

	<i>Administrative Regulation</i>	
	Policy #:	14.04
	Effective:	06/06/2017
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	Owner:	City Manager's Office

## OFFICIAL USE OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA

**Note:** Terms that are ***bolded and italicized*** the first time they appear in this regulation are defined below. After the first occurrence, defined terms appear in *italics only*.

**PURPOSE:**

This regulation establishes guidelines for the official use of City ***social media*** platforms and ensures compliance with applicable state and federal laws governing ***public records***, document retention, freedom of expression, and copyright.

**SCOPE:**

This regulation applies to all City departments and employees who are ***authorized*** to use City ***social media*** accounts to communicate official information to the public.

**POLICY:**

Employees who manage or contribute to ***official City social media accounts*** must ensure that all content aligns with City messaging, branding, and Council goals.

Official social media platforms serve as tools to engage the community and share important information, including emergency updates, events, programs, partnerships, initiatives, job postings, and community involvement opportunities. Whenever possible, posts should direct the public to the City's official website or another official partner website (e.g., FEMA, NOAA, Lane County).

**PROCEDURE:**

**1. Primary Social Media Sites**

**A. Management and Oversight**

- a. The City Manager's Office (CMO) oversees all primary ***social media*** platforms, including content development, scheduling, and campaign coordination.
- b. Any new ***social media*** account created on behalf of the City must receive prior approval from the CMO.

**B. Administration**

- a. Employees ***authorized*** to manage City ***social media*** accounts must use designated, City-approved ***social media*** management tools. Personal login credentials must not be shared. Employees must follow CMO-approved authentication and security procedures.
- b. The CMO will periodically monitor City social media accounts to ensure compliance. Non-compliant accounts must be corrected, or if necessary, deactivated.

### C. Operational Guidelines

- a. All City social media accounts must adhere to this regulation.
- b. Confidential, proprietary, or litigation-related information must not be posted.
- c. Content should encourage community engagement but must not advocate for or preempt Council decisions.
- d. Employees must post only from official City social medial accounts, not personal social medial accounts.
- e. Comments that violate the City's Social Media Comments Policy should be **hidden** (not deleted) and reported to [publicaffairs@springfield-or.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@springfield-or.gov).
- f. Only *authorized* City staff may post content. Volunteers, advisory bodies, commissions, and committees are not permitted to post on behalf of the City unless expressly *authorized* by the CMO.
- g. All *authorized social media* sites must display the City of Springfield logo or a CMO-approved alternate logo.

## 2. Crisis Communication Plan

### A. Crisis Response

- a. The CMO coordinates *social media* responses during crises, including addressing misinformation and responding to public concerns, in alignment with the City's **crisis** communication strategy.

### B. Response Team

- a. The City's Public Information Officer (PIO) or designee, along with CMO staff, will lead *social media crisis* responses.
- b. The City Attorney's Office will provide guidance on issues related to legal risk, privacy, or liability.
- c. The affected department will supply relevant facts and context for the response.
- d. The Police Department or Emergency Management Team will assist if public safety is involved.

### C. Response Protocol

- a. Acknowledge concerns promptly and provide timely updates.
- b. Correct misinformation professionally and factually.
- c. Direct the public to verified City channels for accurate information.
- d. Monitor public sentiment and media coverage using City-approved *social media* monitoring tools.

**D. Prohibited Actions**

- a. Posts and comments should not be deleted unless they violate City regulations or the City's Social Media Comment Policy.
- b. Speculative information should not be shared; only confirmed information may be posted.
- c. *Crisis* responses must maintain a neutral and professional tone.

**E. Approval and Review**

- a. All *crisis*-related statements must be reviewed by the PIO and approved by the City Manager (or designee) before posting.
- b. A post-*crisis* review will be conducted to assess response effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

**3. Social Media Comment Policy**

**A. Acceptable Content**

- a. Comments must relate to City business and directly correspond to the original post topic.
- b. Comments may express individual opinions, provided they do not violate the content restrictions outlined in this policy.
- c. Comments that provide neutral, fact-based information about ballot measures impacting City services, without advocacy, are permitted when posted by *authorized* City staff.
- d. Comments are allowed even if critical of City actions, provided they do not violate any prohibited content standards.

**B. Prohibited Content**

- a. Comments containing personal attacks, defamatory remarks, or discriminatory or harassing statements are prohibited.
- b. Spam, advertising, solicitations, or content promoting illegal activity or violence is prohibited.
- c. Comments that infringe on copyrights, trademarks, or other intellectual property rights are prohibited.
- d. Abusive language, hate speech, or sexually explicit content is prohibited.
- e. City employees may not use *official City social media accounts* to endorse or oppose political candidates, campaigns, or ballot measures.

**C. Additional Guidelines**

- a. Comments reflect individual opinions and do not imply City endorsement.

- b. Comments on *social media* platforms are not considered formal public comments for land use decisions, City policies, or official decision-making processes; however, they may be reviewed by Council and staff for informational purposes.
- c. The City reserves the right to restrict or block users who repeatedly violate this policy, consistent with applicable law and platform rules.
- d. Comments that violate this policy may be *hidden* (not deleted), and violations should be reported to [publicaffairs@springfield-or.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@springfield-or.gov).

#### **4. Social Media Guidelines**

##### **A. Guiding Principles**

- a. Respect the audience and ensure content is appropriate and professional.
- b. Maintain an authentic, trustworthy, and community-focused voice.
- c. Ensure all content is purposeful, relevant, and related to City business.
- d. Respond to public inquiries within 24 business hours when possible.
- e. Correct any factual errors promptly and transparently.

##### **B. Content in General**

- a. Content must be relevant to City business and tailored for the specific platform.
- b. The City's tone should be friendly, helpful, and community-centered.
- c. Posts should include images or videos when possible and link back to the City website.
- d. Each post should focus on a single topic to ensure clarity.
- e. When appropriate, tag TEAM Springfield partners or other approved agencies.

#### **5. Social Media Retention**

- a. All *social media* content must be retained in accordance with Oregon Public Records Law.

#### **6. Social Media Records Request**

- a. Public records requests related to City social media accounts must be submitted to the City Recorder in accordance with the City's Record Request administrative regulation.

#### **7. Personal Use**

- a. Personal use of *social media* by employees is governed by separate administrative regulations.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

##### ***Authorized User:***

An employee who has received approval and training to post or manage content on an official City social media account.

***Crisis:***

An incident or event that poses a significant risk to public safety, City operations, or public trust and requires coordinated communication.

***Hidden Content:***

Social media comments that are restricted from public view but preserved in accordance with public records and retention requirements.

***Official City Social Media Account:***

Any social media account created, managed, or authorized by the City Manager's Office for the purpose of communicating official City information.

***Public Record:***

As defined in ORS 192.005 means any information prepared, owned, used, or retained by the City of Springfield that relates to an activity, transaction, or function of the City and is necessary to meet fiscal, legal, administrative, or historical needs.

Public records may exist in any format, including paper or electronic formats such as email or social media content. Extra copies preserved only for convenience or reference are not considered public records.

***Social Media:***

Refers to various forms of mass communication that rely on user-created content (including text, images, audio, and video) published in an online environment, such as the Internet or mobile networks. This includes platforms accessed via smartphones, tablets, network computers, or any internet-connected device. Social media typically allows for rapid, informal communication and interaction among large audiences with few access restrictions.

**RESOURCES:**

*Administrative Regulations:*

[Records Request](#)