

CITY OF NORTH PORT SOCIAL MEDIA PROCEDURES

As more citizens in the North Port community make the shift towards, or include the use of, social media technologies to receive and share information and communicate, it is imperative that the City include these technologies as part of its efforts to enhance customer service and outreach and increase citizen engagement.

It is the policy of the City that a standard for interaction with social media tools and their associated technology is hereby established.

I. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

These procedures, and its provisions, apply to and serve as a guide to all City employees, departments, and contracted entities that distribute information on behalf of the City while engaging in any social media activities.

II. MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City Manager to adopt guidelines for all interaction with social media technology and its accompanying disciplines so that the City has a standard approach to the collaboration and sharing of information on and in various public domains to provide consistent communication across all media.

Social media by the City of North Port is to be used to inform and engage the public in their City government's projects, programs, and services.

III. DEFINITIONS

- **Social Media** are various forms of user-created content tools such as social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include, but are not limited to: picture and video sharing, wall postings, e-mail, instant messaging, and music sharing. Examples of social media applications include, but are not limited to: Google+ and Yahoo Groups (reference, social networking); Wikipedia (reference); Facebook (social networking); YouTube and Vine (social networking and video sharing); Flickr, Instagram, and Pinterest (photo sharing); Twitter (social networking and microblogging); Skype (instant messaging and webcam chat); LinkedIn (business networking); and news media comment sharing/blogging, and any City operated website (including YourNorthPort.com, ViewNorthPort.com, or CityofNorthPort.com) that may allow for user engagement. This policy covers all social media tools, both current and future.
- **Social Networking** is the practice of expanding one's business and/or social contacts by making connections using a range of social media tools including blogs, video, images,

tagging, lists of friends, forums, and messaging that use the Internet to promote such connections through Web-based groups established for that purpose.

- **Social Media Account** shall mean any registration, login credential, tool, forum, website or network that is created or maintained by an employee on behalf of City of North Port for the purpose of establishing or perpetuating a social media presence.
- **Authorized User** shall mean any employee who has been authorized by their Department Director and registered with and approved by the City Manager's Office to establish, create, edit, or maintain any social media account, and the posts it may contain, in the transaction of official business of the City of North Port.
- **Post** shall mean any e-mail, message, picture, graphic, image, advertisement, notification, feed, stream, transmission, broadcast, podcast, video, instant message, text message, blog, microblog, status update, wall post, comment, and any and all other forms, means, or attempts at collaboration or communication that is uploaded, posted to, or otherwise displayed on or transmitted by, any Social Media Account or Network.
- **External Entity** shall mean any person or party not employed by, or not an authorized representative of, the City of North Port.
- **External Information** shall mean any social media post by any External Entity, and the information or substance it contains.

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Social media is meant to be a tool for dialog, engagement, and information sharing. All comments made by both parties (the Authorized User on behalf of the City and a member of the general public) will be monitored closely and will fall under the Terms of Use Agreement. Comments also will be documented for public record purposes.
2. For sites that do not allow the City of North Port to block comments, Authorized Users will not edit outside comments made by members of the public. Any comment that violates the Terms of Use Agreement or disclaimer should be documented for records retention and then deleted from public view. The comment maker should then be notified that he or she has violated the Terms of Agreement, specifying any and all Terms of Use that were violated.
3. Any published content is persistent in the public domain. The City of North Port is responsible for all content published by Authorized Users on behalf of the City. When speaking on behalf of the City, it should be assumed that all communications are in the public domain and available for publishing and discussion in all forms of media.
4. Authorized Users are to review and understand the Personnel Policy Manual, including the Standards of Conduct portion and the Employee Performance portion of the manual. By completing a User Agreement Form for a social media account, an

Authorized User is acknowledging that violations of the City's Personnel Policy may result in disciplinary actions.

5. Authorized Users are to ensure all content posted to social media accounts represents the City's point of view and not those of individual employees. Authorized Users who are in doubt should consult their Department Director, the City Manager's Office, or the Community Outreach Division.
6. Authorized Users should exercise caution while interacting with any External Entity, both known and unknown to the user, and the information that the Entity may provide or post. External Information shall not be utilized, commented on, or re-posted, unless the information has been verified or corroborated as true and accurate by independent and/or reputable resources.
7. Authorized Users should respect copyright, trademark, fair use and financial disclosure laws. Do not use third party content without permission. Always protect sensitive information, personally identifiable information, or other confidential information. Do not publish or report on conversations that are meant to be pre-decisional or internal to the City of North Port unless leadership or management has authorized the release of such information.
8. Ensure that social media account implementation and use complies with applicable mandates, including, but not limited to: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 119 Florida Statutes, and any other applicable Federal, State or City law.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

Authorized Users shall meet the requirements defined in the City of North Port's Personnel Policy Manual, including the Standards of Conduct portion of the manual and the Employee Performance portion of the manual.

A. Department Responsibilities

A1. Before Establishing a Social Media Account

- Contact the Community Outreach Division to discuss objectives, desired outcomes, and measurements for utilizing social media and to help determine its effectiveness in reaching the communication goals.
- Obtain formal approval in the form of a completed User Agreement Form, which shall specify all Authorized Users for the project, and include signatures from the applicable Department Director and the Community Outreach Division prior to establishing any social media account. This form should be stored in the employee's personnel file in Human Resources.

- Establish the Social Media Account using a CityofNorthPort.com e-mail address. Contact the Information Technology Division to determine the appropriate e-mail address and provide all access information to that account to both the Information Technology Division and the Community Outreach Division, including all subsequent modifications to account information.

A2. When Establishing the Social Media Account and during Maintenance of the Social Media Account

- Include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the social media presence. Where possible, Department social media accounts should link back to www.cityofnorthport.com for the purpose of downloading any forms, documents, and other information.
- Post a Terms of Use Agreement approved by the Community Outreach Division and the City Attorney's Office. The Agreement, in addition to its other language, shall clearly indicate that any Post is subject to public records disclosure.
- All comments, by both the Authorized User and the general public, shall comply with and be enforced by the terms described in the posted Terms of Use Agreement.
- All original content, such as images, documents, and video placed or linked on social media accounts by Authorized Users, should be archived in the event of a public records request.
- Maintain compliance with all applicable Federal, State and City requirements, policies and procedures relating to records retention and public records requests.

B. Information Technology Responsibilities

- Provide Authorized Users information about their ability to access and utilize the Social Media tools authorized by their Department Director and the Community Outreach Division.
- Determine an email address to serve as the official e-mail account for all approved social media accounts. (This can be the individual Account User's assigned City e-mail address or a general account such as communications@cityofnorthport.com)
- Review all login credentials to social media accounts to ensure compliance with password strength requirements and compliance with established Information and Technology practices and industry best practices relating to information systems security.
- Retain a login credential database for social media accounts, to provide for control and continuity of operations.
- Respond to any requests for guidance or opinion regarding technology or information systems security.

C. Community Outreach Division Responsibilities

- Review proposals for new social media projects and provide formal approval or denial.
- Provide counsel to the Department as to the appropriate use of the social media tool and strategic guidance as to the types of information that should be released and the proper measurement for effectiveness.
- Monitor content on each Department social media account to ensure adherence to the guidelines in this policy. Inappropriate use may result in the removal of the department page or account from these social media sites.

D. City Attorney's Office Responsibilities

- Review and approve any departmental changes or additions to the Terms of Use Agreement, or the general disclaimer, as requested.
- Render opinions on matters regarding disclaimers, terms of use, and privacy concerns as they arise.
- Provide opinions on matters of public records.

VI. PUBLIC RECORDS RETENTION

- Each City social media account must include an introductory statement that clearly specifies its purpose and topical scope.
- Each City social media account also must clearly link to a Terms of Use.
- All social media sites must clearly indicate that all posts are subject to public records laws, including Chapter 119 Florida Statutes.
- Items uploaded to a Social Media account must have originals stored on a City server and/or be easily accessible in the event that the City receives a public records request. The management of this record retention will be overseen by both the Community Outreach Division and the Information Technology Division.
- All original content, such as images, documents, and video placed or linked on social media accounts by Authorized Users, should be archived in the event of a public records request.

VII. USING EXTERNAL LINKS

To meet its purpose, the City's social media accounts may contain links to other social media sites or websites that are not owned, regularly reviewed, or controlled by the City. Also, External Entities may "tag" or link the City's social media accounts to posts.

- When appropriate, include the following disclaimer on social media sites, along with the Terms of Use:

The provision of direct links should not be construed as an endorsement or sponsorship of these external sites, their content, or their hosts. The City

specifically disavows legal responsibility for what a user may find on another site, whether or not operated by the City. The views and opinions of the authors of documents published on or linked to the City's social media accounts do not necessarily state or reflect the opinion, policy or position of the City.

The City of North Port is not responsible for the content, quality, accuracy or completeness of any offsite materials referenced by or linked through the City's social media accounts. By using the City's social networking sites, the user acknowledges and accepts the risk of injury or damage from viewing, hearing, downloading or storing such materials rests entirely with the user and that the City is not responsible for any materials stored on other social networking sites or websites, nor is it liable for any inaccurate, defamatory, offensive or illegal materials found on other social networking sites or websites.

The City does not endorse any content, viewpoint, products or services linked from its social networking sites and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information. The City does not warrant the accuracy or reliability of or endorse any products or service providers listed or linked to its site.

VIII. SECURITY GUIDELINES

In general, Authorized Users should show caution when interacting with External Entities, those both known and unknown to the user. If at all in doubt of the legitimacy of any information sent to you, please avoid said information.

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Employ strong passwords which cannot be easily compromised by brute force attacks, including the use of mixed case letters, numbers and valid special symbols.
- Periodically change passwords to social media accounts, and immediately communicate any changes to the Information Technology Division and the Community Outreach Division.
- Refrain from adding, installing, attaching or linking to any additional external services or applications that may potentially grant or enable access to the content, information or posts within the social media account.
- Use caution when accessing links received from External Entities. Exercise caution when utilizing shortened links (links that have been shortened for ease of relaying the original link) from External Entities, as these may lead to a malicious site. Avoid clicking on shortened links from External Entities. Consider requesting the link be re-sent in another form.
- If the social media application installed on a device is identified as a security risk to the City, the Information Technology Division may update, change or remove the application at their discretion.

- Be watchful for spoofed emails and/or websites (seemingly official-looking communications that lead the user to a malicious website or attempt to solicit the user's personal or financial information). Consult Information Technology regarding any security related matter.

IX. GENERAL GUIDELINES

We believe in the importance of protecting the privacy of children online. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) governs information gathered online from or about children under the age of 13. Verifiable consent from a child's parent or guardian is required before collecting, using, or disclosing personal information from a child under age 13. Our site is not intended to solicit information of any kind from children under age 13. If you believe that we have received information from or about children under age 13, please contact us.

X. COMMENT POLICY

It shall be the policy of the City of North Port that the following agreement must be continuously and conspicuously posted on each social media account established and maintained by the City of North Port, if such capability exists. The agreement shall also be posted on www.cityofnorthport.com for easy access:

A. The City of North Port encourages public interaction with the following caveats:

- All comments will be reviewed (moderated).
- The comment policy (see below) must be clearly stated or linked.
- Comments must not be posted if they contain:
 - Blatantly partisan political views
 - Explicit commercial endorsements
 - Discriminatory, racist, offensive, obscene, inflammatory, unlawful or otherwise objectionable statements, language or content.

B. Comment Policy

To maintain a respectful dialogue, we've posted the guidelines of our comment policy below. In short:

- **Stay focused.** All viewpoints are welcome, but comments should remain relevant to the discussion, the City of North Port's community outreach efforts, public information and the associated Web site.
- **Be respectful.** Personal attacks, profanity, and aggressive behavior are prohibited. Instigating arguments in a disrespectful way is also prohibited.

- **Tell the truth.** Spreading misleading or false information is prohibited.
- **No spam.** Repeated posting of identical or very similar content in a counter-productive manner is prohibited — this includes posts aggressively promoting services or products.

We retain the discretion to determine which comments violate our comment policy. We also reserve the right to remove and/or not allow comments to get posted. The views expressed within posted comments do not necessarily reflect those of the City of North Port.

We recognize that the Web is a 24/7 medium, and your comments are welcome at any time. However, given the need to manage city resources (i.e. - your tax dollars), moderating and posting comments should only be expected to occur during regular business hours.

Reporters are asked to send questions to the necessary media office through their normal channels and to refrain from submitting questions here as comments. Reporter questions will not be posted nor answered.

This comment policy is valid for all discussions on any City managed forum. Thank you for taking the time to review our comment policy. We encourage your participation in our discussion and look forward to an active exchange of ideas.

IX. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective as of May 4, 2015.