

# **CITY OF TEXAS CITY**



# **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

## **Social Media Policy**

### **A. POLICY/PURPOSE**

City of Texas City departments may utilize social media and social network sites to further enhance communications with various stakeholder 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. Social media facilitates further discussion of City issues, operations and services by providing members of the public the opportunity to participate in many ways using the Internet.

### **B. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. All City of Texas City social media sites shall be (1) approved by the Mayor, Director of Information Technology and the requesting Department Head; (2) published using approved City social networking platform and tools; and (3) administered by the Department of Information Technology or their designee. 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 content and technical experience.
2. All City of Texas City social networking sites and entries shall adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies including all Information Technology and Records Management City policies and other applicable City policies.
3. Texas Public Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
4. 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.
5. Content submitted for posting that is deemed not suitable for posting by a City of Texas City social networking moderator because it is not topically related to the particular social networking site objective being commented upon, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria outlined in this policy, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.
6. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content for any reason. The City's decision is final.
7. Each City of Texas City social networking site shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the blog and social network site. Where possible, social networking sites should link back to the official City of Texas City Internet site for forms, documents and other information.
8. City of Texas City social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:

- a. Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
- b. Profane or obscene language or content;
- c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- e. Content that is considered degrading, demeaning, harassing, or bullying.
- f. Solicitations of commerce;
- g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

9. All City social networking moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of this City of Texas City policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with the policy.

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

11. Where appropriate, IT security policies shall apply to all social networking sites and articles.

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

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

### **C. EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL NETWORKING**

The City of Texas City understands that social networking and Internet services have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among stakeholders and citizens. Social networks are online communities of people or organizations that share interests and/or activities

and use a wide variety of Internet technology to make the interaction a rich and robust experience.

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

1. City policies, rules, regulations and standards of conduct apply to employees that engage in social networking activities while conducting City business. Use of your City e-mail address and communicating in your official capacity will constitute conducting City business.
2. Employees who participate in social media outlets on or off-duty are subject to the same standards for such communications as set forth in the City of Texas City Personnel Policy.
3. City employees shall notify their supervisor and the IT department if they intend to create a social networking site or service to conduct City business.
4. Departments, with the approval of the Mayor, have the option of allowing employees to participate in existing social networking sites as part of their job duties. Department Heads may allow or disallow employee participation in any social networking activities in their departments.
5. Confidential or proprietary information or similar information of third parties who have shared such information with the City of Texas City should not be shared on social media outlets.
6. Employees shall follow all copyright laws, public records laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and any others laws that might apply to the City or your functional area.
7. Employees shall not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without their approval.
8. When participating in social networking sites not related to City business, an employee shall make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the City of Texas City but speaking in their capacity as a private citizen. If an employee publishes content on any website outside of the City of Texas City and it has something to do with the employee's employment at the City or subjects associated with the City, the employee shall use a disclaimer such as : "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the City's positions or opinions." It should be noted however that a disclaimer will not prevent an employee from being disciplined if their communication has the effect of violating any City policy.
9. Employees shall not use ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the City's workplace. Avoid comments or topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
10. If an employee identifies one's self as a City employee, the employee shall ensure that their profile and related content is consistent with City of Texas City performance and conduct standards regarding how to present one's self to colleagues, citizens and other stakeholders.

11. While the City of Texas City encourages its employees to enjoy and make good use of their off-duty time, City employees may be subject to discipline if their activities on or off duty have the effect of disrupting the functioning or efficiency of the workplace. Activities which are considered disruptive include, but are not limited to, harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile working environment for any official or employee; disrupting the smooth and orderly flow of work within the City; or disrupting working relationships. In addition, employees are subject to discipline for inappropriate activities, on or off duty, if they are acting pursuant to their official duties, or if they engage in inappropriate conduct or speech on private employment matters.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this City of Texas City Social Media Policy, the following terms are defined as provided below:

A. Social Media and Social Networking: Both terms are used to refer to social Internet sites or websites wherein information is created, exchanged or provided by/to third parties and individuals. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, and blogs of all types, etc.

B. City of Texas City social networking moderator: A designated City of Texas City official, approved by the Director of Information Technology and the requesting Department Head, who creates, reviews, edits, authorizes and/or allows content to be posted on any City of Texas City social media sites.

C. Article: An original posting of content to a City of Texas City social media site by a City of Texas City moderator.

D. Commenter: A City of Texas City official or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular City of Texas City article or social media content.

E. Comment: A response to a City of Texas City article or social media content submitted by a commenter.