

CITY OF ELMHURST SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: 1/6/16

Purpose:

The purpose of the City's Social Media Policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media on behalf of the City by the City's dually authorized employees. Rules are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the City is accurate, appropriate and properly authorized. At this time, the City's social media use refers to activity on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, and any other form of communication that is open to response or comment. This policy governs all social media use by or on behalf of the City and/or its departments and will be posted to the City's website and linked to all City social media account pages.

Overview:

The City of Elmhurst has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

1. *General Policy:* It is the general policy of the City to utilize social media as a method of providing timely information of general interest to the public through accounts created on major social media websites, which shall be monitored and maintained by authorized personnel.
2. *Single Accounts:* The City shall maintain one account on each social media website selected for use by authorized personnel and as approved by the City's Communications Manager. No Department shall create a separate account without the express written approval of the City's Communications Manager or his/her designee. The City shall have a single presence on each social media site approved for use. Any pages or sites created and/or maintained by an individual department of the City require prior approval of the Communications Manager, and shall comply with this Social Media Policy.
3. *Limits on Two-Way Communication:* In general, the City shall take all actions necessary to limit the amount of two-way communication on each of its social media accounts (including but not limited to disabling any commenting features). If deemed necessary or beneficial to the City or user, authorized personnel may interact with other users provided that the exchange is brief and factually correct and encourages the user to contact the City through another medium with further questions. Authorized personnel may use the "scenario response messaging systems" to achieve these goals if necessary but should not carry on an extended dialogue.
4. *Comments:* Authorized personnel are prohibited from deleting comments left on the City's social media accounts to protect users' First Amendment rights except those comments that are categorized under **Prohibited Content**, considered unworthy of First Amendment protection as determined by the City's Attorney.
5. *Third Party Information Sharing:* Third party information may be shared through social media so long as it conforms to the guidelines established under the goals of the City's social media plan.
6. *System Maintenance:* The City's Communications Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for monitoring the City's social media accounts and shall issue new passwords in response to personnel changes and/or periodically as a best practice for security. The City's department pages will have a designated point person who monitors the pages. The City's Communications Manager or his/her designee is responsible for enforcing the policy on all City and Department pages.
7. *Compliance with Applicable Laws:* The City's social media sites are subject to State of Illinois public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media. Content related to City business shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public disclosure officer.

8. *General Posting:* Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the City's official website. The City's Communications Manager or his/her designee shall monitor content on all social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message, and branding consistent with the goals of the City.

Prohibited Content

The purpose of identifying the Prohibited Content list below is to provide the City's Communications Manager or his/her designee with a guideline for content or comments on the City's various social media platforms that are subject to removal. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on the City's Social Media pages. A person who is under consideration for being barred from the City's social media site will first be issued a warning after improperly posting. A third warning will result in being barred from the social media page.

The following content is prohibited and subject to removal:

1. Comments unrelated to the particular post being commented upon
2. Comments that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
3. Comments containing vulgar, offensive, profane, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations as well as content that provokes violence
4. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
5. Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection ACT. By posting on the City's site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old
6. Photographs or videos unrelated to the particular post being commented upon
7. Personal information of any person such as social security numbers, driver's license numbers, bank accounts, address or telephone numbers
8. Spamming or repetitive content such as posting the same content more than 2 times in the same location
9. Sexual content or links to sexual content
10. Solicitations of commercial sales
11. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
12. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party including trade secrets (information regarding the development of systems, processes, products and technology), internal reports, policies, procedures and confidential communications

Applicability Statement

This policy shall apply to all City departments as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency or official permitted by the City to post on the City's social media sites.