



City of San Carlos Personnel Policies & Procedures

POLICY: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Approved: May 2016
Revised: October 2017**

Purpose

This policy provides guidance to those employees and contractors of the City of San Carlos who are authorized to post information, create pages (collectively, “post” or “posting” hereinafter), and/or participate on social networking websites and other social media services or channels. Social media, social networking and Web 2.0 are terms that describe Internet-based technology communication tools with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation and information sharing in multiple ways. Social media examples include: online forums (e.g. Open Town Hall); video posting sites (e.g. YouTube); photo sharing platforms (e.g. Instagram); social networks (e.g. Facebook); and micro-blogging services (e.g. Twitter). Social media tools can help citizens and government interact with each other in the individual’s preferred method and time schedule and foster a culture of greater civic engagement. When posting on social networking websites or other social media channels on behalf of the City, employees and contractors are, in effect, serving as the voice of the City. Therefore, all posting shall be in accordance with the policy and guidelines set forth below and the policies referenced herein.

Provisions

1. Posting information on a social media venue on behalf of the City is subject to all applicable policies of the City and the provisions within this policy.
2. Only those authorized by the City Manager are allowed to post on a social media venue on behalf of the City. Some departments, such as Police and Parks & Recreation, have been authorized to post their own content. The Sheriff’s Department has its own policy, while Parks & Recreation posts must adhere to this policy.
3. Any and all information posted, or pages created, on behalf of the City must:
 - a. Directly pertain to the City of San Carlos, to City-sponsored or co-sponsored events or activities, to events or activities of community-wide benefit, or to organizations to which the City is a member;
 - b. Contain information that is freely available to the public and that is not confidential by any policy of the City, or by local, state or federal law;
 - c. Not contain any personal information, except the names of the employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public on the topic or the contact at the member-agency;
 - d. Not include images of anyone who can be identified without first obtaining a signed release of any such person, or parent of a minor, so depicted, except as

may be allowed by law without consent, such as for publicly obtained pictures/video involving public events;

- e. Not include language of a nature that is sexually explicit, or that is lewd or obscene, racial, political, or illegal, a personal; and
 - f. Not be of a commercial nature, unless approved in advance by the City Manager, Community Relations Director or Assistant City Manager. Posts that announce functions or events officially sponsored, co-sponsored or conducted by the City or its public safety contractors are permitted and encouraged.
4. The specific social networking venue must be approved in advance by the City Manager, Community Relations Director or Assistant Manager. Approved sites include: Shape San Carlos (Open Town Hall), Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Nextdoor. Consideration for additions to the approved list shall be given to the overall nature and theme of the venue and its suitability for use for City purposes.
 5. Community Engagement is encouraged, however, any City sponsored social media venue, site or page shall not be considered a public forum, except as provided in the "Terms of Use". Public input will to be regularly monitored and comments and/or photos that are offensive or not on topic will be removed and the author notified. If an author is in violation of this policy more than once, the City may restrict this person from posting on any City social media site. If staff resources are not available for monitoring and policing of any social media site, comments may be turned off at the discretion of management.
 6. Messages and materials submitted for posting shall comply with the social media venue's "Terms of Use" policies, terms and conditions.
 7. Many social media venues include advertising materials on pages containing personal posting. Accordingly, it is important to be aware that City information may be posted so as to be readable concurrently with commercial advertising. The City does not endorse any links or advertisements placed on social media sites, including their vendors or partners.
 8. Except as expressly provided in the policy, accessing any social media venue shall otherwise comply with all application policies of the City of San Carlos pertaining to the use of the Internet by employees; including e-mail content.
 9. The inclusion of links in any post must comply with the City's official website external link policy.
 10. All postings may be considered public records and shall be kept consistent with City policies.
 11. This policy shall be complied with in all respects. Revisions to this policy may occur and every attempt will be made to provide prior notice of such change. However, when deemed necessary to fully protect the City's interests, the interests of the public, and to more fully protect the safety of the public, including employees governed by this policy, this policy may be changed without notice.
 12. Prior to posting on any social media venue, each employee with the authority to post shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt of this policy indicating that he, or she has read the policy, understood all of its provisions and has agreed to be bound by the same.

Guidelines

1. The content posted by the City on social media sites shall only pertain to City-sponsored or City-endorsed programs, services, policies, news and events, for items of general community interest, or for organizations to which the City is a member. Final determination as to the acceptability of content will be made by the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, the Community Relations Director, the Communications Coordinator (City Content Managers) or the Content Managers for the Police Department or Parks & Recreation Departments (Department Content Managers). Content may include, but is not limited to: information, photographs, videos and links.
2. Content posted to social media sites should where feasible and appropriate contain hyperlinks directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to take action regarding that content, or to conduct business with the City.
3. City social media sites may "share", "like", or "retweet" content from other City social media sites, governmental entities, non-profit organizations, or groups to which the City is a member, sponsor or co-sponsor at the discretion of the City's Content Managers.
4. Staff posting to social media sites must ensure they have full permission or rights to any content, including photos and videos.
5. Content Managers shall review, be familiar with, and comply with the social media site's use policies and terms and conditions as posted by the service provider.
6. Content Managers shall not express personal views or concerns through postings. Postings will only reflect the views of the City.
7. Postings must not contain any information deemed confidential as defined by City policy or state or federal law.
8. Postings may not contain any personal information, except for the names of employees or third parties and contact information whose job duties include being available for contact by the public and except for the names of persons who by their actions or circumstances have become public figures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I have received and reviewed the City of San Carlos Social Media Policy. I understand that it is my obligation to read and understand this material. I further understand that I must abide by the standards, rules, practices and subsequent program changes made at the management's discretion.

Printed Name

Date

Signature