

POLICY/ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE/ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

SECTION: COMMUNICATIONS	REFERENCE NUMBER: 505.03
SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS	INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE: 07-14-2010
TITLE: SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS	LAST REVISION DATE: 12/17/20

OVERVIEW

The City of Denton is committed to providing open and accessible information online and encourages the use of social media and digital platforms to communicate public information and foster community engagement. The purpose of this policy is to help cultivate a culture of transparency, integrity, and trust in community engagement and to encourage the use of existing and emerging resources provided they serve as a value and benefit to the public. The use of social media and digital platforms may change over time as technology evolves.

SCOPE

The scope of this policy governs the use of City social media and digital platforms for the purpose of public outreach and communications pertaining to City services, news, programs, events, and activities.

This policy applies to employees who are authorized to use a City social media page or digital platform as an essential function their job or is approved to use public information that resides on a City platform for the purpose of public outreach or other department related objectives. An example is an employee who is assigned to serve as an admin on a department's Facebook page or an employee authorized to share department-related public information with specific targeted audiences. An employee's personal use of social media is governed by the Ethics Policy (109.01) of the City's Policies and Procedures Manual. This policy also applies to public users of a City social media page or digital platform.

DEFINITIONS

"Content" refers to information that can be created, distributed, shared, posted, or transmitted, such as a comment, photo, document, audio, video, gif, hashtag, mention, emoji, infographic, or another emerging digital format.

"Digital Platform" refers to a web or cloud-based platform such as the City's website, www.cityofdenton.com, and secondary standalone websites; digital mass communication applications such as Constant Contact; and community input applications such as Engage Denton and Survey Monkey.

"Employee" refers to personnel who are authorized or approved by the City Manager, Public Affairs Department, or their designees to communicate using a City social media or digital platform.

"Public Information" refers to information, regardless of form or format, online or offline, that the City disseminates or makes available to the public, such as content contained in a press release, video, public notice, announcement, event, activity, or program.

"Social Media" refers to web-based, user-generated content sharing platforms that include microblogging sites, such as Twitter; networking sites, such as Facebook, Nextdoor, and LinkedIn; photo and video sharing sites such as Instagram and YouTube; social bookmarking sites such as Reddit and Pinterest.

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I. ADMINISTRATION

Primary Website Administration will be the responsibility of Public Affairs who will:

- Manage the City's domains, primary website, and website content management system (CMS);
- Oversee the website CMS, and the creation and organization of webpage content;
- Assign employee CMS access and privileges to help maintain department-specific content.

Standalone Website Administration will be the responsibility of Public Affairs who will:

- Evaluate requests for standalone websites on a case-by-case according to factors including cost, function, and impact to departmental and citywide communications;
- Oversee the inventory, access, and content of standalone websites.

Digital Communication Administration will be the responsibility of Public Affairs who will:

- Oversee video and audio conferencing platforms for online public meetings and community engagement;
- Oversee the use of high-volume email marketing software and cloud-based survey applications;
- Oversee the collaboration of digital communications platforms.

Social Media Administration will be the responsibility of Public Affairs who will:

- Oversee the creation, administration, and deletion of social media pages;
- Oversee and monitor employee and public user-generated content (described in this policy);
- Serve to provide support and guidance relating to public inquires and policy violations;
- Serve to provide guidance and assistance to department social media administrators.

Social Media and Digital Platform Training Administration will be the responsibility of Public Affairs who will:

- Manage training requirements for employee social media and digital platform administrators;
- Process and maintain city-wide employee user agreements;
- Oversee the on-going development and implementation of style, design, and best practice guidelines.

II. EMPLOYEE GUIDELINES

Employees are encouraged to use City social media and digital platforms to:

1. Communicate, deliver, display or public information;
2. Foster transparency, integrity, and trust in community engagement;
3. Share essential and useful resources beneficial to the public;
4. Listen, empathize, and respond to questions and inquiries;
5. Offer relevant information based on platform guidelines.

In doing so, content must serve in one of the following capacities to:

1. Inform the public of meaningful, valuable, beneficial or relevant information;

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2. Promote community collaborations, sponsorships, or programs per a City agreement;
3. Educate and inform the public about City departments, plans, projects, or programs;
4. Support department mission-focused actions, services, activities, or events;
5. Obtain constituent-centered input relevant to need assessments and service improvements.

Guiding Principles of Appropriate Use of Social Media and Digital Platforms

Employees shall maintain a high level of service and City branding compliance.

Employees must uphold a high standard of quality communication and ethical conduct, adhere to the City's training, and maintain compliance and consistent use of the City's style, design, and best practices guidelines.

Employees shall establish a proof and approval process.

Employees must implement and practice a two-person proof and review process to ensure proper grammar, spelling, tone, and voice. Correcting grammar or typographical changes can be made without preserving a copy for records because these edits are considered non-substantive changes.

Employees shall only communicate and engage on public information.

Employees are authorized to share public information only and are not approved to express their personal views or concerns.

Employees are encouraged to create content that conforms to the Revised 508 Standards.

Employees are encouraged to be proactive and create content that is ADA Section 508 compliant to the maximum extent possible for websites and digital content accessible to people with disabilities. Proactively creating and sharing content that is consumable by applications such as screen readers and assistive technology will improve access to all individuals under the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Employees are encouraged to educate as subject matter experts relative to their level of expertise.

Employees may educate the public as it relates to their area of expertise and maximize platforms to disseminate time-sensitive information, providing employees due their diligence to maintain a public record and secure content on the City's website as often as possible.

Employees must be mindful of photographic consent.

There is no expectation of privacy for at-large public events held on City property; however, it is the City's best practice to obtain permission or to alert the public in advance. Employees must be mindful of minors and obtain written consent from a parent or guardian for up-close and small group photos. This written consent must be retained by the employee.

Employees must adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, policies, and platform guidelines.

Employees must comply with copyright laws and ensure the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information shared with the public. Content may not be copied, displayed, or shared without permission.

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III. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**Employee Digital Platform Responsibilities***Primary City Website*

An employee authorized to edit webpage content will be required to:

- Attend content management system training;
- Update and maintain department-specific webpage content;
- Respond to department content management requests in a timely manner;
- Oversee content accessibility requirements.

Secondary website(s)

An employee authorized to edit webpage or website content will be required to:

- Update and maintain department-specific or project-specific content;
- Submit current login credentials to the Public Affairs Dept.;
- Notify the Public Affairs Department of significant changes to the website;
- Submit requests to Public Affairs for approval to develop a standalone website with considerations based on factors including cost, function, and impact to departmental and citywide communications

Digital Communication Platform(s)

An employee authorized to use a digital platform will be required to:

- Obtain a proper license or coordinate access with the Public Affairs Dept.;
- Coordinate authorized use of video and audio conferencing platforms with the Public Affairs Dept. and City Manager's Office and comply with Technology Service Dept. and DTV requirements, as needed;
- Obtain approval from the Public Affairs Department for the use of high-volume email marketing software and cloud-based survey applications to be used for mass communications.

Employee Social Media Responsibilities

Employees who are authorized or approved to use social media for communication and outreach must adhere to the training and social media best practices. Employees may defer to the Public Affairs Department for confirmation of responsibilities based on any emerging platform roles and variances.

Page Administrator Responsibilities

An employee authorized to serve as a social media page administrator (admin) will be required to:

- Assign a page admin role to one Public Affairs employee and one additional department employee to serve as a backup during a leave of absence and to help maintain policy compliance;
- Coordinate and obtain approval for account profiles linked to City platforms;
- Manage and monitor content, campaign strategies, public inquiries, replies, quality assurance, and records retention management related to any assigned social media page and affiliated group or location page;
- Collaborate content strategies with page contributors that are in compliance with this policy;
- Oversee page contributors and routinely review privileges to determine if access remains warranted;
- Report policy violations and obtain approval to delete or remove content from public view.

Page Contributor Responsibilities

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An employee authorized to serve as a social media page contributor or other role will be required to:

- Coordinate and confirm approval of the profiles linked to City platforms;
- Maintain and monitor content relevant to the platform, audience, and department's posting strategy;
- Assist page administrators with content management, replies, quality assurance, and records retention management;
- Report policy violations to the admin and Public Affairs Department.

Participation Responsibilities

An employee approved to share City curated content using a personal social media profile will be required to:

- Submit a signed employee user-agreement;
- Comply with user-agreement requirements to generate in-bound website strategies;
- Limit use for the purpose of public outreach and to serve as a department subject matter expert;
- Maintain the same level of policy compliance as authorized employees and public users;
- Share public information from an existing City platform and do not share original or personal content.

Employee Training Responsibilities

An employee who is authorized to use a social media or digital platform is required to:

- Participate in Public Affairs Department training before actively using any platform;
- Proactively use resources available to employees to improve communication and public outreach;
- Understand and apply best practices relative to individual platforms;
- Communicate department structure or personnel changes to the Public Affairs Department and schedule training as needed;
- Participate in ad hoc training as required by the Public Affairs Department.

IV. TERMS OF USE

Employees monitor all City social media and digital platforms routinely to ensure compliance to City and third-party policies and terms of use relative to each platform. Employees and public users must comply to the Terms of Use and enforcement of this policy and applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

The City's social media and digital platforms are hosted on third-party platforms. All users are subject to each platform or site copyright and terms of service.

To the extent permitted by applicable law, by using the City's social media and digital platforms, the user agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City of Denton, its employees, officers, representatives, and agents from and against all claims and expenses, including attorney's fees, arising out of the user's use of the City's social media and digital platforms.

City-Curated Content

1. Content curated by the City may contain links to other social media pages or websites that are not administered by the City.
2. References, links, or content on a City platform should not be considered an endorsement by the City or its departments or employees. "Retweets," "likes," or "shares" does not constitute an endorsement.

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3. The City is not responsible for and does not guarantee the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness, nor security of content of a link.
4. Content such as images, video, audio, and other intellectual property is subject to copyright law. Employees are encouraged to evaluate sources and conduct a fair use analysis.
5. The City may post a reference or link based any of the following criteria;
 - a) The link represents a public agency or educational institutions;
 - b) The link represents a local nonprofit organization or public service;
 - c) The link represents a public social service or not for profit opportunity;
 - d) The link provides information about local arts, humanities, culture, or education;
 - e) The link serves as a resource for crime prevention or public safety;
 - f) The link represents an approved City partnership or sponsorship agreement.

City-Curated Photographs

1. Photographs taken by the City at public events or in public spaces may be posted on social media, however, if minors are photographed, Staff should consider the guidelines below:
 - a. It is permissible to take photographs of minors at public events, but Staff should consider notifying guardians that photographs will be taken. This can be done through signage at the event or through a form/notice.
 - b. When taking photos of minors for paid event promotion/advertising, not including paid advertising to increase social media impressions and reach (commonly referred to as “boosting”), parental waivers must be signed before featuring minors on social media or any other advertising medium. The City’s standard parental waivers can be obtained from the Public Affairs Department.
 - c. Photographs focusing on children must not invade their privacy. For example, photos should not be taken from changing rooms, and staff should exercise caution regarding photos of minors in swimsuits or in poses that could in any way be construed as sexual.

User-Generated Content

1. User-generated content reflects the view and opinion of the user only and does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City, nor does the content reflect the views of the City.
2. User-generated content must not violate the privacy of others and should not include or share personal information, such a social security number, phone number, or email address on any platform.
3. The City reserves the right to hide, restrict, or remove from view any content or link that is deemed a violation of this policy or any applicable law. The City also reserves the right to report a violation applicable to third-party platform policies and guidelines. The City may remove user-generated content that includes, but is not limited to:
 - a) Abusive, vulgar, or profane content;
 - b) Personal attack or threat of any kind;
 - c) Multiple repetitive content or spam;
 - d) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - e) Content that suggests, promotes, or encourages illegal activity;
 - f) Political endorsements of parties, candidates, or groups;

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- g) Commercial endorsements of products, services, organizations, or other entities;
- h) Content that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- i) Content that incites, promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability status, national origin, genetics, or any protected classification under federal or state law.

V. PUBLIC RECORD, SECURITY, AND PRIVACY COMPLIANCE*Record Retention Compliance*

A public record is subject to compliance with the Texas Public Information Act and City of Denton record retention policy and requirements. Questions regarding records retention schedules and regulations should be directed to the City Secretary, and technical questions regarding the City's social media archival tool should be directed to the Public Affairs Department. A public record can exist in different forms such as paper, email, and social media and will be captured, recorded, and retained accordingly:

1. *Automated Retention*

The Public Affairs Department oversees the capture and storage of public records and maintains a retention schedule compliant with state code. The City uses a cloud-based archiving repository application to automatically archive and store social media and City website pages.

2. *Manual Retention*

In the event a platform is incompatible with the archive application, the page administrator will preserve the record(s) on the City server and include the following to maintain the integrity of the public record: document and capture the user ID or name, a timestamp of the content, any applicable edit history, a high resolution of any associated content, content removed from public view.

3. *Social Media Retention Consideration*

Social Media should reflect duplicate information that is native to a City administered website and not be the source of new content. If new content is created on a City social media page, it must be captured and stored by the automated archive application. In the event, new content is native to a social media page that is not captured by the City's archive application, and the employee must process manual retention. If content is posted on a City page and then subsequently reposted to a community page, the repost is considered a duplicate or reference copy and does not need to be manually retained, providing the repost does not generate new content that is not duplicated in the original post or on a City website.

Security and Privacy Compliance

The Public Affairs Department maintains an inventory of social media pages, digital platforms, domains, login credentials, and applicable passwords, as needed. Employees are responsible for computer equipment and technology systems compliance per the Technology Services User Authorization, Identification, and Accountability, Policy 506.02, city-wide training, and requirements that help mitigate security risks and avoid exposure to viruses, malware, and other digital security threats. To protect user security and the privacy of others, employees will not include or share personal information, such a social security number, phone numbers or email addresses on social media and/or digital platforms.

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To protect user privacy and the privacy of others, do not include or share personal information, such a social security number, phone numbers, or email addresses on social media and/or digital platforms.

VI. POLICY ENFORCEMENT

Employees who distribute or post communication by way of social media, or other means, which has the effect of any of the following: destroying the efficiency of City employees in performing their duties; impairing harmony; interfering with or disrupting City operations or functions; undermining authority; or which prevents successful service with employees' superiors or close working relationships which are essential to fulfill public responsibilities, or the ability for employees to perform their duties effectively, may be subject to disciplinary action. See the City's disciplinary policy regarding unbecoming conduct (109.01, Section V-B).

The Texas Public Information Act ensures access to public information. Therefore, employees will not delete or hide content from public view unless the content is prohibited and in violation of this policy, and permission is granted by the Public Affairs Department.

Employees who fail to comply with the standards and procedures outlined in this policy may be subject to corrective action, including and up to dismissal.