



POLICY NAME: SOCIAL MEDIA

APPROVAL DATE: MAY 14, 2012

1. OBJECTIVE

1.1. These social media guidelines set responsibilities and procedures intended to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange through the use of social media technology. Use of social media for municipal purposes falls under the same legal and ethical standards as any other means of communication with the public on behalf of the Municipality of the County of Richmond (“the Municipality”).

2. APPLICABILITY

2.1. These guidelines apply to all municipal service areas and covers officially established, publicly available, and Municipality-managed social media accounts. These guidelines do not require the establishment of social media accounts, nor do they apply to the use of social media on a personal basis or cover use of social media for political or internal government purposes.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide the social media practices of the Municipality:

3.1. **Value** – to encourage the safe, creative, and effective use of social media by municipal staff by providing a framework for the application of the policies and guidelines that oversee social media use

3.2. **Quality of Service** – to improve communication and public engagement through the presentation of information and knowledge that is timely, accurate, and relevant

3.3. **Transparency** – to present information to the public in a way that is easily discoverable and readily accessible, and presents the Municipality in a fair and reasonable manner

3.4. **Respect** – to ensure that social media interactions are conducted in a manner that conforms to the same professional and ethical standards required in the workplace

3.5. **Integrity** – to ensure that municipal staff and Council conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on social media sites, respecting the laws of copyright infringement, software licensing, property rights, security, and privacy



3.6. **Accountability** – to require that all municipal staff and Council are responsible for understanding and following the relevant policies and procedures affecting the use of social media

3.7. **Legislative** – to adhere to applicable provincial, federal and municipal laws, regulations and policies

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. **Social media** includes all online technologies and practices used to share information, express opinions, and build relationships. It can involve a variety of formats, including text, pictures, video, audio, and real-time dialogues. It includes, but is not limited to, such things as social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), media-sharing (e.g., YouTube, Flickr), webcasts (e.g., RSS, podcast), and collaborative media (e.g., wikis, blogs). Not all forms of social media may be appropriate for use by the Municipality.

4.2. **Contributor** refers to any staff of the Municipality (full and part-time, councillors, and all other municipal advisors or consultants using corporate resources) who creates content that is posted to any of the Municipality's social media accounts.

4.3. **Subscriber** refers to members of the public who receive or access content from a social media account. Different forms of social media may have specific jargon for this concept (e.g., Facebook "Friends", Twitter subscribers are known as "followers"). Subscribers may, depending on the privacy settings of the social media site, submit comments for posting in response to content.

4.4. **Moderator** refers to an authorized municipal staff person who reviews, authorizes, and allows content submitted by staff contributors and public subscribers to be posted to a Municipality-managed social media account.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. The **Chief Administrative Officer** will:

- Administer and implement the Social Media Guidelines of the Municipality, and;
- Identify necessary revisions to the Social Media Guidelines in consultation with other managerial staff.

5.2. **Directors** will:

Ensure that service area staff is advised of the approved Social Media Guidelines of the Municipality;

Directors will also act, or appoint another staff member, to:

- Act as the designated representative authorized to post social media content in an official capacity on behalf of the Municipality;
- act as the Moderator responsible for reviewing, authorizing, and allowing content submitted by staff contributors and public subscribers to be posted to a Municipality-managed social media account, and;
- Review site activity and content daily for exploitation or misuse.



5.3. The IT Coordinator and the Director of Recreation, Leisure and Community Relations will:

- Grant approval where appropriate for all new external social media endeavors that are initiated or created by the Municipality, and;
- Determine that each new social media endeavor initiated or created by the Municipality has plans that are based on reasonable communications practices and include technical and monitoring measures which ensure the timely removal of any defamatory or objectionable submissions.

6. TERMS OF USE

6.1. Municipal representation

Only staff who is given authorization to act as a designated representative by their service area managers may post content in the name of the Municipality of Richmond to any social media site. Contributors and moderators of the Municipality are required to identify themselves honestly, accurately, and completely when participating in social media.

Other staff may participate in social media in the course of business when relevant to their duties, but they do so as individuals representing themselves through personal social media accounts, not representing the opinions of the Municipality.

6.2. Appropriate content

Only information that is publicly available may be posted to social media sites. It is unacceptable to publish or report on conversations or information that is confidential, pre-decisional, or speculative. Content from contributors and public subscribers containing any of the following shall not be allowed for posting:

- comments that are not topically related to the site or article being commented upon;
- profane language or inflammatory content;
- content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, physical or mental disability, or sex orientation;
- sexual content or links to sexual content;
- encouragement of illegal activity, and;
- information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.

Content that is deemed by moderators to be unsuitable according to the above criteria shall be removed and retained along with a description of the reason that the specific content was deemed unsuitable for posting.

6.3. Copyright, fair use, and privacy laws

Communication through social media is subject to all relevant provincial, federal and municipal laws, regulations and policies.



THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
LA MUNICIPALITÉ DU COMTÉ DE
RICHMOND

Any content posted to a third-party social media site is ultimately owned and controlled by the site operator according to its established terms of use.