



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

1.6 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for the responsible use of social media platforms by employees, authorized users and representatives of the City of Providence. This policy aims to protect the reputation of the municipality, safeguard sensitive information, and encourage the use of social media in a constructive, ethical, and professional manner.

Scope

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, temporary, contract employees, including interns, fellows and volunteers of the City of Providence.

Nothing in this policy shall supersede, modify, or diminish any rights, benefits, or obligations contained within applicable collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) or laws. In the event of a conflict between this policy and a CBA, the CBA shall prevail for covered employees. For all other employees not covered by a CBA, this policy shall govern.

Policy

For the purposes of this policy, "social media" includes any platform or medium for posting or sharing content online, including but not limited to web logs (blogs), social networking sites, video sharing platforms, messaging services, forums, and other online or app based spaces. This policy covers all forms of electronic communication, whether the content is for personal or professional reasons. Employees are ultimately responsible for their online actions and content. Before posting or sharing information, employees should assess the potential impact on their work, colleagues, and the City of Providence.

1. General Guidelines

A. **Respect and Professionalism:**

1. Employees should maintain a high level of professionalism in their interactions on social media.
2. Any behavior that harasses, discriminates, or violates the rights of others will not be tolerated.
3. Threats of violence, or any other unlawful or inappropriate content will also not be tolerated.
4. Work-related complaints should be resolved through direct communication with the parties involved, management, or Department of People and Culture, not through social media.
5. Avoid making posts that could be seen as malicious, offensive, threatening, or that could create a hostile work environment. Any content that disparages others or causes harm to the reputation of colleagues or stakeholders is strictly prohibited.

B. **Transparency:**

1. Employees should avoid making any statements that could be seen as representing the views or positions of the City of Providence.
2. When posting on social media in a personal capacity about city-related matters or using its name in any personal social media posts, employees must clearly identify themselves as City employees and ensure the link is relevant and appropriate.
3. Employees should identify that they are stating their private opinion by including a disclaimer such as "these opinions are my own and do not reflect the views of the City of Providence" or a similar statement.

C. **Confidentiality and Privacy:**



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

1. Employees should not share any confidential City information, employee, constituent or client details, or proprietary data on social media.
2. Sensitive, non-public City information, trade secrets, financial data, and internal operations should not be disclosed.

D. **Honesty and Accuracy:**

1. Employees should be honest and accurate when posting information or sharing news. Any mistakes should be promptly corrected, and posts that have been altered should be disclosed as such.
2. Given the permanent nature of online content, even deleted posts can be retrieved, so employees should refrain from posting false or misleading information about the City of Providence, its employees, or its partners.

E. **Reputation Management:**

1. Be mindful of the City's reputation when posting. Do not post anything that could damage the image or credibility of the City of Providence.
2. Employees should avoid engaging in negative discussions about the City, colleagues, constituents/clients online.

F. **Media Contacts**

1. Employees should refrain from speaking on behalf of the City of Providence to the media without first consulting the Department of Communications.
2. All media inquiries must be directed to the Department of Communications to ensure consistency and accuracy in the City's public messaging.

G. **Compliance with Laws and Regulations:**

1. All social media activities must comply with relevant laws, including defamation, harassment, and privacy laws.
2. Employees must adhere to the rules and guidelines set by the social media platforms they use.

H. **Personal Social Media Use:**

1. Personal accounts should not be used for work-related purposes unless explicitly authorized by a department director.
2. Employees are prohibited from using social media for personal purposes during work.
3. Personal use of City email addresses for social media accounts is also prohibited.

2. **Guidelines for Work-Related Social Media Use:**

A. **Authorized Accounts:**

Only authorized employees are permitted to manage or post on official social media accounts. Authorization will be determined by department directors or senior management.

B. **Content Creation:**

1. All work-related content shared on official social media accounts should be accurate, appropriate, and align with the City's values, mission, and goals.
2. Any work-related content should be reviewed and approved by the designated Department of Communications or Social Media Manager before being published.

C. **Respect for Intellectual Property:**

1. Ensure that all content posted on social media complies with copyright and intellectual property laws. Do not share material that is not owned or licensed to you.
2. Properly credit authors, photographers, designers, or creators when sharing their content.

D. **Engagement:**

1. Engage with the audience in a positive, respectful, and helpful manner.
2. Respond to questions or complaints in a timely manner but avoid responding to negative comments or criticism impulsively. Direct such queries to the appropriate channels or department.



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

3. **Compliance**

- A. The City reserves the right to monitor social media activities related to the City's interests and reputation.
- B. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, which could include warnings, suspension, or termination depending on the severity of the infraction.

Related Policies:

Email Use Policy

Information and Systems Security Policy / Information Technology Policy

Discipline Policy

Code of Conduct

Personal Wireless Devices

Workplace Recording and Surveillance Policy

Other Related Information:

Local 1033 [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)