

TOWNSHIP SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES – EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK Version 5.0 – September 2019

The Township will employ the use of social media websites to reach citizens it might not otherwise reach. In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including, but not limited to:

- Social networking or affinity website such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn, You-Tube, Instagram, Vine, etc.
- Websites, your own or someone else's Web log, Blog Site(s), Journal or Diary, Personal Websites or Blog(s)
- Wikis such as Wikipedia and any other site(s) where text can be edited or posted
- Social bookmarks
- Web bulletin board or a chat room

Social Media Benefits

Provide an excellent resource for communicating the Township's various messages and promoting Township services, programs and initiatives.

- Increased efficiency as it pertains to the posting of information, news, events and high-level materials.
- Providing nontraditional support device to internal departments and divisions for promoting events, opportunities and other Township-driven initiatives.
- Additional advertising tool for increasing traffic on the Township's website.

General Provisions & Usage Rules

Because the Township administration has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding who may "speak" and what is "spoken" on behalf of the Township on social mediate sites, this policy is established for the use of all social media.

The Township Clerk and Manager will create and maintain the Township's official Social Media accounts. All account activity will be reviewed by the Township Clerk and Manager and will be uploaded to the account. Information posted to any Township social media must be approved by the Township Clerk and Manager and must be consistent with the policies of the Township. For the Township's primary social networking sites, such as its official Facebook page and Township website, content will be posted in accordance with its practices for disseminating other forms of public information.

1. This Social Media policy will be placed on the Township website and all Township social media sites or be made available by hyperlink.
2. Departments that are approved by the Township Manager to use social media are responsible for complying with applicable Federal, State and County laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding records retention, Freedom of Information Act, Open Public Records Act, First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws and information security policies (if applicable) established by the Township, its departments, affiliated boards, commissions, and authorities.

3. If employees' job duties require that they speak on behalf of the Township in a social media environment, they must seek approval for such communication from the Township Manager or the designee, who may require them to receive training before they do so and impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to their activities. Likewise, events may occur within the Township that will draw immediate attention from the news media. It is imperative that only the Township Manager or his/her designee speak for the Township to deliver an appropriate message and to avoid giving misinformation in any media inquiry. As a result, employees who are contacted for comment on behalf of the Township must answer all media/reporter questions with the following response: "I am not authorized to comment for the Township" (or "I don't have the information you want.) Let me have the Township Manager contact you."
4. In an instance of a declared emergency only authorized personnel approved by the Township Manager are permitted to release information.
5. The Township shall have a single presence on social media sites deemed appropriate for use. Separate departmental social media applications/pages are not permitted. Requests for individual departmental or agency pages or sites must be approved by the Township Manager.
6. The Township social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, requesting an inspection, giving notice required by any statute, by ordinance or regulations such as but not limited to notices of claim. Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Township social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting official communications.
7. Anyone may become a "fan" of the site. However, individuals who display objectionable or inappropriate profile pictures will be removed from the Township's pages. The Township retains the right to determine what is "objectionable" or "inappropriate".
8. The social media pages are informational only in content and will not allow any comments at this time. The Township has the right to post, remove, delete or choose not to post any materials on any social media sites that officially represent the Township and/or its departments.
9. The Township Manager and/or his or her designee will monitor the Township's social media site to ensure adherence to both this Social Media policy and the interests and goals of the Township. The Township Clerk and Township Manager and/or his or her designee have the authority to remove any information in accordance with archiving and retention requirements.
10. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the Township's official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the Township.
11. The Township does not warrant or make representations of endorsements as to the quality, content, suitability, accuracy or completeness of the information, text, graphics, links and other items contained on this server or any other server. Such materials have been compiled from a variety of sources and are subject to change without notice from Township. Except to the extent required by law, commercial use of the materials is prohibited without the written permission of the Township.
12. Some of the links on the Social Media pages may lead to resources outside the Township government. The presence of these links should not be construed as an endorsement by the Township of these sites or their content. The Township is not responsible for the content of any

such external link. The Township specifically disclaims any and all liability for any claims or damages that may result from providing the Township website or information it contains, including any web sites maintained by third parties and linked to the Township web site. The responsibility for the content rests with the third-party organizations that are providing the information.

13. The Township retains the right to “block” a fan/member who engages in any acts considered inappropriate including, but not limited to, violating the Township’s Social Media policy.
14. “Friending” or becoming a “fan” between the Township and a resident/member does not indicate the Township’s endorsement of that person’s actions or comments.
15. Before posting on any of the Township’s social media sites/pages “fans” must review the Township’s terms/disclaimers that will include, but not limited to, portions of the Social Media Policy Guidelines & Provisions. Liking the “page” constitutes acceptance of these terms/disclaimers.
16. Comments posted by others on the Township’s Facebook page(s) are not to be considered the opinion of the Township; nor does the Township endorse any third-party comments on this page.
17. Activity on third party sites is governed by the third-party website’s security and privacy policies.
18. These usage rules may continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge. The Township Clerk and the Township Manager and/or his or her designee will review social media site usage and provide policy recommendations to the Township Council on a continuing basis.