietary information. The County of Wetaskiwin reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

### **7. RECORD RETENTION**

Documents and records generated as a result of this policy will be maintained in accordance with the County record retention policy or bylaw.

#### **References:**

- Communications and Engagement Strategy
- Computer Network and Internet Usage Policy #12.0.7

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## SCHEDULE 1

### BEST PRACTICES

Social Media Networks are an ever changing environment, open to everyone in the world to use. As such, it is important for the County of Wetaskiwin to have a Best Practices procedure to ensure the correct usage of these networks, and to maintain the municipality's reputation and integrity.

### CONTENT GUIDELINES

1. Posting guidelines for followers:

The County of Wetaskiwin strives for a balanced, fair and honest online dialogue. Regardless if the comment is favorable to the County or not, fair comments, as determined by administrators of the Social Media Network, will stand. However, if comments are in contradiction to the Guidelines as set out in the Social Media Policy, they may be removed by administrators of the Social Media Network (Communications Officer and/or Information Services staff). Continuous attacks that are in contradiction to the Guidelines by the same user will lead to that user being banned from the County's Social Media site.

2. Posting guidelines for general employees:

The Communications Officer and/or Information Services Staff monitors all County Social Media Networks and Platforms. Any posts made by any County staff on the County platforms which contain offensive, libelous or malicious content will be noted, recorded and then deleted from said platform. The record will then be given to the Chief Administrative Officer and may result in disciplinary action.

3. Posting guidelines for Communications and Information Services Staff:

Conversations on Social Media Platforms are often informal. Responses to conversations on Social Media Platforms may be informal as well. However, it is important to remain professional in dealing with the public in this online environment. As it is a public forum, this means any and all comments can be reposted by users, including the media. The following should be kept in mind when making or responding to posts on Social Media Platforms:

- 3.1. Maintain a respectful, constructive tone.
- 3.2. Refrain from using Internet slang.
- 3.3. Stick to the facts. Do not engage in debate.
- 3.4. Do not launch personal attacks against followers.
- 3.5. Do not make partisan or political comments.
- 3.6. Do not criticize County procedures, policies or business practices.
- 3.7. Adhere to confidentiality standards. Do not post anything not meant for public consumption.
- 3.8. Do not link to material that would be in contravention of the Guidelines as outlined in the County Social Media Policy.
- 3.9. If an employee is unsure how to answer or handle a situation, seek advice of the Chief Administrative Officer or the Director of the department of which the situation relates to.

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