


City of Lawrence
Administrative Policy

SUBJECT Social Media Policy		APPLIES TO CITY EMPLOYEES	
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APPROVED BY  David Corliss, City Manager	TOTAL PAGES 5		POLICY NUMBER 180

1.0 Purpose

The Social Media Policy comprises the philosophy, recommendations, and strategies necessary for providing professional city communications in social media. This policy outlines the protocol and procedures for use of social media to publicize official city services and events. In addition, this policy addresses the responsibilities of individual employees and city officials with regard to social media and the use of city resources (time/equipment), as well as responsibilities related to public records and open meeting laws.

2.0 Definitions

Social Media – Various forms of discussion and information-sharing, including blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, video posts, message boards and online forums. Technologies include: picture sharing, wall postings, fan pages, e-mail and instant messaging.

Social Networking – The practice of expanding business and/or social contacts by making connections through web-based applications.

3.0 Policies & Procedures

- A. All official City of Lawrence presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the city's information networks and are governed by the City of Lawrence Computer Use Policy (AP-85) contained in the City of Lawrence Employee Handbook. Official sites are administered by the Communications Manager or an official department designee and used for the limited purpose of informing the public about city business, services and events.
- B. All City of Lawrence social media sites must comply with applicable federal, state and city laws, regulations and policies. This includes adherence with established laws and policies regarding copyrights, records retention, Freedom of Information Act, First Amendment, privacy laws and information technology, web standards, brand standards and media policies established by the City of Lawrence.
- C. Individual departments are encouraged to utilize social media. Prior to creation, department social media sites must be approved by the Communications Manager and Department Head. The Communications Manager will work with departments to reach their goals by assisting with the development of social media sites and helping the department define a strategy for engagement using social media.

Prior to launching the site, departments will need to identify their specific goals and how they will achieve their goals through the use of social media. The Communications Manager will also discuss how departments will keep information current on social media sites in order to keep information timely and relevant. The City of Lawrence understands that social media is an outlet that does not particularly adhere to normal business hours. However, it is essential that an expectation of service be designated that provides a framework for response times. If a response is warranted, during normal business hours (Monday-Friday), a response should be provided as quickly as the information can be captured. If a posting occurs outside of normal business hours, a response should be generated by the next business day. Information should not be released via social media unless it has been verified as factual. It is recommended that language be placed on the social media sites denoting appropriate response times.

Each department will have an official designee who is responsible for the management of its social media presence. Accounts will be created by the eGov Coordinator and branch directly from the city's main social media sites. For Facebook, only "fan" pages will be allowed. Accounts will be named

based on functions performed rather than specific departments or divisions. This allows for greater flexibility and comprehensive organizational use of social media.

The Communications Manager and eGov Coordinator will have administrative access to the sites, including username and password information, and will monitor content on department sites to ensure adherence with the Social Media Policy for appropriate use and to ensure that the message and branding are consistent with the goals of the City of Lawrence. The Communications Office retains the authority to remove information and repeated violation of these standards may result in the removal of department pages from social media outlets.

- D. Each social media site used by the City of Lawrence will include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose of the site and directs users to the city's web site. In addition, wherever possible, links to information should direct users back to the city's official web site for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Lawrence.
- E. Employees representing the city via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Lawrence and in accordance with all human resource policies. Employees shall not disclose information about confidential city business on either the city's social media sites or their personal social media sites. If applicable, disciplinary actions consistent with the employee handbook may be taken for misuse of postings.

Employees, advisory boards or elected officials utilizing outside agency social media sites (i.e. The Lawrence Journal World social media sites) shall follow the guidelines of this policy when posting as an identified member of a city advisory board or when posting information related to city services, events and programs. The guidelines set forth in section G of 3.0 shall apply to outside agency postings.

- F. Elected officials and advisory board members are not allowed to post on "City of Lawrence" sites (or other sites that appear to be or allude to being official city pages) due to considerations and possible violations of the Kansas Open Meetings Act. The city will not sanction or support the creation of an advisory board social media site due to possible violations of the Kansas Open Meetings Act.
- G. City of Lawrence 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;
- b. Profane language or content;
- c. Content not consistent with Chapter 10 of the city's Code of Ordinances;
- d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- e. Solicitations of commerce;
- f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any party;
- i. City staff, elected officials or advisory board members, shall not initiate or participate in discussions related to policy creation or formation on social media sites;
- j. Content that reflects negatively on the City of Lawrence.

The city reserves the right to remove content that is deemed in violation of this policy, applicable law, or the city's employee handbook. Any participants on the city's official social media sites that repeatedly violate the posting/commenting guidelines may be permanently removed from the city's site.

- H. When the City of Lawrence begins operating under the special circumstances of a crisis, staff will immediately stop posting on their respective sites. All sites will be redirected to the city's main social media sites to ensure followers receive consistent information from the City of Lawrence. All communication in a crisis situation will be posted by the Communications Manager, or their designee. When the city decides to return to normal communications operations, individual departments may again begin posting information related to city services, programs and events.
- I. The City of Lawrence reserves the right to temporarily or permanently suspend access to official city social media sites at any time.

4.0 Guidelines for Employee Participation in Social Networking

The City of Lawrence understands that social networking and Internet services have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among stakeholders and citizens. The city does not seek to control, through this policy or otherwise, the purely personal online content posted by city employees when that content is posted during non-working time, is posted using personal

equipment, or is not posted in an official capacity as an employee of the City of Lawrence.

All online activity is subject to the city's Computer, Email and Internet Use Policy and other policies found in the City of Lawrence Employee Handbook (AP-85).

- A. 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/or communicating in your official capacity will constitute conducting city business.
- B. Updating and posting to the city's social media sites must be done through the employee's city email account and completed as part of their existing job duties; appropriate Internet permissions will be granted to specific staff that have been designated as the department's Social Media Developer. If a backup Social Media Developer is needed for a department due to workload issues, the department will need to address this access during the development of the social media accounts. Department Heads may allow or disallow employee participation in any social networking activities for work-related purposes in their departments.
- C. Follow all privacy protection laws, i.e., HIPPA, and protect sensitive and confidential city information.
- D. Follow all copyright laws, public record laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and other laws that might apply to the city or your functional area.
- E. Do not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without written approval.
- F. Do not engage in behavior that violates the city's Statement of Individual Respect.