

Social Media Policy



Social media facilitates discussion of City issues, operations and services by providing the public the opportunity to participate. City of Raleigh departments may use social media and social network sites to further enhance communications with various stakeholders and organizations in support of City goals and objectives. City officials and City organizations have the ability to publish articles, facilitate discussions and communicate information through various media related to conducting City business. This policy is designed to define social media, the process of using social media, and the rights and responsibilities of the City in its use of social media.

Purpose

Social networking and Internet services have become a popular form of communication. The City of Raleigh believes that effective and efficient interaction with the public may be enhanced using online technology to present matters of public interest in the City of Raleigh.

Scope

This policy applies to all officers, agents and employees of the City of Raleigh. Employees who choose to participate in social networks in their capacity as City of Raleigh employees must adhere to this policy.

Definitions

Social Media - A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Blog - An abridgment of the term web log, a blog is a website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other materials such as graphics or videos.

Author - An authorized City of Raleigh employee who creates and is responsible for posted articles and information on social media sites.

Articles - An original posting of content to a City of Raleigh social media site by a City of Raleigh author.

Commenter - A City of Raleigh employee or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular City of Raleigh article or social media content.

Comment - A response to a City of Raleigh article or social media content submitted by a commenter.

Departmental Moderator - Any authorized City of Raleigh employee who reviews, authorizes and allows content submitted by City of Raleigh authors and public commentators to be posted to a City of Raleigh social media site.

COR Moderator - A resource in the Public Affairs Department that has the authority to monitor and police all social media sites related to the City of Raleigh.

Organizational Rules

All proposed City of Raleigh social media accounts or sites shall be (1) submitted using the Social Media Site/Account Request Form to the requestor's department head; (2) the request must be approved by the department head; (3) the Public Affairs Department must sign off on the [Social Media Site/Account Request Form](#) for final approval. The site shall be published using approved City social networking platform and tools.

Designees can be any department employee or volunteer designated by the requesting department head that has a complete understanding of this policy and has appropriate subject knowledge and technical experience.

City of Raleigh social networking Web sites are considered a public record under North Carolina General Statutes Section 132 and will be managed as such. Non-employees may not know that social networking sites are public record. **To assure that the public is aware of this, departments with a social networking site must display the following statement prominently on their social networking page:**

Employees of the City of Raleigh communicate via this Web site. Consequently, any communication via this site (whether by a City employee or the general public) is subject to monitoring and disclosure to third parties. Relevant City of Raleigh and North Carolina Public records retention schedules apply to social networking content. Records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using the approved City platforms and tools.

All social network sites and entries shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.

Employees using social media to communicate on behalf of the City of Raleigh should be mindful that any statements made are on behalf of the City of Raleigh. Therefore, employees shall ***use discretion*** before posting or commenting. Once comments or posts are made, they can be seen by anyone and may not be able to be recanted. Consequently, the following are examples of unacceptable social networking content and comments:

- Profane or obscene language or content
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetrates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Solicitations of commerce;
- Infringement on copyrights or trademarks; and
- Confidential or non-public information.

Content submitted for posting that is deemed unsuitable for posting by a COR Moderator or the Departmental Moderator because it is not topically related to the particular social networking site objective or is deemed prohibited content based on the aforementioned list shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.

The City of Raleigh reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

Each City of Raleigh social networking site shall include an introductory statement or status statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the blog and social network site. ***The social networking sites must link back to the departmental City of Raleigh Internet site and the Public Social Media Comments Policy where possible.***

All Moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of this policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with the policy.

All social networking sites shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the City of Raleigh and shall have City of Raleigh contact information prominently displayed.

Employees representing the City government via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with all Personnel policies.

Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Maintenance of the City's website and intranet (Corecon) site take priority over maintaining a social media site. A social media site is used to enhance, not replace website communications.

Procedures

Any employee who desires to create a social media site must receive approval from his or her department director and Public Affairs.

The Public Affairs staff will process and retain request forms and establish the appropriate services for archiving social media content.

The City of Raleigh Moderator will establish a general account that aggregates all City of Raleigh social media accounts or sites to monitor on a daily basis. When a new site has been approved, the Departmental Moderator will contact the City of Raleigh Moderator to subscribe to the new site feed.

The Department Moderator will contact the City of Raleigh Moderator who generated the account or site if facilitative, corrective, monitored, or other action needs to be taken.

The City of Raleigh Moderator will be responsible for monitoring all comments posted to a City of Raleigh social media site for appropriateness. This person(s) will be responsible for ensuring all content is suitable for posting, removing all content that is not suitable or prohibited based on the criteria listed in this policy. This person(s) also is responsible for retaining all content that is removed in accordance with this policy.

All sites shall be published using approved City social networking platforms and tools. Requests for using other platforms must be submitted to the City of Raleigh Information Technology Department.

Employee Guidance for Participating in Social Networking

City of Raleigh employees should always consider whether it is appropriate to post comments that commit themselves or the City to a course of action. ***Employees should never comment on areas that are NOT within the realm of their job responsibility.*** Employees should never post an opinion. Improper use of the City's social media Web site may result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Great care must be given to screening any communication made on behalf of the City. If there is any question regarding the content of a potential comment or post, do not post it.

Employees who choose to participate in social networks as a City employee should adhere to the following guidelines.

1. City policies, rules, regulations and standards of conduct apply to employees who engage in social networking activities while conducting City business and must comply with the City's Personnel Policies.

Use of a City email address and communicating in your official capacity will constitute conducting City business.

2. City employees shall notify their department director if they intend to create a social networking site or service to conduct City business using the Social Media Site/Account Request Form.
3. Department heads will determine the employee responsible for managing the social networking activities in their departments.

Public Social Media Comments Policy

The following **Public Social Media Comments Policy** will be posted on the external Web site:

Welcome to the City of Raleigh's (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) page.

The City of Raleigh uses social media to interact with residents, businesses and visitors about public issues. Please submit your questions, comments and concerns. Please note this is a moderated online discussion site and subject to North Carolina Public Records Laws, and e-discovery laws and policies.

The City reserves the right to delete unacceptable submissions. The following are examples of unacceptable social networking content and comments. The list is not intended to be all-inclusive. Examples are:

- A. *Profane or obscene language or content;*
- B. *Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetrates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;*
- C. *Solicitations of commerce;*
- D. *Infringement on copyrights or trademarks; and,*
- E. *Confidential or non-public information.*

Please note that the opinions and comments expressed on this social media site do not reflect the opinions and positions of the City of Raleigh government, its officers or employees. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this moderated discussion site, please contact the City of Raleigh Public Affairs Department at 919-996-3100.