

**POLICY DIRECTIVE NO. D-22**

SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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APPROVAL DATE: January 7, 2014      LAST REVIEW DATE: June 7, 2022

REFERENCE: \_\_\_\_\_

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**A.    “SOCIAL MEDIA”:**

For the purposes of this Policy Directive, “social media” or “social networking” refers to all internet-based applications and technologies which provide for the creation, exchange or sharing of information, opinions, commentary, personal messages and other user-generated content, including but not limited to the use of social networks, web forums, newsgroups, chat rooms, blogging, vlogging, tweeting, wikis, podcasts, and includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

**B.    PURPOSE:**

The City of Chilliwack (the “City”) recognizes the importance of the internet and social media platforms in business communication, shaping public thinking and the expression of ideas. While the City encourages the appropriate use of social media as a tool to further enhance customer service and communication with citizens, local businesses and various stakeholders, professionalism is of utmost importance. This Policy Directive is intended to establish guidelines and requirements for the personal and professional use of social media and to ensure that all individuals understand:

1.     Their personal and professional responsibilities regarding confidentiality, privacy and acceptable use of social media as outlined in this Policy Directive;
2.     That information communicated through the use of social media may be subject to the same laws, regulations, policies and other requirements as information communicated in other ways;
3.     That the use of social media in a manner that directly or indirectly has a negative effect on the City’s business interests, reputation, or relationships with its community is prohibited; and,
4.     A breach of this Policy Directive will result in discipline for the individual up to and including termination of employment or termination of contract, as applicable.

**C. SCOPE:**

This Policy Directive applies to social media use by any person employed or engaged by the City to perform services for or on behalf of the City, in any capacity (collectively, “**Staff Members**”). This Policy Directive applies to Staff Members at all times, including outside of working hours, and applies regardless of whether the City’s network, systems, resources, devices or equipment are used.

**D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF MEMBERS:**

Staff Members are responsible for the content they publish online, whether it is under their own name, an alias, or is anonymous, or whether the individual is using the City’s social media accounts or a personal account. All Staff Members must ensure all online communications comply with applicable provincial, federal and local laws, regulations and policies including all applicable City policies such as those with respect to information technology, records management and maintaining a respectful workplace.

The following constitutes a non-exhaustive set of guidelines for what is expected of Staff Members to model an appropriate online presence and to exercise sound judgement when engaging in online activities:

1. Staff Members must not engage in any internet or social media communication that is intended to, or might reasonably have the effect of discriminating against, disparaging, defaming, harassing, humiliating, bullying, threatening or intimidating anyone, including other Staff Members and members of the community.
2. Staff Members are expected to ensure that their online content is accurate, courteous, respectful and professional. Staff Members must not use obscene, profane or otherwise inappropriate language on any internet or social media communication. Any content posted online must not reflect negatively on the Staff Member’s professional reputation or that of the City.
3. Staff Members must comply with all other City policies, procedures, standards and guidelines when using social media. Staff Members must also refrain from any conduct which violates the law.
4. Staff Members must ensure that confidential information concerning the City, its Staff Members, operations and its current and former clients is kept in the strictest confidence. Staff Members must not, without prior authorization from the City, disclose any confidential information regardless of its source, and whether or not it is a matter of public record. Confidential information means information disclosed to, used by, developed by, or made known to an individual in the course of their employment or engagement which is not generally known by persons outside the City and includes, but is not limited to, information pertaining to the City’s past, present, future personnel, clients, assets, operations, services, practices, methods, facilities, technology, research, marketing, strategies, finances, inventions, routines, policies and procedures.

5. No Staff Member, with the exception of those authorized in the section below, is permitted to prepare, publish or modify content on the websites or social media accounts of the City. Likewise, Staff Members may not speak or purport to speak on behalf of the City when using their social media accounts and may not use City logos or trademarks on social media sites. Where a Staff Member mentions the City on social media or the fact that they work for the City, they must include a disclaimer stating that any opinions expressed are their own and do not represent the views, positions or opinions of the City.

**E. GUIDELINES FOR THE CITY'S SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS:**

The City will authorize specific individuals to utilize social media in an official capacity to ensure that, as with all communications activities, communications through social media channels are accurate, consistent and professional. The purpose of the City's social media pages is to engage the public and provide information about operational issues as requested. The City's social media pages will not be used to debate public opinion or generally converse. Where a Staff Member is authorized to use social media for work-related purposes, the following requirements (in addition to those set out above) apply:

1. Staff Members representing the City via social media must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City.
2. Staff Members must not post anything on social media that might harm or tarnish the image, reputation or goodwill of the City (this includes being mindful of appropriate grammar and spelling).
3. All content should be written in a corporate casual tone, minimizing overly emotionally language, tone and punctuation.
4. All City social media pages will clearly indicate they are maintained by the City and will have contact information prominently displayed. Where possible, social media pages should link back to the official City website for forms, documents and other information.
5. Discussions on official City social media pages will be monitored and authorized Staff Members are expected to answer questions when asked directly.
6. When posting photos from City events, Staff Members must use good judgment in choosing what is appropriate to post and must obtain the express prior approval of each Staff Member who appears in the photo before posting it on social media.
7. Social media is not considered a substitute for internal communication amongst Staff Members. Important information should be transmitted within normal City communication channels, not through the City's social media platforms.
8. Any content that a Staff Member posts to social media on behalf of the City becomes the City's property.

9. Regardless of who has written it, content and comments containing any of the following will be removed from City social media pages:
- a. Comments unrelated to the particular page or post being commented upon;
  - b. Profane language or content;
  - c. Content of a harassing nature;
  - d. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination, including, without limitation, on the basis of any protected grounds under the British Columbia *Human Rights Code*;
  - e. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - f. Solicitations or commerce;
  - g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - h. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or,
  - i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party such as third-party intellectual property rights.

**F. PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING WORK HOURS:**

The City's computer resources, including Wi-Fi/internet access, are business systems for use by authorized Staff Members to conduct legitimate City business only. Use of an internet connection for any purpose that is not specifically related to City business is prohibited during working hours. Notwithstanding the above, incidental personal use of social media and the City's computer resources is permissible during work hours provided that such use does not interfere with the performance of duties to the City. Incidental personal use of social media and the City's computer resources including Wi-Fi/internet access during working hours must meet all the following criteria:

- it is infrequent and of short duration, or it occurs outside of working hours;
- it complies with this Policy Directive, other applicable City policies, and applicable laws;
- it does not cause the City to incur any cost;
- it does not expose the City to any harm, risk, loss or liability; and,
- it is not part of any activity which the Staff Member engages in for commercial purposes or personal profit.

**G. NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY AND STAFF MEMBER MONITORING:**

Staff Members should not expect absolute privacy when using social media, especially when using the City's network, systems or devices. Staff Members should assume that anything posted on the internet and social media will be widely disseminated and read, regardless of the number of individuals initially viewing the post. Social media use may be monitored where the posts concern the City, its Staff Members, clients or other stakeholders or when posts are made on City time or on City devices, equipment, networks, resources or systems. Specifically, the City may monitor, collect and use information about a Staff Member's social media postings or use of City systems, networks, devices or equipment for the following purposes:

1. Managing its employment and contractual relationships;
2. Evaluating Staff Member performance or customer service;
3. Accessing work product;
4. Managing Staff Member transitions following the termination or departure of a Staff Member;
5. Investigating incidents, complaints or allegations if there are reasonable grounds to believe Staff Member misconduct has occurred, including any violation of City policies or applicable laws;
6. Ensuring that the City's network, system, resources or devices are being used in compliance with laws and City's policies; or,
7. For other purposes where the City is authorized or required by relevant privacy legislation or other applicable laws to access or monitor social media use.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City does not engage in ongoing or continuous monitoring of Staff Member use of social media. The monitoring described in this Policy Directive, and any ensuing collection, use or disclosure of information obtained from such monitoring, will be conducted by the City in accordance with the British Columbia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and applicable City privacy and technology-use policies.

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Chief Administrative Officer