



HR-23 Social Media Policy

Department: Human Resources

Purpose

The County of St. Paul No. 19 (the County) is committed to guiding the County's employee's use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services which permit users to share information with others in an effective manner, according to the mission and values of the organization.

Scope

This policy applies to all County employees, whether they work onsite, offsite or remotely. This policy does not apply to County employee's personal use of non-County social media platforms, and where the employee does not reference the County or its operational, business or service-related information or issues.

Policy Definitions

Administration means the municipal operations under the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and as delegated by the CAO.

Management means the director of a department to which the employee reports into.

Supervisor means the managerial or supervisory employee to whom the employee would normally report.

Personal information refers to recorded information of any kind, stored in any format that identifies an individual including, but not limited to:

- a) Address and contact information (including an identifying number or symbol assigned to an individual).
- b) Race, ethnic origin, gender or marital status.
- c) Educational, financial, employment or criminal history.
- d) Health Information, where appropriate.
- d) Opinions of others about the person.
- e) Personal views and opinions.

Social media refers to an Internet website or internal or external platform, which allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media includes, but is not limited to social networking, blogging, video hosting, wikis and social bookmarking.

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These platforms and applications may include, but not be limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest, Skype, Messenger, WhatsApp, and/or others commonly used.

Policy Statements

General Matters

It is the responsibility of the County's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), to ensure that the County's management and employees are aware of this Policy.

Any administrative procedures, processes, or forms required to support this Policy are the responsibility of the County's administration as delegated by the CAO.

The County recognizes and supports social media as an important tool for promotion and engagement with its employees, contractors, stakeholders and citizen's while keeping the privacy of County business as the highest priority.

Use of Social Media – Differentiating Personal and County Social Media Accounts

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of the County, as well as the personal use of social media when referencing the County.

- County employees are expected to keep their personal social media accounts separate from County accounts.
- Personal content or Personal Information on County accounts is not permitted.
- Employees must know and adhere to the County's policies and administrative procedures and processes when using social media in reference to the County.
- Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their own image, as well as the image of the County, as the information posted or published may be public information for an extended period of time
- Employees should be aware that the organization may see content and information made public by employees through social media. Employees should use their best judgement in ensuring they are not posting material that is inappropriate or harmful to the County, its employees, and other stakeholders.
- Although not an exhaustive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that could create a hostile working environment.
- Employees are not to publish, post, or release any information that is considered confidential. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, employees should refer these inquiries to their supervisor or CAO or their designate.
- If employees encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue politely and advise their supervisor.
- Employees should get appropriate permission before referring to or posting images of current or former employees, or other stakeholders. Additionally, employees require permission to use a

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third party's copyrights, copyright materials, trade/service marks, or other intellectual property.

- Social media use should not interfere with employee responsibilities and job duties. When using County computer systems, use of social media for business purposes is permissible, but personal use of such platforms is discouraged.
- Subject to applicable law, after-hours online activity which violates the County Code of Conduct and/or Conflict of Interest Policy or any other company policy (i.e.: Harassment, Bullying, Violence, and Discrimination in the Workplace Policy) may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Related Policies:

- Code of Conduct, Ethics, and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Media Policy
- Information and Security Policy

Supersedes: ADM-29 Social Media Policy

Council Approval: September 14, 2021