

# **ANTRIM COUNTY Social Media Internal Use Policy**

## **1.0 Purpose**

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for Antrim County. Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs can improve interactivity between government agencies and the public, reaching new and different populations from traditional media sources. Antrim County supports the use of social media technology to enhance and improve communication, collaboration, information exchange, and transparency with the public. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist in making responsible decisions about the use of social media, the County has established these guidelines for its appropriate use.

## **2.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all Antrim County employees, volunteers, or any individual who officially represents Antrim County in the creation of or contribution to social media for Antrim County.

## **3.0 Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of digital communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Antrim County, as well as any other form of digital communication.

This policy is for the mutual protection of the County and its employees, volunteers, and representatives, and is not intended to prevent, discourage, or unduly limit their expression of personal opinion or online activities.

The same principles and guidelines found in Antrim County policies apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, adversely affects employees or members of the community, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Carefully read these guidelines, the Antrim County Social Media Public Use Policy, the Antrim County Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy, and the Discrimination & Harassment Policy to ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Antrim County recognizes that many individuals use electronic social media networking sites, and in accordance with Michigan's Internet Privacy Protection Act, Antrim County will not (1) request access to pages of private internet account that are not visible to the public; (2) request passwords to allow access to private pages; or (3) discipline any individual who refuses/fails to

provide such access or passwords in the absence of a valid search warrant, court order and/or subpoena.

Postings on social media networking sites are permanent and may have legal consequences. Given the potential ramifications to Antrim County and its departments, it is establishing guidelines for employee use of social media. Employees are required to abide by these guidelines, even outside of work, as a condition of employment.

Employees will be held personally accountable for their posts. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including termination, and may result in legal action, if appropriate. This policy is not intended and does not infringe on employees' rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

## **4.0 Use of Social Media**

### **4.1 Personal**

- Refrain from using social media while at work or while using Antrim County devices/equipment, unless it is work-related as authorized by your Supervisor.
- Do not use a County email address when using social media in a personal capacity.
- If you identify yourself as an Antrim County employee, official, or representative when conducting personal social media activities, state in your profile that your comments are not representative of Antrim County. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Antrim County."
- Social media sites are not the proper forum for venting complaints about Antrim County in order to accomplish positive change. All employees who have complaints or suggestions related to their employment are encouraged to communicate directly with their supervisor or Human Resources.
- While such settings are not fool proof, employees, officials, and representatives should use privacy settings, when appropriate, to prevent personal information from becoming public. Employees should also be aware that anonymous postings do not necessarily remain anonymous.
- Employees, officials and representatives are required to avoid copyright and trademark infringements, and never use any images, branding materials, or trademarks without permission of the owner.
- Other employees, officials, and representatives may respond to an official post, but must include a disclaimer that reflects that the content contained therein is in no relation to their professional duties as an employee of Antrim County. Employees shall, in no way, attempt to convey their position as the official County position.

### **4.2 Professional**

- Only authorized agents may post content to social media pages on behalf of a department.
- Maintain the confidentiality of Antrim County private or confidential information. Do not post confidential reports, policies, procedures or other confidential communications regulated by County, State, or Federal rules or statutes.

- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to an Antrim County website without identifying yourself as an Antrim County employee, official or representative.
- Do not use personal social media accounts for work purposes.
- Do not post information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Refrain from posting copyrighted material or other content that violates the legal ownership interest of another party.

## **5.0 Authorized Use**

Elected Officials and Department Heads are responsible for designating who is authorized to use, maintain, and monitor social media on behalf of the department and for determining appropriate access levels. The Information Technology Department will oversee all official department social media accounts.

## **6.0 Site Content**

Departments are responsible for establishing and maintaining content posted to their social media sites. Social media is a 24/7 medium; however, our monitoring capabilities are not. Inappropriate comments should be handled appropriately when discovered. Legitimate and reasonable comments and questions will receive a response as soon as practicable.

## **7.0 Records Retention**

Because social media sites are not government sites, they do not follow the State of Michigan Record Retention Laws and Policies for Local Government. Social media conducted on behalf of the County is subject to these laws and policies and to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). You must follow the State's record retention laws and policies.

More information about the State's record retention laws can be found at the State of Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget website.

[https://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/0,5552,7-358-82548\\_21738\\_31548---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/0,5552,7-358-82548_21738_31548---,00.html)

Departments are responsible for the creation, administration and deactivation of social media accounts. Be prepared to treat each comment, post, photo, and list of individuals connected to a social media site as an open record. Do not assume third-party platforms such as Facebook and Twitter will keep accurate records of your content.

Under the State's record retention rules, many of the items and documents you might post, such as notices of special events or holidays, and copies of documents in your department's possession do not need to be saved permanently. You must save a copy of these materials only until the event has passed, the case is closed, the project is completed, or the information has served its useful purpose. Most tweets and posts fall into this category because of the transient and temporary nature and because they do not perform a governmental function or create a County policy. However, you must be prepared to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests or to produce documents and materials pursuant to a lawsuit. If you post something that is the only record of a County operation or is the only record that a County function has been performed, you must keep a copy.

Content deemed inappropriate, once discovered, shall be promptly documented (screenshot/printout), and saved per the retention policy and then removed immediately.

**Related Policies:**

**Antrim County Social Media Public Use Policy**

**Antrim County Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy**

**Antrim County Discrimination and Harassment Policy**