

Come discuss with Patty Gamin May 25, 2023 11:45 - 1:15

## What is a workplace social media policy:

A social media policy is part of your business code of conduct that tells employees how they should represent themselves and the District on social media. It includes guidelines to protect the District's security, privacy and legal interests.

## Benefits of having a social media policy:

With the current popularity of social media, employees need to know when and if their conduct on social media platforms can affect their employment. Whenever an employee's conduct could be called into question, it is good employment practice to have a policy in place to guide both management and employees. Some individuals need extra guidance because they might be tempted to do something that could "cause a stir" about or within the District. Better safe than sorry!

## What to include in a social media policy:

Your policy needs to outline clear, comprehensive guidance, beginning with a **statement of purpose**.

For example: The (District name) does not encourage or discourage employees to have an active voice and presence on social media. However, social communities are where many people communicate and this policy will outline the District's guidelines regarding such communication.

Next, **who does the policy apply to:**

The District's social media policy applies to all District employees and volunteers, full or part-time; seasonal or permanent. It applies to these employees/volunteers when they use social media during or after work to post District-related information.

What is meant by District-related:

- \* photos taken at work or at district-sponsored events
- \* photos taken of fellow employees (any District); partners/customers/clients
- \* confidential or personal information pertaining to partners, clients, prospects, or employees of any District
- \* District owned content such as blogs, presentations, videos, reports, etc.

What do we mean by Social Media:

\*any online platform where you may be interacting-personally or professionally-with others, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

\* Photo-sharing networks such as Instagram

\* Video-sharing networks, such as YouTube or Periscope

\* Discussion forums such as Reddit

\* Q&A based networks such as Quora

\* Review platforms such as Yelp and Google Reviews

Always think before posting. Ensure that your status or image updates won't have any negative effects. Check your facts. Respect the law (including copyright law). Avoid saying negative things about the District or others involved with the District.

Disclose your Affiliation: If you talk about work related matters that are within your area of job responsibility, you must disclose your affiliation with the District.

State That It's Your Opinion: When commenting on the District, unless authorized to speak on behalf of the District, state that the views expressed are your own.

Protect Yourself: Be careful about what personal information you share online.

Your policy should also include statements against:

- Sharing proprietary or confidential District information
- Posting defamatory, derogatory or inflammatory content
- Posting information or pictures that imply illegal conduct

Clarify who can speak on behalf of the District on social media.

## Using social media during work hours (personal as opposed to work):

Unless you are specifically authorized to speak for the District because of your position or because of a special assignment, using social media during work hours for any reason is strictly prohibited. You may use social media for personal use during your breaks, lunch hours and off-duty hours.

## Policies for employees what can and can't they say on their personal page:

See above.

## What can or shouldn't be posted on social media district pages:

See above.

## Corrective action for an employee if they violate policy's:

Same as other corrective action. What is the severity of the infraction? Progressive action based on severity. Verbal warning, written warning, suspension and/or dismissal if infraction warrants.

## Samples from other policies:

This policy has been developed in recognition of the growing popularity of and participation in online social media. The District is supportive of employees participating in social media in their personal time to keep in touch with their friends, share information or become involved in online discussions.

However, for employees who use social media either as part of their job or in a personal capacity, it is important to understand employment obligations when the line communication is about the District, our services, other employees, or other work related issues.

Although many users may consider their personal comments posted on social media or discussions on social networking sites to be private, these communications are frequently available to a larger audience than the author may realize.

As a result, any online communication that directly or indirectly refers to the District, it's services, District Board and/or employees, or other work-related issues, has the potential do damage the District's reputation or interests.

When participating in social media in a personal capacity, employees must:

- \* Not disclose District confidential information or sensitive information. Information is considered confidential when it is not readily available to the public. If you are in doubt about whether information is confidential, ask your supervisor before disclosing any information.
- \* Not communicate anything that might damage the District's reputation, image, interests or the confidence of our clients/customers.

- \* Not represent or communicate on behalf of the District in the public domain, without prior approval of the District Manager.
- \* Not post any material that would directly or indirectly defame, harass, discriminate against or bully any District employee, supplier, or client/customer.
- \* Ensure, when identifying themselves (or when they may be identified) as a District employee, that their social media communications:
  - \* Are lawful; and
  - \* Comply with District policies and procedures

When engaging on social media, employees should:

- \* exercise care and discretion with their use of online communication. Employees would work on the assumption that content may be viewed by, sent, forwarded, or transmitted to someone other than who was intended to view the communication;
- \* take care not to disclose other people's personal information or publish images of others without permission. Be aware that people may be readily identifiable even when names are not used;
- \* use common sense and respect others in posts and discussions. If an employee disagrees with the opinion of another, they should keep responses appropriate and inoffensive;
- \* adopt the simple practice of stepping back, re-reading and thinking about what they post before doing so.