

Title: Creating and Using City of Andrews Social Media		
Category: Communication		
Reference Number: PR 1	Initial Effective Date: 01/01/2020	Last Revision Date:

1) SCOPE

This administrative directive provides guidelines for (1) creating City social media sites, (2) governing employees posting to social media on the City's behalf, and (3) governing citizens' postings and comments.

2) DEFINITIONS

Social Media are third-party websites which allow for the creation of content and dialogue around a specific issue or area of interest.

City Social Media Sites are those pages, sections or posting locations in Social Media websites that are established or maintained by an employee of the City who is authorized to do so as part of the employee's job, and that are used to conduct City business, communicate with officeholders or City Staff, and/or communicate with or gather feedback from residents and other interested parties.

City Social Media Content is information posted or provided to a City Social Media Site by a City employee (or authorized representative) when such activity is a part of the employee's job duties.

3) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Department Director to ensure that employees are aware of these guidelines for creating and maintaining social media resources.

Any department establishing a City Social Media Site shall first establish the position of site administrator who shall have responsibility for operating and maintaining the site. Administrators should report to a Director when an issue about a citizen's comment or question is outside the administrator's realm of knowledge. Moderators are responsible for ensuring information given is accurate. They shall never misrepresent themselves using a false name when acting on behalf of the City. Comments shall be deleted if they violate the rules for public comment set forth herein. To ensure reader clarity, administrators should re-read their posts and comments, prior to submitting. Also, they should check for grammar and spelling errors. The assigned administrator is

also responsible for ensuring that all City records created or maintained on City Social Media Sites are retained according to the Department Records Retention Schedule and the Texas Public Information Act and are properly preserved or disposed of.

City employees are responsible for ensuring all contributions to social media sites adhere to the standards of conduct outlined in this policy. All applicable City of Andrews policies governing employee conduct and communications apply in the administration of this policy.

The City Manager will be the coordinating authority for review, approval, monitoring and governance of any approved City social media sites.

4) PROCEDURE

A. General Governance of City Social Media Sites:

- i. City Social Media Sites may contain information that represents the City's position on policy issues and/or the positions of its leadership, or may create the appearance of representing such positions. For this reason, all City Social Media Sites will be approved by the City Manager in advance of creating the site.
- ii. All City Social Media Sites should be created in such a way as to allow the City Manager to have full administrative rights over the site at all times – including closure of the site.
- iii. Employees creating or posting information to a City Social Media Site must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City and in accord with all relevant Personnel policies.
- iv. Employees found in violation of any part of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- v. The City Manager may disable a City Social Media site or prohibit posting of City Social Media Content to a site at any time or for any reason, including without limitation any violation of any part of this policy, unprofessional use of the resource, lack of use or disinterest by the public, or a department's failure to maintain the site.
- vi. Any employee using City Social Media Sites, whether as an administrator or as a responder to a posting, will follow these guiding principles:
 1. Unless posting or responding as the site administrator, employees should maintain transparency by using his/her given name and job title, and by being clear about his/her role in regards to the subject.

2. Write and post about his/her area of expertise, especially as related to the City and daily assignment(s). When writing about a topic for which an employee is not the City's expert, make this clear to readers.
3. Keep postings factual and accurate. If a mistake is made, admit it and post a correction as soon as possible.
4. Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. When disagreeing with others' opinions or providing comments, be sure that the comments are meaningful, respectful and relevant to the topic.
5. Understand the postings are widely accessible, not retractable, and retained or referenced for a long period of time, so consider content carefully.
6. Ensure comments do not violate the City's privacy, confidentiality and applicable legal guidelines for external communication. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties with whom the City may be in litigation without the appropriate approval.
7. Refrain from the expression of personal opinions or positions regarding policies, programs or practices of other public agencies, political organizations, private companies or non-profit groups.

B. Design and Content of City Social Media Sites:

- i. City Social Media Sites should be focused and limited in scope and topic, and should complement rather than replace the City's existing web resources. General "departmental" pages and associated content should be managed within current City websites.
- ii. Include summaries of information and direct readers to the official City of Andrews Web site for complete stories, press releases, articles, and more.
- iii. Self-promotion and personal advertising are not allowed.
- iv. Information that is proprietary, copyrighted, attorney-client privileged, subject to state or federal privacy laws, and information not subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act should NOT be posted on a City Social Media Site.
- v. A clear statement of the intent, purpose and subject matter of the site, as well as a statement clearly articulating that all content and comments

posted to the site are subject to public disclosure laws, should be clearly posted on any City Social Media Site.

- vi. In the “About Us” or other appropriate section, include the words “Official City of Andrews [Police, Code Compliance, etc.] Facebook/Instagram Page.”
- vii. Design elements (logos, background, images) should be appropriate to the subject matter and consistent with existing City design elements.

C. Public Comments and Interactive Features:

- i. City Social Media Site accounts must be set up in a way that either maximizes public comments or limits the resource to organizational postings only.
- ii. Membership to a City Social Media Site should not be required in order for the public to post comments. If this is not possible, then a City e-mail contact must be posted as an alternative for providing comments.
- iii. Interactivity and commenting on sites fall within three distinct categories:
 - 1. “Push” sites which do not allow public comments.
 - 2. “Limited forum” sites that clearly define a specific topic for discussion.
 - 3. “Open forum” sites that do not limit the topic of discussion.
- iv. A City department that creates a City Social Media Site that permits interactivity and comments should provide a disclaimer on the site that posted comments do not necessarily reflect the views or position of the City.
- v. Editing public comments posted on an “open forum” by the Department that maintains the site is permitted if the comments:
 - 1. Clearly violate the site’s terms of service;
 - 2. Contain information about City business or operations that is confidential and non-public;
 - 3. Would reasonably be considered pornographic, obscene, or defamatory in nature;
 - 4. Directly promote or advocate violence or the threat of violence;

5. Are solicitations of commerce or promotion of private business enterprises;
 6. Contain or link to inappropriate sexual content;
 7. Encourage or promote illegal activity;
 8. Include information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 9. Do not pertain to the topic under discussion; including comments containing links to other websites or pages which are not relevant to the topic under discussion;
 10. Are in support of, in opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or ballot measures;
 11. Contain profane language or content;
 12. Promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws;
 13. Include references to or inappropriate characterizations of individuals including personal attacks upon any member of the public, City employee or City official;
 14. Appear to violate the legal ownership interest of any other party; or
 15. Contain individually identifiable information (e.g. address, phone number and social security number) of specific individuals, be they City employees, officials or members of the public.
- vi. If photos, video, or other media are solicited through a site, all must be accepted and posted unless they fail to meet the guidelines stated above.
- vii. All public comments and posted media files inclusive of an edited content must be archived and stored in accord with requirements of Texas and federal laws and city records retention policies.