
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

APPROVED:	FEBRUARY 15, 2018	REVISED:	NOVEMBER 22, 2021
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PURPOSE

The Township of Langley (“Township”) recognizes the value and power of Social Media. The Township is supportive of open exchange, communication and social networking via Social Media, and encourages employees to participate in that exchange of information and ideas in a manner that is respectful, transparent, and responsible.

Communication through Social Media is far reaching and information distributed on Social Media has the potential to reach a vast public audience. Information distributed on Social Media in connection with an official Township account can have a significant impact on the municipality, its employees, and its elected officials, including serious negative consequences.

In addition, employees should be aware that their personal Social Media use can have a significant impact on their relationship with the Township, where it relates to, affects or has a potential effect on the Township’s reputation, business interests, elected officials, staff or services.

The purpose of this Social Media policy is to establish clear guidelines for Township employees in their use of Social Media both inside and outside of the workplace. Employees must ensure they comply with this Policy as well as those contained in the Employee Handbook, including the Communication Protocol Policy, when using Social Media in a manner that is or may be connected to the Township.

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is any form of electronic communication tool or service used to facilitate online conversations or content sharing, including, but not limited to: Facebook; Twitter; video-sharing applications such as YouTube; collaboration applications such as Wikipedia; professional network applications such as LinkedIn; photo-sharing applications such as Instagram; and online forums, message boards, discussion groups, blogs and wikis that are internal and external to the Township (“Social Media”).

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Township employees and contractors, including but not limited to managers, supervisors, full-time, part-time, auxiliary and off site employees, students, volunteers and interns (collectively defined as “Employees” for the purposes of this Policy).

OFFICIAL TOWNSHIP SOCIAL MEDIA

The Township uses Social Media platforms to share timely, valuable information with the community. The Township may support mutually beneficial initiatives of partner organizations through its official accounts on Social Media platforms after consultation and approval from the Corporate Administration Division.

All official Township Social Media accounts, regardless of the platform, must clearly indicate that they are maintained by the Township of Langley and include appropriate contact information of the moderator for the account.

No Employee is permitted to create or establish an account on a Social Media platform with the intent of representing the official position of the Township without the explicit permission of the Corporate Administration Division.

Only authorized Employees are permitted to establish a Social Media presence on behalf of the Township or to express an official Township position on behalf of the Township in Social Media (“Authorized Employees”). To become an Authorized Employee with the authority to post to official Township Social Media, Employees must obtain written permission from the Employee’s General Manager/Director and the Director of Corporate Administration. Once authorized, the Corporate Communications Department will facilitate all required system access and permissions.

Official Social Media accounts of the Township are considered the property of the Township, along with any posts, communications, or other content. Authorized Employees operating official Township Social Media accounts must understand that content posted to those Social Media accounts, passwords or other account access mechanisms, and contacts and connections established by those accounts remain the sole property of the Township and must not be shared or otherwise distributed without consent.

Authorized Employees must comply with the guidelines in sections 5 and 6 below when conducting Social Media on behalf of the Township.

GUIDELINES FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

As a general rule, Employees should avoid conduct in Social Media that would be unacceptable in the workplace. You should exercise common sense and good judgment with regards to your online conduct. Remember that internet activity can be captured in temporary files, saved, accessed, stored and retrieved even after the original posting or activity has been removed or deleted. Employees should also be mindful that it is often possible to connect an individual to their employer, even where that individual does not identify themselves as an employee.

The following guidelines must be adhered to:

- (i) **Exercise Good Judgment and Professionalism.** You are expected to conduct yourself respectfully and truthfully, to demonstrate professionalism, to respect the dignity and privacy of others, and to be cautious and thoughtful about what you write and post. Remember that your personal Social Media presence may be connected to you as an Employee of the Township, even if you do not identify yourself as an Employee. Always think before you post.
- (ii) **Don't Discuss Township Business Unless Authorized.** You must refrain from personally discussing or commenting on work-related matters on Social Media without the Township's express authorization. This includes refraining from discussing or commenting on work-related matters on anonymous or pseudonymous Social Media accounts.
- (iii) **Don't Represent the Township Unless Authorized.** Do not speak on behalf of the Township or represent that you do, unless you have been given explicit written authorization to do so. The Township logo and trademarks may not be used without explicit permission in writing from the Director, Corporate Administration.
- (iv) **Be Transparent.** If referencing the Township, its services, employees, elected officials, residents, contractors, vendors or suppliers, use a disclaimer which clearly indicates that your opinions, claims, anecdotes are your own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Township.
- (v) **If You're Not Sure – Ask.** If you are uncertain about whether to reference a work-related matter on Social Media, you should either refrain from making the reference or consult with your Manager/Director or the Director of Corporate Administration.
- (vi) **Protect Confidential Information.** Do not disclose confidential or proprietary information of the Township, its employees, elected officials, residents, contractors, vendors or suppliers. Confidential Information includes employee lists, personal employee or elected official information, Township plans, business plans, work product, financial information, operational information, information about personnel changes, labour relations and related strategies, and any and all information and documentation about the Township's residents, suppliers, vendors that is not publicly known or has not been made officially public by the Township ("Confidential Information").
- (vii) **Behave Ethically and With Integrity.** Do not post any Inappropriate Content, including communications that are false, misleading, obscene, defamatory, discriminatory, inflammatory, aggressive, combative, insulting, threatening, harassing, offensive, abusive or hateful to another person or entity. You are expected to know and to follow the Township's Respectful Workplace Policy and the Township Code of Ethics in relation to any comments or remarks posted on Social Media sites.
- (viii) **Follow The Law.** You are expected to respect intellectual property, copyright, trademark, defamation, and privacy laws in all Social Media use.

- (ix) **Be Aware of Your Audience.** Remember that the Internet is a public space. Consider that co-workers, managers, residents, the general public may read what you post, regardless of how obscure or secure the site you are posting to may seem.
- (x) **Don't Use Work Time for Personal Social Media.** Do not use Township resources or time to access social networking sites or to participate in social media activities for personal purposes.
- (xi) **Use Personal Information for Personal Social Media.** You must use your personal contact and email information, rather than your Township contact and email information, for personal Social Media use unless otherwise expressly authorized by the Township.
- (xii) **Follow All Township Policies.** You are expected to know and follow this Policy as well as the Related Policies and References outlined in this Policy.
- (xiii) **Remember That You Are Responsible For What You Post.** Always remember that you are responsible for all of your comments, content, posts, images, views, thoughts and opinions in Social Media, including those that contain Inappropriate Content or are otherwise unlawful.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

You must not post Inappropriate Content in Social Media. Examples of Inappropriate Content include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) The Township's Confidential Information or proprietary information;
- (ii) Any of the following without the Township's written consent:
 - The Township's logo, trademark, copyrighted materials, advertisements or proprietary graphics;
 - Photographs of the Township's facilities/premises;
 - Postings that include references by name to the Township's partners, affiliates, residents, elected officials, suppliers, vendors or other third parties;
- (iii) Any postings or other communications that include personal information about the Township's Employees, officers, directors, employees, partners, affiliates, or other third parties, or their photographs, without their consent;
- (iv) Any postings that, alone or in context, permit a reader to connect you with the Township, and that contain obscene, pornographic, or sexual content, , false or misleading statements, aggressive, combative or threatening statements, or derogatory, discriminatory, abusive, hateful, vulgar or otherwise offensive language;
- (v) Any postings that defame or otherwise discredit the services of the Township or its officers, directors, Employees, partners, affiliates or other third parties;

- (vi) Any postings that attack the integrity of the Township or otherwise damage the Township's reputation; and
- (vii) Any postings containing information in violation of intellectual property, copyright, trademark, defamation or privacy laws.

MONITORING EMPLOYEE ACTIVITY

The Township acknowledges that Employees may host, comment or otherwise participate in Social Media and the Township respects the right of Employees to do so. However, remember that what you post on Social Media is publicly available, and may be publicly accessed in some cases despite privacy settings. You should not have an expectation of privacy when using Social Media.

In order to fulfill its organizational responsibilities and exercise its rights, including protection of the Township's reputation and the public interest, and its right to manage employees, the Township may monitor your online activity including your use of Social Media, and may collect, use and disclose information, in accordance with and to the extent permitted by applicable law.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Failure to comply with this policy will lead to corrective action, which may include disciplinary action or other remedial measures, up to and including termination of employment. If appropriate, the Township will pursue all available legal remedies and report suspected unlawful conduct to law enforcement authorities.

REPORTING SUSPECTED VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY

You are expected to immediately report known or suspected violations of this policy. To do so, you must contact your manager or the Director of Human Resources. If you report a suspected or actual violation of this policy in good faith, you will be protected from retaliation in the workplace. All good faith allegations of violations will be fully and confidentially investigated. You are required to cooperate with all investigations of alleged violations of this policy.

RELATED POLICIES AND REFERENCES

Acceptable Use of Technology Policy; Code of Ethics, Confidentiality, and Conflict of Interest Policy; Communication Protocol Policy; Corporate Identity Manual; Corporate Style Guide; Customer Service Standards; Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Media Policy; Respectful Workplace Policy; and generally accepted records management principles.