



Subject/Title
Social Media Policy

Date Effective
April 1, 2010

Revision Date Effective

Code Number
ADM 15

City Manager

City Manager's Office
Responsible Key Business

Purpose:

To provide guidance to City of Charlotte employees or contractors in the implementation of social media applications in order to:

- Prevent violation of existing City policies such as logo standards, Internet usage policy, public records retention, personnel information and sponsorships
- Demonstrate how technology can support the City's communication needs
- Ensure appropriate designation of City spokespersons and/or subject matter experts
- Protect against the inadvertent establishment of a public forum

Scope of Social Media Use:

The City of Charlotte's primary websites (CharlotteNC.gov, ridetransit.org, cmpd.org, Charneck.org, charlotteairport.org) will remain the City's primary and predominant internet presence.

However, departments may engage in social media to achieve certain business and communication goals including:

- Disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible such as during public safety emergencies
- Marketing and promoting City services and products
- Encouraging public input for City projects, programs and initiatives

Whenever possible, content posted to these social media sites should also be available on the City main websites or contain links directly to the City's main websites; however, abbreviated URLs should also be avoided.

Social media will only be used as a vehicle for communicating the City's message (i.e., "government speech). Specifically social media will not be engaged in a manner that allows members of the public to post comments on or through the social media vehicle. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City's use of social media may invite or solicit citizen input and comment to the City in a non-publicly posted manner.

Responsibilities:

City Manager's Office: Since social media are websites or web applications, Corporate Communications on behalf of the City Manager's Office will be responsible for reviewing staff

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requests for these tools to ensure the social media tools are implemented effectively and consistently as possible across all City key business units.

Corporate Communications will also maintain a list of social media sites approved for use by the City. Corporate Communications will also monitor all City social media sites to ensure adherence to the policy, and reserves the right to remove pages or close sites if necessary.

Key Business Units: To ensure corporate branding standards, all key business units, with exception of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police, Charlotte Fire Department, Charlotte Area Transit System and Charlotte Douglas International Airport may use only social media sites maintained by Corporate Communications.

However, the exempted departments must adhere to this policy and coordinate any social media applications with Corporate Communications and provide the following information for site approval:

- *Purpose:* This will include the goal and objectives of the site or application, which cannot be accomplished through the City's main sites.
- *Strategy:* The social media effort should support a larger communication strategy with identification of audiences, messages and other tactics.
- *Implementation and Resources:* This includes an implementation plan, as well as process for managing site accounts such as frequency and protocol associated with posting information. While social media sites are free, they require constant monitoring and updating to be effective. The department initiating the social media tool is responsible for tasks such as updating information, monitoring content, replying to site users and fulfilling public information requests.

All social media sites **must adhere** to all standing City policies and protocol such as:

- *Communications Standards:* All tools must maintain corporate standards in the use of City logos. Variations of the standards can only be approved by Corporate Communications.
- *Public Records and Retention:* All sites are subject to State of North Carolina public records statutes. Information on social media sites have little or no historical value; therefore, content will not be retained in most cases. However some exceptions may apply, and retention will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- *Web Policy:* (ex. Linking guidelines/privacy/accessibility): All sites must adhere to City web policy, concerning linking, privacy as well as adhering to guidelines for accessibility for the disabled.
- *Political Activity:* The social media sites will not contain any political information or be used for political activity.
- *Blogging and Public postings:* Blogs or postings from the public are prohibited on social media sites. These sites should direct all public feedback back to the sponsoring City staff.
- *Internet security policies:* The sites will comply with City policies and procedures for information security.

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Employee Use of Social Media Sites:

Employee use of social media sites is allowed for social or professional networking purposes. However, employees are encouraged to exercise sound judgment and discretion in contributing to social media sites, where information is available to numerous users. This is especially encouraged on personal sites to ensure a distinct separation between personal and organizational views because inappropriate usage of social media may be grounds for disciplinary action**.

***Section 4.05. Personnel administration standards of the City Code of Ordinances states that tenure of employment shall be subject to satisfactory performance of work, personal conduct compatible with the trust inherent in public services, necessity for the performance of work and availability of funds.*