



ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Number	AR 510
Responsible Department	City Manager's Office
Established/Effective Date	January 31, 2023
Latest Revision Date	January 31, 2023
Next Review & Reauthorization Date	January 2025

SUBJECT: Citywide Social Media Policy

1. **Purpose:** The City of Huntington Beach utilizes Social Media (in addition to other online and traditional communication tools) to disseminate news and information related to City business, events, services, and programs. To expand opportunities to connect and engage with Huntington Beach community members and other stakeholders, the City has established its own Social Media accounts to distribute official and timely information.

In an effort to maintain trust, as well as to direct community members and stakeholders to a consistent and accurate information source, City staff (Approved Users) will only engage on official City Social Media Network Accounts or Partner Social Media Network Accounts. The ever expanding number of Social Media Networks related to the City of Huntington Beach makes it infeasible for the City's Approved Users to properly engage or interact with non-City approved Social Media accounts, forums, and sites.

This AR 510 is intended to establish guidelines to ensure the appropriate use of the City's Social Media Network Accounts while promoting accuracy and consistency of information dissemination.

2. **Authority:** Huntington Beach City Charter, Section 401.
3. **Application:** This regulation applies to all City of Huntington Beach employees, interns, and volunteers who are granted access to the City's Social Media accounts, technology, and resources across all departments.

Establishment of City Social Media Network Accounts and access must be granted in writing by the Department Director overseeing the applicable Social Media account, the Public Affairs Manager, and the City Manager. The City Manager at his or her sole discretion will determine the applicability of this AR in the event of a question. In addition, any contractor performing Social Media functions will be required by the contract to follow this AR.

4. **Definitions:** The following definitions shall apply to this Administrative Regulation.
 - 4.1. "Approved User": A City of Huntington Beach employee, intern, contractor, or volunteer who has authorization granted by the Department Director overseeing



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the applicable Social Media Network Account and the Public Affairs Manager to access one or more of the City of Huntington Beach's Social Media Network Accounts.

- 4.2. "Comment": A form of Social Media engagement in which a user replies to a Social Media Post.
- 4.3. "Partner Social Media Network Account": An entity or organization which can be defined as one of the following:
 - 4.3.1.1. Other governmental agency;
 - 4.3.1.2. Entities with which the City has an existing formal, contractual relationship;
 - 4.3.1.3. Educational institutions operating within the City;
- 4.4. "Post": Content shared on Social Media Network Accounts through a page or profile. A Post may contain a photo, graphic, video, written content, URL, etc.
- 4.5. "Social Media": A general term referring to all internet-enabled applications and websites that are used to share information, engage with the community, and solicit feedback.
- 4.6. "Social Media Bot": Computer programs used on Social Media Network Accounts to do various tasks while simulating human behavior. Programs use artificial intelligence, data analytics, and other programs to imitate legitimate users posting content, which may or may not be accurate or appropriate. Social Media Bots may also be programmed to behave as Trolls.
- 4.7. "Social Media Management Platform": A secure, web-based tool that allows for the management of multiple Social Media Network Accounts across various departments and devices. Examples include Sprout Social and Hootsuite.
- 4.8. "Social Media Network": A specific Social Media website that allows people to engage and share information. Examples include, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and Twitter.
- 4.9. "Social Media Network Account": A specific Social Media account or page on a Social Media website (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and Twitter) that an Approved User can Post to, allowing people to engage and share information.
- 4.10. "Troll": A commonly referenced Social Media term for an online bully that deliberately tries to offend, cause trouble, or directly attack Social Media users and/or other entities by Posting derogatory, misleading, and/or incorrect information on Social Media.

5. **Policy:**

General Provisions

- 5.1. All City of Huntington Beach Social Media Network Accounts will be created and maintained in accordance with the City's branding guide. All City Social Media Network Accounts are to be updated to meet the City's branding guide within six months of the approval of this policy. It is the responsibility of the Department



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Director to ensure all Social Media Network Accounts and content is consistent with the City's branding guidelines on an ongoing basis.

- 5.2. All City of Huntington Beach Social Media Network Accounts will be managed and connected through the Office of Communications-designated Social Media Management Platform.
 - 5.2.1. The Public Affairs Manager will oversee the Platform and have administrative access to all Social Media Network Accounts.
 - 5.2.2. The Public Affairs Manager will provide Approved Users with access to their respective Social Media accounts through the Social Media Management Platform.
 - 5.2.3. Each Department is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of Approved Users and providing to the Office of Communications.
- 5.3. In the event of a critical incident, management and oversight of all Social Media Network Accounts will be handled by the Office of Communications. This includes the ability to post critical notices and updates across all available Social Media Network Accounts, as needed.
- 5.4. All Social Media passwords must be created and updated in accordance with guidelines from the Information Services Department.
- 5.5. All City Social Media Network Accounts will be in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and policies including, but not limited to, copyright, records retention, California Public Records Act, Brown Act, the First Amendment, privacy and employment related laws, and established City policies. The Office of Communications will maintain oversight.

Authorized Use on Official City of Huntington Beach Social Media Network Accounts

- 5.6. The establishment of all City of Huntington Beach Social Media Network Accounts will be subject to approval by the applicable Department Director, Public Affairs Manager, and City Manager. Social Media Network Accounts may not be established in the name of or associated with the City of Huntington Beach without the applicable Department Director, Public Affairs Manager, and City Manager's written approval, which will be kept on file with the Office of Communications. This requirement applies regardless of whether the account is established or already in use.
- 5.7. Department Directors and the Public Affairs Manager are responsible for identifying the Approved Users of the City's Social Media Network Accounts and for determining and granting their appropriate access levels and credentials to the account and Social Media Management Platform, as needed.
- 5.8. Approved Users must receive training from the Office of Communications on the appropriate use of Social Media, the appropriate development and release of Social Media content that is consistent with the City's branding guide, and this Administrative Regulation to ensure the promotion of unbiased and accurate content.



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- 5.9. Each Department is required to update and maintain a current list of all Approved Users and their access levels and credentials (user names and passwords) for their respective Social Media Network Accounts. Each Department must ensure all information is accurate, updated, and provided to the Office of Communications.
- 5.10. Any City employee with an Approved User's access to any City Social Media Network Account must be removed or disconnected immediately after termination, administrative leave, and/or separation from the City. If the Approved User's access credentials are unique to them, they must be deleted. If their access credentials are shared with other Approved Users, the credentials must be updated immediately with a new password and distributed to the remaining Approved Users and the Office of Communications.

Social Media Content and Posting Guidelines

- 5.11. Approved Users must ensure all City Social Media Posts and Comments are civil, factual, apolitical, and unbiased.
- 5.12. Approved Users are not to post on behalf of elected officials.
- 5.13. All Social Media Network Account content, including Posts, photos, graphics, videos, Comments, etc., should be directly related to the City of Huntington Beach.
- 5.14. Approved Users may not post content that they do not own or is not properly attributed to the creator without permission, including photos of minors without guardian's written consent.
- 5.15. All Social Media Posts and Comments must be issued through approved City Social Media Network Accounts. City personnel may not use a personal or professional Social Media profile to respond in an official capacity relating to City business.
- 5.16. All Social Media Posts and Comments are limited only to official City or partner Social Media accounts that support City business and align with the Social Media policies outlined in this regulation. A partner must have an active contract or MOU approved by the City Council to act as a partner. A complete list of these partners and their Social Media Network Accounts will be kept on file in the Office of Communications and will be shared with Approved Users.
- 5.17. Approved Users are not to engage or respond to Posts or Comments made on non-City or non-Partner Social Media Network Accounts, forums, or sites that do not follow the Social Media policies outlined in this Administrative Regulation.
- 5.18. Approved Users should consult the decision tree (Exhibit A) in deciding whether or not to respond to a Post on their respective Social Media accounts. In any event, Approved Users must use their best judgement, based on the facts and circumstances, and discuss with the Public Affairs Manager, prior to Posting. Approved Users are to avoid engaging Trolls and Bots, particularly in an argumentative or offensive manner, on political content, conversations, and Comments.



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- 5.19. All Social Media Network Accounts will Post content and be monitored regularly by Approved Users and prompt action taken when an issue arises.
- 5.20. All City Social Media Network Accounts must make use of moderation assist, muted words, or similar tool to aid in limiting profanity, vulgarity, hate speech, and other obscene language, as outlined in 5.23.
- 5.21. Posts and Comments related to City business made on non-City Social Media Network Accounts, or made by non-City Approved Users/employees or officials, do not reflect the opinions of the City of Huntington Beach and may be cause for discipline. The City of Huntington Beach only endorses the content published on approved City Social Media Network Accounts. The accuracy of information Posted relating to Huntington Beach on other Social Media accounts, forums, or sites is not confirmed by the City.
- 5.22. All Social Media Network Accounts, Posts, and Comments should link back to the City of Huntington Beach website, or other official City source, for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business.
- 5.23. Approved Users may utilize paid advertising to spread awareness of City sponsored programs and services. The City's Social Media Network Accounts may not use paid advertising to promote non-City business.
- 5.24. Approved Users are not to share news articles or media content without permission from the Public Affairs Manager.

Public Engagement on City Social Media Network Accounts

- 5.25. All Approved Users of City Social Media Network accounts are prohibited from blocking users, deleting Posts or Comments, and hiding Posts or Comments unless approved by the Public Affairs Manager after consultation with the City Manager and City Attorney.

The City of Huntington Beach has the right to remove, without notice, Posts or Comments on City Social Media Network Accounts that include the following:

- 5.25.1. Language that defames, abuses, harasses, stalks, threatens, or violates the legal rights of others.
- 5.25.2. Sexual content, profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, racism, hatred, slander, threats, and/or violence.
- 5.25.3. Personal attacks, defamatory attacks, or Comments disparaging an individual or group based on ethnicity, race, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected basis under federal or state statutes.
- 5.25.4. Vicious, or malicious statements concerning any employee, the City, or its operations.
- 5.25.5. Personal information about another person or information that violates a person's privacy.



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- 5.25.6. The endorsement or promotion of commercial entities, commercial causes, or commercial products.
- 5.25.7. The endorsement or promotion of political campaigns, candidates, or organizations.
- 5.25.8. Spam or advertisements.
- 5.25.9. Material having intellectual property rights, including copyrights, trademarks, or any other propriety property that belongs to another person or organization.
- 5.25.10. Promotion of illegal activity.
- 5.25.11. Content that compromises public safety or operations, or violates law.
- 5.26. The terms outlined in Section 5.25 must be displayed or linked on all City Social Media Network Accounts and made available on the City's website.
- 5.27. If an Approved User encounters content outlined in Section 5.25, the Approved User must contact their supervisor and the Public Affairs Manager to receive permission to block, remove, or hide the applicable Post or Comment.
- 5.28. All Social Media Posts and Comments removed, based on the standards in Section 5.25, must be retained by the Approved User pursuant to the City's Records Retention Schedule, including the time, date, and identity of the individual or group who Posted the content, if available.
- 5.29. The City reserves the right to report any account it determines may be operated by a Social Media Bot to the applicable Social Media Network with the intent of those Social Media Network Accounts taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.
- 5.30. Comments Posted by a member of the public on any City Social Media site is the opinion of the Commenter or Poster only, and publication of a Comment does not imply endorsement.


6. Responsibilities:

- 6.1. All Approved Users, must review this AR and sign an acknowledgment that they read, understand, and agree to adhere to the guidelines in this AR. This acknowledgment will be kept on file with their respective Departments and the Office of Communications prior to being provided access to Social Media Network Accounts.
- 6.2. Approved Users are responsible for complying with this regulation. Any violations of this AR will result in revoked access to Social Media Network Accounts and additional disciplinary actions as determined by the City Manager's Office.
- 6.3. Department Directors and supervisors are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- 6.4. The City Manager's Office is responsible for preparing and administering this policy.
- 6.5. The City Attorney's Office is responsible for reviewing content and approving this Administrative Regulation to form for purposes of legal compliance.

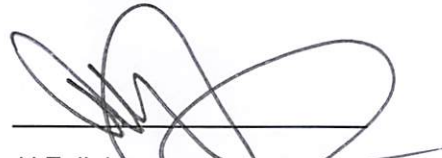


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Travis Hopkins, Assistant City Manager
Initiating Department

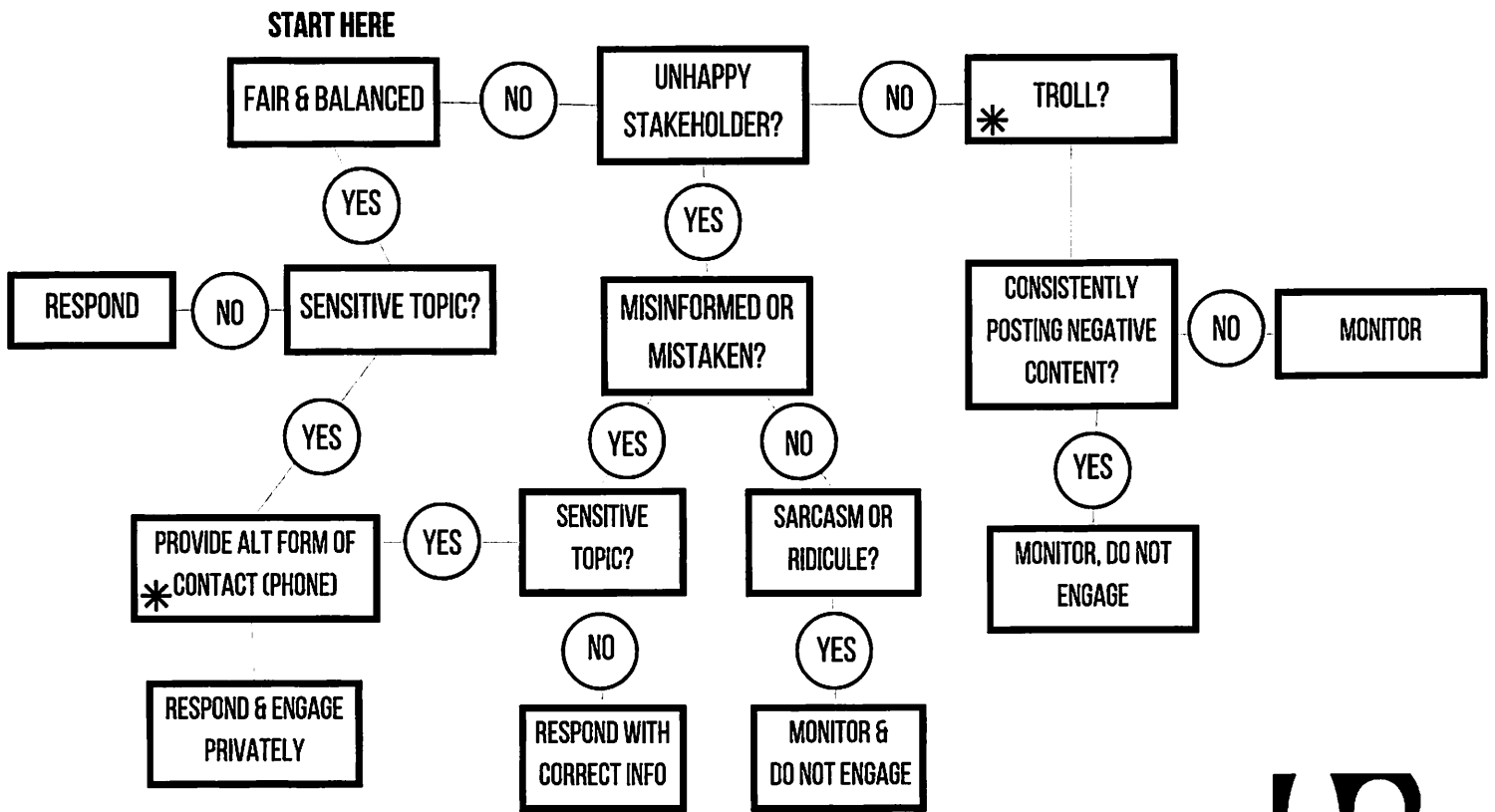

Approved to form & content
Michael Gates, City Attorney 


Al Zelinka
City Manager

The following documents can be found at the *SurfNet*:
<https://surfnet.cohb.net/policiesprocedures/SitePages/Home.aspx>

- Exhibit A: City of Huntington Beach Social Media Decision Tree

CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH SOCIAL MEDIA DECISION TREE



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY - EXHIBIT A

*NOTIFY A MANAGER

