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**PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The City of Milford recognizes that the role of technology is constantly expanding. In particular, social media tools (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) are seen as ways to improve communication and interactivity between City government and the public. This policy sets forth guidelines that must be adhered to with respect to utilization of social media sites for official City of Milford purposes.

This policy is designed to provide consistency and transparency regarding the use of social media by City departments and Authorized Agents who create or contribute personally or professionally to any kind of social media owned and operated on behalf of the City.

The most appropriate uses of City social media fall generally into two categories:

- As tools for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible.
- As marketing/promotional channels which increase the City’s ability to broadcast messages to the widest possible audience.

**DEFINITIONS**

*Administrator:* An employee authorized to manage a social media page, approve or deny membership requests when applicable, and/or create or change account login information.

*Authorized Agent:* An employee authorized to post social media content on behalf of the City or a City Department.

*Post:* A social media status update, or an item on a blog or forum.

*Social Media:* Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. These include, but are not limited to, forums, social networking, video and photo sharing, weblogs, micro-blogging, discussion boards, online wikis, and other websites that allow individuals or companies to publish or share content with other users.


**APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all City Officials, employees and users including, but not limited to, full time, part time, and intermittent / seasonal / special employees.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

**First Amendment**

The First Amendment provides individuals with the right to engage in protected speech without unlawful government interference. If the City establishes a social media site to communicate with the public about agency business, the First Amendment will apply to the comments and posts made by others on that site. For these reasons, no Administrator or Authorized Agent shall

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delete, hide or block posts or people based solely on the content of a message. However, the City of Milford reserves the right to adopt rules on public comments so long as the rules do not interfere with protected speech.

Comments will be screened for the following:

- Commercial advertising
- Discriminatory comments
- Links to third party sites
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language
- Anything in violation of Federal, State, and/or Local law

Anyone posting on a City of Milford social media site is acting as an agent of the City and thus, their posts are not personal and belong to the City of Milford.

Public employees have the right to exercise their First Amendment speech rights, to comment on working conditions, and to speak on matters of public concern. As a general rule, however, social media posts that fall more into the category of an individual gripe about the employee’s job or supervisor will not be considered protected and thus could result in discipline, up to and including, termination. In addition, an employee is expected to engage with his/her supervisor, Department Director, Human Resources Administrator and/or their Appointing Authority before resorting to social media when they have concerns about a workplace situation.


**City Policies**

All City of Milford Authorized Agents shall be trained regarding the terms of this policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with this policy. Where appropriate, the City’s information technology security policies shall apply to all social media sites and articles.

**Consistency**

Each social media site operated on behalf of the City shall specify the purpose and topical scope of the site. Social media sites should link back to the official City website for forms, documents and other information and not become a substitute for the City website. Furthermore, all social media sites shall clearly indicate that the City maintains them and have the City of Milford contact information prominently displayed. Non-emergency and emergency contact information for the City should also be published. Communication through social media sites should not be used for emergencies.

The use of the City of Milford logo is encouraged as a social media profile picture, however, in the event that another picture is found to be more appropriate, it may be used after approval from the Appointing Authority.

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**Endorsement**

No City or Department social media site shall endorse or otherwise cite (either with approval or disapproval) vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders. In accordance with the Participation in Political Activity section of the Employee Policy Manual, Authorized Agents may not engage in political activity during working hours and may also not engage in political activity aimed at co-workers on City owned property being used as a work area. City employees shall not use a title unless they are doing so in an official capacity or on an official site.

**Professional Use**

Only Authorized Agents may post content to social media sites on behalf of the City or a Department. Authorized Agents may not disclose any confidential or proprietary information acquired by way of their official position with the City. This restriction applies whether the information is disclosed on professional or personal social media accounts, or by any other method.

Do not use personal social media accounts for work purposes. This is to facilitate compliance with public records laws and protect information on your personal accounts from public disclosure. Authorized Agents should always consider whether it is appropriate to post an opinion online, commit a department to a course of action, or discuss areas outside of their expertise.

Authorized Agents will not use social media (i.e. responding to comments and messages or posting content) after normal City Hall hours of operation without prior approval from the Appointing Authority or Department Director. In certain circumstances, this is considered overtime, and failure to obtain prior authorization may be cause for corrective action.

**Personal Use**

City email addresses should not be used for social media in personal capacities. For example, personal Facebook or Twitter accounts should not be created using milford-de.gov email accounts. Employees who utilize a personal social media account shall avoid communicating that they are a City of Milford employee or must state in their profile that their comments are not representative of City of Milford government.

Whether or not you specify on your personal social media accounts that you work for the City, your employment with the City is public record. Be mindful that whenever you discuss issues online, whether in a personal or professional capacity, your comments can be tied back to your employment with the City of Milford. For this reason, be mindful that social media engagement is appropriate and in accordance with the City’s Employee Policy Manual.

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## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Appointing Authority will:

- Evaluate and approve all social media channels.
- Maintain a list of approved social media sites that will be utilized by the City.
- Maintain current list of account login information for all approved social media sites.
- Reinforce brand standards that are representative of the City of Milford.
- Have final authority to decide what content will be edited or removed from a department's social media page.
- Determine appropriate disciplinary action, in accordance with the Employee Policy Manual, if any Authorized Agent is found in violation of this policy.
- Designate a primary and secondary administrator for each social media account operated on behalf of the City.
- Change social media passwords if Authorized Agents are removed or leave City employment.

### Departments will:


- Oversee and manage social media pages in use by Authorized Agents.
- Designate and train Authorized Agents in proper use of social media; refer to this policy.
- Provide the Appointing Authority with a current list of social media pages and account login information for the purpose of emergency management.
- Follow necessary precautions to ensure that content posted to a City's social media site can be managed by Authorized Agents only.
- Follow all records retention for social media.

### Authorized Agents will:

- Uphold standards and values when posting on social media sites.
- Effectively monitor social media sites by answering questions or flagging concerns when appropriate.
- Use social media accounts during normal City hours of operation unless given permission by the Department Director.
- Analyze effectiveness of social media sites and make recommendations to the City for continuous improvement.

## **PUBLIC RECORDS**

When posting to social media sites, there is no expectation of privacy. All information posted is Public Record and therefore once content is posted on a social media site, it shall remain posted, unless it is removed for one of the reasons set forth under the First Amendment section above, or it is changed to correct spelling or grammar errors.

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Public records will be managed in compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws, regulations, and policies including the Delaware Freedom of Information Act (covering Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law), and Public Records retention schedules, Copyright Law and other applicable City policies.

**VIOLATIONS**

Employees violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with City policies, departmental operating procedures and/or collective bargaining agreements.

If you have questions regarding appropriate use of this policy, please contact your supervisor, the Human Resources Administrator or your respective Appointing Authority.

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*Appointing Authority Signature*

*Date*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of this policy.

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*Employee Signature*

*Date*