

Borough of Paramus Social Media Communication Policy

Social media provides inexpensive, informal and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public; therefore, employees must adhere to the following guidelines for their participation in social media.

Only those Employees directly authorized by the Borough Administrator may engage in social media activity during work time through the use of the Borough of Paramus Communication Media, as it directly relates to their work and it is in compliance with this policy.

Employees must not reveal or publicize confidential Borough of Paramus information. Confidential proprietary or sensitive information may be disseminated only to individuals with a need and a right to know, and where there is sufficient assurance that appropriate security of such information will be maintained. Such information includes, but is not limited to the transmittal of personnel information such as medical records or related information. In law enforcement operations, confidential, proprietary or sensitive information also includes criminal history information, confidential informant identification, and intelligence and tactical operations files.

No Borough of Paramus employee shall post internal working documents to social media sites. This includes, but is not limited to, screenshots of computer stations, pictures of monitors and/or actual documents themselves without the prior approval of the Borough of Paramus Administrator. In addition employees are prohibited from releasing or disclosing any photographs, pictures, digital images of any crime scenes, traffic crashes, arrestees, detainees, people or job related incident or occurrence taken with the Borough of Paramus's Communication Media to any person, entity, business or media or Internet outlet whether on or off duty without the express written permission of the Borough Administrator. Except in "emergency situations," Employees are prohibited from taking digital images or photographs with media equipment not owned by the Borough of Paramus. For purposes of this section, an "emergency situation" involves a sudden and unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action, assistance or relief, and may include accidents, crimes and flights from accidents or crimes and the employee does not have access to the Borough of Paramus's Communication Media. If such situation occurs, employee agrees that any images belong to the Borough of Paramus and agree to release the image to the Borough of Paramus and ensure its permanent deletion from media device upon direction from the Borough of Paramus.

Only authorized personnel can communicate on behalf of the Borough. All others, when expressing their opinion, must explicitly state that their opinions are their own and are not the opinions of the Borough. Personal social media postings cannot be done during work time. Under no circumstances may information of a confidential or otherwise proprietary nature be placed or posted on the Internet or otherwise disclosed to anyone outside the Borough of Paramus*. Such unauthorized communications may result in disciplinary action.

Because (authorized) postings placed on the Internet through use of the Borough of Paramus' Communication Media will display on the Borough of Paramus' return address, any information posted on the Internet must reflect and adhere to all of the Borough of Paramus' standards and policies.

All users are personally accountable for messages that they originate or forward using the Borough of Paramus' Communication Media. Misrepresenting, obscuring, suppressing, or replacing a user's identity on any Communication Media is prohibited. "Spoofing" (constructing electronic communications so that it appears to be from someone else without a legitimate authorized purpose and authorized by the Borough Administrator is prohibited.

Employees must respect the laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, rights of the public, the Borough of Paramus and other third-party rights. Any use of the Borough of Paramus' name, logos, service marks or trademarks outside the course of the employee's employment, without the express consent of the Borough of Paramus, is strictly prohibited. To minimize the risk of a copyright violation, employees should provide references to the source(s) of information used and cite copyrighted works identified in online communications.

If employees choose to identify themselves as a Borough of Paramus employee on their personal social media accounts, and even those that do not, should be aware that he or she may be viewed as acting on behalf of the Borough of Paramus. No employee may represent themselves as a spokesperson of the Borough of Paramus unless authorized to do so. When authorized to post on the behalf of the borough, any text, photo, audio, video or other multimedia file must first be approved by the Borough Administrator.

Generally speaking, we prohibit any Borough Employee from posting anything on behalf of the Borough or to post a comment on behalf of the Borough which negatively reflects upon the Borough of Paramus, which violates the trust the public places in the Borough of Paramus, or which violates any of our policies, including but not limited to our Anti-harassment and equal employment opportunities policies. Borough of Paramus employees are encouraged to exercise extreme caution posting photographs of themselves in uniform or in situations where they can be readily identified as Borough employees. Employees must keep in mind that, if they post information on a social media site that is in-violation of Borough of Paramus policy and/or federal, state or local laws, the disclaimer that they are not posting on behalf of the Borough of Paramus will not shield them from disciplinary action. If seen as a violation of the Borough of Paramus' policies (i.e. Anti-harassment Policy or law).

*Please note this policy is not intended to preclude or dissuade employees from engaging in any legally protected activities protected by state or federal law, including the National Labor Relations Act, such as discussing wages, benefits or terms and conditions of employment.