
SOCIAL MEDIA

Employees who elect to use or contribute to online media are not only impacting their own personal images, but potentially that of this Township. The purpose of this policy is to reasonable guidelines. This policy is not meant to restrict communications protected by state or federal law. It is similarly not designed to preclude or dissuade discussions among employees about wages, terms and conditions of employment or to restrict employees from complaining about working conditions or other legally protected or required activities. The Township respects the privacy of its personnel.

Definitions

Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic or topics that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for “Web log.”

Content: Any information posted to an internet (web) based media or social networking site, including (but not limited to) written, audio, photographic, or video information.

Forum: A web-based meeting place designed for the discussion of questions of public interest.

Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual (or individuals) with administrator rights.

Post: Content an individual shares on a social media site; the act of publishing content on a site. Posts are not limited to blog postings, but also include comments, videos and other images.

Profile: Biographical, philosophical, and/or personal information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

Social Media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. Forms of social media include, but is not limited to, social networking sites (such as Facebook, MySpace), micro-blogging sites (such as Twitter, Nixle), photo and video sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), personal blogs, social bookmarks (such as Digg and Delicious) and news sites (NJ.com, Digg, Reddit, Huffington Post, etc.)

Social Networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies and content.

Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

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When communicating in social media you ACT AT YOUR OWN PERIL.

Township personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of this Township for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Township, except to the extent that discussions are related to a dispute or concern about the employees' terms and conditions of employment.

1. As public employees, Township personnel are cautioned that speech on- or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties—that is, that owes its existence to the employee's professional duties and responsibilities—is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the Township.
2. Township personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access, and has not been previously been made public, as a result of their employment without written permission from the Township Manager.
3. For safety and security reasons, Township personnel are cautioned not to disclose their employment with this Township nor shall they post information pertaining to any other member.
 - a. Shall not display Township logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal web pages.
 - b. Are cautioned not to post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause them to be identified as an employee of this Township. Your Internet posting(s) should reflect your personal point of view, not the point of view of the Township. You are personally responsible for all online activity conducted with a Township email address and/or which can be traced back to the Township's domain name, and/or which uses the Township's resources, including, but not limited to, Township computer equipment and/or networks, and telecommunication devices such as cell phones, smart phones, tablets and other electronic and/or mobile devices. This also includes activity conducted on personal social networks that reference your affiliation with the Township or your status as an employee of the Township.

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- c. If you identify yourself as a Township employee in any manner on any internet posting or blog, comment on any aspect of the Township's business or post a link to the Township, you must include the following disclaimer in an *openly visible* location:
 - i. "The views expressed on this post are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Township of Lawrence or anyone associated/affiliated with the Township of Lawrence."
- d. When using social media, Township personnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to the Township's code of conduct is required in the personal use of social media. In particular, Township personnel are prohibited from the following:
 - i. Posting, transmitting, or otherwise disseminating information to which they have access as a result of their employment without written permission from the Township Manager;
 - ii. Divulging information gained by reason of their authority;
 - iii. Divulging information or facts about any citizen, situation, or investigation that they have knowledge of through their work as a Township employee;
 - iv. Making any statements or publishing materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of the Township, without written permission from the Township Manager;
 - v. Posting information pertaining to any facet of the Township's operation;
 - vi. Posting information pertaining to any other member of the Township include disparaging comments about co-workers, managers, or residents that are not related to a dispute or concern over working conditions;
 - vii. Impairing working relationships within the Township, for which loyalty and confidentiality are important;
 - viii. Impeding the performance of their duties;
 - ix. Interfering with discipline and harmony among coworkers;
 - x. Harassing, threatening, discriminating against, bullying or intimidating other employees or residents;
 - xi. Appealing to racial, ethnic, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status;

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- xii. Negatively affecting the public perception of the Department;
- xiii. Otherwise violating any other provision of this handbook;
- xiv. Township personnel may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this Township without express authorization from the Township Manager.

Alleged violations of this policy may be investigated prior to any action being taken. However, violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Township personnel should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation); publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person; using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.

Township personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.

Township personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the Township at any time without

Township personnel should take steps to secure access to personal social media sites through password protections and other available security measures. Personnel are cautioned not to share password and or access information with any other person. As such there will be a presumption that any items, images or statements posted on Township personnel's personal social network site/blog, will have originated from the Township personnel.

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Reporting violations — any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy shall notify his or her supervisor immediately for follow-up action.

The Township shall not be liable, under any circumstances, for any errors, omissions, loss or damages claimed or incurred due to any of your Internet Postings.