

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
Council Policy No. 121/17

PURPOSE:

This Social Media Policy outlines the corporate standards and principles of communicating in the online world related to discussing, sharing or commenting on City business.

Goal of Social Media Use

The City's goal in using social media is to:

- Engage citizens.
- Engage citizens at their convenience.
- Make it easy for citizens to participate.
- Create a two-way dialogue with the community.
- Provide the City with the ability to communicate effectively.

POLICY:

PUBLIC GUIDELINES

City managed social media sites should display the public comment guidelines where possible.

Welcome to the City of Fort St. John's <insert name of social media website>! The purpose of this page is to share information of public interest with our residents, businesses and visitors. We hope to be able to provide you with the most recent news stories, photos and videos from the City of Fort St. John.

If you are looking for the official source of information about the City of Fort St. John, please also visit our website at www.fortstjohn.ca.

We value the opportunity for dialogue that <insert social media website> provides and while this is an open forum, it is also a family friendly one and we ask that you follow our posting guidelines.

The City reserves the right to remove any comments that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or that is deemed discriminatory, slanderous or obscene. Comments should reflect the topic or subject.

We do not allow graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization.

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PUBLIC GUIDELINES (continued)

We do not allow posts that are solicitations or advertisements for commercial entities (excluding charitable events), products, political organizations or candidates.

We do not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.

We reserve the right to delete comments that are spam or include links to other sites.

You agree to participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.

STAFF GUIDELINES

1 Best practices

The City's social media use can be sustained with designated communications staff. Under the direction of the Director of Strategic Services and the support of the Graphic Designer, the Communications Coordinator is responsible for specific social media functions including posting fresh and engaging content, monitoring statistics and ensuring timely responses to public questions.

Social Media training is provided to key staff, by the Communications Coordinator, in each department to build social media capacity throughout the organization (including knowledge of best practices and trends), leverage ongoing communications opportunities and provide timely responses to citizen inquiries.

The City's social media sites are only to be used for the purpose of sharing City information and not information from individuals, businesses or groups. The current approved social media sites for City use are:

- Facebook: City, Recreation & Fire Department
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- LinkedIn

Employees representing the City on social media sites are expected to conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct, Discrimination and Harassment Policy and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

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STAFF GUIDELINES (continued)

2 Approval

All social media sites must be approved by the City Manager and the requesting General Manager. Designees and/or administrators can be any departmental employee or volunteer designated by the requesting Department Head that has a complete understanding of this policy and appropriate content and technical expertise.

3 Access

Only employees with authorized access (by a General Manager or Director) to City social media sites are permitted to post or comment on behalf of the City. Sharing account log in information is not permitted.

Access to the City Facebook account will only be permitted through the creation of a City personal Facebook account using a City email address. This newly created personal email account is still considered personal and employees should refrain from speaking on behalf of the City where possible.

As it is not possible to comment to a Facebook Group page from the City account an employee may use their personal City Facebook account but must identify themselves and their title to the group and explain they are speaking on behalf of the City.

When incorrect information is posted on another Facebook site the City may comment on the other site to correct information and drive the conversation back to a City official platform where the conversation can be managed.

4 Only post as the City

Employees will not use a personal Facebook account to speak on behalf of the City. Personal comments on City social media sites is permitted from a personal account however speaking on behalf of the City or providing information on City business is strictly prohibited.

Do not post personal comments when posting as the City.

5 Know That You Are On the Record

Communication on social media sites or accounts should always be considered public and permanent. Online communications are not private; posts may be accessed by a wider audience than intended or copied by others and published elsewhere without your permission or knowledge.

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STAFF GUIDELINES (continued)

5 Know That You Are On the Record

If you would not say or write something down in a public setting, then do not post it online. City employees must not post confidential or sensitive information acquired through their work, and should take care not to put themselves into a conflict of interest in online discussions of City issues – even if you are speaking from your personal perspective, people may assume you are speaking on behalf of the City.

6 Be Clear

When representing the City of Fort St. John, employees should only comment and post about their own program area. If you don't know the answer to a question, refer it to someone who does. Avoid talking about a program area you do not work for, even if you are familiar with that area. Only respond to news media inquiries if you are authorized to do so.

7 Be accurate

Communications on the City's behalf, on all social networking sites, should be based on current, accurate, complete and relevant data.

The public expects City employees to be accountable for their communications. Be courteous and stick to facts. If you make a mistake, be honest and try to correct it as quickly as you can in order to restore trust with your audience.

8 Respect

Privacy, libel and human rights laws and policies apply to social media sites and accounts as they do to other forms of communication. Do not post obscene or racist content; personal attacks, insults or threatening language; or potentially libellous statements.

Respect copyright laws: do not post documents, logos, photographs, graphics or other material owned by others without written permission, unless such postings fall under an exception to copyright protection.

Employees with access to City Social Media sites are authorized to use their best judgement in monitoring and are empowered to remove or not approve posts that violate these rules.

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STAFF GUIDELINES (continued)

8 Respect

Comments can be deleted if the content:

- Is slanderous or defamatory;
- Contains obscene language or sexual content;
- Promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Promotes commercial services or products other than significant sponsors, affiliations, or business partnerships;
- Promotes a political candidate;
- Promotes illegal activity;
- Provides information may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Personal content and does not have the consent; or
- Content that violates a legal interest of another party.

Where possible City social media sites will utilize profanity filters so that no comment from the public containing profanity will pass through the spam filter and be posted to the live site.

9 Logo Use

Staff will not use City logos, the City crest or enterprise logos for endorsements – or any other corporate/city images or iconography on personal social media sites and/or personal websites or to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.

City social media sites or accounts are official City websites or accounts and should be easily identifiable as such through logos and text.

10 Appropriate Use

Do not create posts or comments that are unrelated to the social media site's purpose, and never post commercial content, spam, confusing, misleading or out-of-date information or web links. Do not post links to news items and media stories, unless there is a specific sponsorship or partnership agreement in place with a media outlet.

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STAFF GUIDELINES (continued)

10 Appropriate Use

The City monitors content posted on social media sites and may take steps to modify or remove any posts that contravene City policies or guidelines.

11 Personal Social Media Use

Whether or not an employee chooses to create or participate in a blog, wiki, online social media network or any other online publishing platform is his or her own decision. However, the City of Fort St. John recognizes that emerging online collaboration platforms are changing the way individuals and organizations communicate. This policy is designed to offer practical guidelines for responsible, constructive communications via social media channels for employees of the City of Fort St. John.

It is the expectation of the City that employees using personal social media accounts will use the same discretion and good judgment when posting online that they would use in a public setting. An employee who chooses to express an opinion regarding City policy may do so only if they precede their disclosure with a disclaimer acknowledging that their personal opinion does not necessarily reflect the opinion of their employer.

City employees have no right to privacy with respect to their personal use of social media or personal social media accounts accessed by means of City computers, or with respect to personal social media content so accessed. They should not expect or assume privacy or confidentiality with respect to any such personal social media use or social media content. Employees are responsible for ensuring their online activities do not interfere with their ability to fulfil their job requirements or their commitments to their managers, co-workers or customers.

The City of Fort St. John expects its employees adhere to the City Code of Conduct Policy and to be truthful, courteous and respectful toward supervisors, coworkers, citizens, customers and other persons associated with the City. Do not engage in name-calling or personal attacks. Refrain from making disparaging comments about the workplace, policies, or supervisors, or discussing internal employment disputes on social media. Assume anything written about a co-worker or supervisor will be read by that co-worker, your supervisor and many others.

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STAFF GUIDELINES (continued)

11 Personal Social Media Use

Employees are encouraged to share posts from the City official sites to their personal sites to assist the City in getting a message out and to ensure that what they are posting to their personal pages is the official message from the City.

12 Enforcement

This policy is in addition to and complements all existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, email and the interest of the City.

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Use of the City provided internet, email and social media is a privilege. Unauthorized use will result in the loss of access for the user, and depending on the seriousness of the infraction, may result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content from City social media sites that are deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.