

ITASCA COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Itasca County recognizes that emerging social media and online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way individuals and organizations communicate. This policy is designed to offer practical guidance for responsible, constructive employee communications using these new communication platforms.

SCOPE

This policy primarily covers your use of social media at work or in a work related association. However, this policy also covers situations in which your social media use impacts your job performance, the performance of other county employees and/or negatively impact Itasca County. This type of activity may be subject to guidance by the County.

PURPOSE

- A. Establish practical, reasonable and enforceable guidelines by which our employees can conduct responsible, constructive social media engagement in both official and unofficial capacities.
- B. Prepare Itasca County and our employees to utilize social media channels to help each other and the communities we serve, particularly in the event of a crisis, disaster or emergency.
- C. To promote a safe environment for employees to share subject matter expertise to support effective delivery of public service.
- D. To protect our company and employees from violating Municipal, State or Federal rules, regulations or laws through social media channels.

DEFINITIONS

1. Social media is broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, email or any other existing or emerging communications platform.
2. Social Media Account – A personalized presence inside a social networking channel, initiated at will by an individual. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and other social networking channels allow users to sign-up for their own social media account, which they can use to collaborate, interact and share content and status updates. When a user communicates through a social media account, their disclosures are attributed to their User Profile.

3. Social Media Disclosures - Blog posts, blog comments, status updates, text messages, posts via email, images, audio recordings, video recordings or any other information made available through a social media channel. Social media disclosures are the actual communications a user distributes through a social media channel, usually by means of their social media account.

4. External vs. Internal Social Media Channels – External social media channels are social media services that do not reside at a domain. Internal social media channels are located at a company-owned domain, require a password to access and are only visible to employees and other approved individuals.

5. User Profile – Social Media Account holders customize their User Profile within a Social Media Channel with specific information about themselves which can be made available others users.

6. Copyrights – Copyrights protect the right of an author to control the reproduction and use of any creative expression that has been fixed in tangible form, such as literary works, graphical works, photographic works, audiovisual works, electronic works and musical works. It is illegal to reproduce and use copyrighted material through social media channels without the permission of the copyright owner.

7. Hosted Content – Text, pictures, audio, video or other information in digital form that is uploaded and resides in the social media account of the author of a social media disclosure. If you download content off of the Internet, and then upload it to your social media account, you are hosting that content. This distinction is important because it is generally illegal to host copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

8. Embed Codes – Unique codes that are provided to entice others to share online content without requiring the sharer to host that content. By means of an embed code, it is possible to display a YouTube user's video in someone else's social media account without requiring that person to host the source video file. This distinction is important because embed codes are often used by copyright owners to encourage others to share their content via social media channels.

9. Controversial Issues – Issues that form the basis of heated debate, often identified in political campaigns as wedge issues, since they provoke a strong emotional response. Examples include political views, health care reform, gun control and abortion. Religious beliefs may also be controversial, particularly to those intolerant of beliefs different from their own.

10. Official Content – Publicly available online content created and made public by our company, verified by virtue of the fact that it is accessible through our corporate website .

11. Inbound Links – An inbound link is a hyperlink that transits from one domain to another. A hyperlink that transits from an external domain to your own domain is referred to as inbound link. Inbound links are important because they play a role in how search engines rank pages and domains in search results.

12. Link Bartering Exchanges – Trading or purchasing inbound links from other domains exclusively for the purposes of lifting your domain in search engine page results.

13. Tweets and Retweets – A tweet is a 140 character social media disclosure distributed on the Twitter micro-blogging service. Retweets are tweets from one Twitter user that are redistributed by another Twitter user. Retweets are how information propagates on Twitter.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A. Itasca County trusts and expects employees to exercise personal responsibility whenever they use social media, which includes not violating the trust of those with whom they are engaging.
- B. The information that employees post or publish may be public information for a long time.
- C. Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as Itasca County's image.
- D. Employees should be aware that Itasca County may observe content and information made available by employees through social media.
- E. Employees who choose to make social media disclosures about topics relevant to our organization should always be aware that their disclosures are not private or temporary. Social media disclosures live online indefinitely, and employees should remember that they will be visible to a broad audience and possible even read out of context.

POLICY EXPECTATIONS

- A. Do not engage in personal use of social media during regular work hours.
- B. Use social media for business purposes (ex: Facebook, Twitter, Itasca blogs and LinkedIn)
- C. Ensure your social media activities do not interfere with your ability to fulfill your job requirements or commitments to your supervisor, co-workers or customers.
- D. Know and adhere to the Itasca County's Code of Ethics, Respectful Workplace Policy, and other company policies when using social media in reference to Itasca County.
- E. Do not engage in prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- F. Do not engage in harassment, threats, intimidation, ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, racial or religious intolerance and any other form of behavior prohibited in the workplace is also prohibited via social media channels.
- G. Do not publish post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public. If there are questions about what is considered private or confidential, check with the Human

Resources Department and/or supervisor.

- H. Get appropriate permission before you refer to or post images of current or former employees, members, vendors or suppliers. Additionally, employees should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.
- I. If you engage in social media channels about Itasca County or on behalf of Itasca County, disclose your identify and affiliation with Itasca County.
- J. When engaging in social media about Itasca County and NOT in an official capacity as a county employee, add a disclaimer such as:
 - 1. "I work for Itasca County and this is my personal opinion."
 - 2. "I am not an official spokesperson but my personal opinion is..."
 - 3. "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent our organization's positions, strategies or opinions."
- K. Keep related social media accounts separate from personal accounts.
- L. Do not engage directly with minors via social media channels and must always use extreme care if creating content intended to be consumed by minors.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

- A. Employees have a right to their personal privacy. They have the right to keep their personal opinions, beliefs, thoughts and emotions private.
- B. Employees are prohibited from sharing anything via social media channels that could violate another employee's right to personal privacy. Examples of social media disclosures that may compromise an employee's right to privacy include, but are not limited to: pictures, video or audio.
- C. Whether internal or external, social media communications are never private. Sharing of any information via social media channels that could compromise the security of any facility or department is prohibited

SOCIAL MEDIA DURING EMERGENCIES

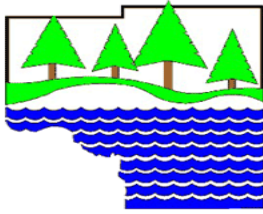
- A. As evidenced by FEMA's adoption, social media tools are becoming increasingly important in local and incidental crisis and emergency management communications. Nevertheless, even in times of crisis, disaster or emergency, only Employees with the authority to speak on behalf of are permitted to do so.
- B. If an employee who is not authorized to speak on behalf of the company has valuable information that could benefit those affected by a crisis, disaster or emergency, they may share that information via social media channels, so long as they include a disclaimer and do so in accordance with the guidelines of this policy.
- C. All employees may use social media channels to extend the reach of official communications. While only those officially designated by are authorized to speak on behalf of the company, all employees are encouraged to share official content via social media channels, particularly during a crisis, disaster or emergency, so as long they take the time to verify that the information they are sharing is, in fact, official content. For example, before sharing a link, employees should always verify that (1) the source of the information is legitimate and (2) that the link they are sharing transmits to information hosted at domain.

- D. If an employee decides to endorse or republish someone else's social media disclosure about related topics or emergency relief information, employees must first verify that the social media disclosure they are republishing was distributed by the designated source. For example, before retweeting someone else's tweet, verify that the Twitter user cited did, in fact, distribute that tweet. There have been numerous cases where false tweets attributed to news sources were redistributed by other Twitter users, promoting misinformation and confusion.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- A. Failure to comply with these social media policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- B. Failure to comply may also result in civil or criminal penalties as provided by law.

Board Approved: 11/22/2016



**ITASCA COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
Itasca County Courthouse
123 NE 4th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

November 22, 2016
Regular Meeting

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION RBA-2016-388

DEPARTMENT: Information Services

PRESENTER: Candy Carsella-Kee

TIME REQUIRED: 10 minutes

AGENDA ITEM:

Approve Implementation of Itasca County Social Media Policy

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the implementation of a Social Media Policy as referenced in the new Technology Policy for Itasca County.

BACKGROUND:

The Itasca County Social Media Policy was created by the Technology Committee and was reviewed and is supported by the HR Department and County Administrator.

The proposed policy is attached for your review.

ITEM HISTORY:

History:

11/15/16 COUNTY BOARD
NEXT: 11/22/16

RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT

COUNTY ATTORNEY REVIEW: N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

- Social Media Policy_Final to Board_Nov2016 (DOCX)

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Leo Trunt, District #3

SECONDER: Mark Mandich, District #5

AYES: Tinquist, Snyder, Trunt, Eichorn, Mandich