



**CITY OF CARSON
COUNCIL POLICY & PROCEDURE**

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SUBJECT

USE OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA

ORIGINAL ISSUE:

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EFFECTIVE:

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SUPERSEDES:

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish the City of Carson's (City) general standards and responsibilities for the acceptable use of social media. The policy governs the use, administration, management, monitoring, and retention of social media and social media content, consistent with state, federal, and the City's laws and regulations, and the City's goals. This policy applies to all uses of social media by the City's employees maintaining, using, or providing oversight of City social media tools. This policy also applies to members of the public who use the City's social media. However, except as provided in Section IV.C., below, this policy does not apply to the City's employees' private activities on their private social media platforms.

All content created, received, transmitted, stored on, or deleted from the City's information systems is exclusively the property of the City or, to the extent provided by applicable law, of the person or entity that created or owns the copyright or trademark rights to that content.

When used in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as prudent operational, security, and privacy considerations, social media tools can: enhance the speed, reach, and targeting of communications (including during disaster/emergency incidents); facilitate collaboration; improve the provision of information to the City's residents; increase citizen engagement and dialogue; streamline processes; foster productivity improvements; and increase the City's ability to broadcast messages to the widest possible audience.

This Social Media Policy is intended to work in conjunction with the City's adopted personnel rules and regulations. This Policy is not intended in any way to chill or interfere with employees' Section 7 activities, i.e., any activity by an employee or group of employees by which they seek to improve their pay and working conditions, regardless of whether or not they are already unionized. This Policy is further not intended to limit employees from discussing wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment with fellow employees and with non-employees. Finally,

this Policy is also not intended to limit employees from speaking with the media regarding their employment in an individual capacity regarding wages, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

II. DEFINITIONS

Authorized employee means a City of Carson employee who has been authorized by his/her department head or by the City Manager to post content on a City social media platform or platform. *Authorized employee* includes the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Information Technology Manager, Public Information Analyst or City Manager appointed.

City Manager means the City Manager of the City of Carson, and includes his or her designee.

City social media means a social media platform or platform established and maintained by the City, and whose postings the City fully controls (excluding advertisements or hyperlinks on the social media vendor's website).

Employee includes all City employees (full-time, part-time, contract, interim, temporary and seasonal), volunteers, contractors, consultants, vendors and other persons at the City, including all personnel affiliated with third parties who have access and/or authorization to use City social media. Members of the City's legislative bodies are excluded from this definition.

Legislative body has the same meaning as Section 54952 of the Government Code.

Post or posting means an item of information, article, photo, video, etc., placed on a City social media platform or platform on behalf of the City.

Social media refers to various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. *Social media* allow people, business and governmental entities to create online content and organize, edit or comment on it, as well as combine and share it. *Social media* use many technologies and platforms, including web feeds, blogs, photo and video sharing, podcasts, social networking, and more. *Social media* is an Internet based communication tool with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, participation, and information sharing.

Social media platforms means content created on behalf of the City and with the City's permission, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the internet. Examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogs, RSS, YouTube, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, and any other social media platforms or platforms that may be published after this policy had been adopted.

III. GOALS OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA

- A.** Direct visitors to the City's website for complete and accurate information about the City and its programs. The City social media platforms will supplement, not replace, the City's official website for all notices and events.

- B. Provide City information to a greater number of City of Carson residents and businesses.
- C. Enhance current communications efforts by the City and its departments.
- D. Serve as a source to build awareness, interest, and quality of life in the City.
- E. Help disseminate emergency information.
- F. Draw the public to the City website.
- G. Draw the public to City services and events.
- H. Disseminate timely, relevant information that is clear and concise, thus avoiding overwhelming City of Carson followers with frivolous information

IV. **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR LEGISLATIVE BODIES AND EMPLOYEES**

A. **General**

This policy shall operate in conjunction with the City's adopted personnel rules and regulations.

1. The City's official website, <http://ci.carson.ca.us/>, will remain the City's primary means of Internet communication.
2. Only authorized employees may post on City social media platforms.
3. The establishment or use of City social media platforms is subject to approval of the City Council. Upon approval, these platforms shall bear the name and official City seal and logo where feasible, and shall be branded as "The official platform of the City of Carson" or "The official platform of the City of Carson's [BLANK] Department/Division," or with other language to this effect.
4. City social media shall link back to the City's official website for further information, documents, forms, etc.
5. Social media will not be the primary tool used for disseminating emergency information. Emergency information may be released on social media platforms, but not before release on the City's website, Nixle Alert, or other emergency information systems that is existing or may be created in the future.
6. All social media utilized by the City shall be one-way communication tools and shall not permit comments or postings except for those authorized by City Manager Office in accordance with this Policy. The City Manager shall specifically authorize any platform which provides a two-way communication tool and which allows for public comments.

7. The City Manager or his/her designee reserves the right to terminate any City social media platform at any time without notice. The City Manager shall notify the City Council of his/her decision to terminate the use of any approved social media, and the reasons therefor.
8. City social media will comply with usage rules and regulations promulgated by the social media provider, including privacy policies.
9. All City social media will adhere to applicable federal, state, and local regulations and policies. This includes but is not limited to laws and policies regarding copyrights, records retention, Freedom of Information Act, the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the free speech clause of the California Constitution, privacy laws, and information security.
10. The City's social media will comply with the City's Conflict of Interest code and applicable ethics rules and policies.
11. The City's social media may be subject to the California Public Records Act and Article 1, Section 3 of the California Constitution. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to the City's business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication (with certain exceptions), may be a disclosable public record. The City Clerk's office is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media; provided, however, that such requests shall be handled in collaboration with the City Attorney's Office. Content related to the City's business shall be maintained in an accessible format, so it can be produced in response to a request. Wherever possible, such platforms shall clearly indicate any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting may be subject to public disclosure upon request, and may contain the following disclaimer language, "This platform/platform [or message] is intended to serve as a vehicle for communication between the City of Carson and the public. All public records requests should be directed to the office of the City of Carson City Clerk."
12. Freedom of Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be in a format that can be managed, stored, and retrieved in compliance with these laws.
13. Each department is responsible to ensure that all posted content is kept and preserved in accordance with the City's records retention schedule in an appropriately labeled folder on a City server in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible.
14. All passwords will be the responsibility of each department. Passwords must be shared with the Information Technology Division, which must be informed immediately upon any password change.
15. The intended use of social media, and the City's privacy policy and terms of use of such media will be provided to visitors and users of the media

through links back to the City's website (<http://ci.carson.ca.us/>) where feasible.

16. The City Manager reserves the right to restrict, review, or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
17. All posts made on any City social media platform will reflect the official views of the City, and will be reviewed by the Information Technology Manager.
18. The City reserves the right to amend all or part of this policy at any time.

B. Members of the legislative bodies

The City's social media platforms may be managed consistent with the Brown Act. Accordingly members of the legislative bodies shall not respond to or participate in any postings, or use the City's social media platforms to respond to, post, blog, engage in serial meetings, or otherwise discuss, deliberate, or express opinion on any issue within the subject matter of the jurisdiction of the body. Members of the legislative bodies shall be notified of these restrictions.

C. Procedures and regulations for authorized employees

The following procedures provide the degree to which authorized employees are allowed to access the City's social media platforms while acting in the course and scope of employment, and the process for gaining such access. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may subject the person responsible to disciplinary action.

1. The City may immediately edit or remove content posted on City social media platforms that does not adhere to this policy.
2. The Information Technology Manager is responsible for maintaining a list of all social networking application domain names, maintain names of all employee administrators of these accounts, and maintain a list of associated user identifications and passwords. The department head shall provide all passwords, usernames or other information necessary for content removal to the Information Technology Manager at the time that department creates any social media, and immediately whenever any such information is changed.
3. Only authorized employees may post material on any social media platforms on behalf of the City.
4. Any authorized employee shall review, be familiar with, and comply with a social media provider's policies.
5. Each department head will designate one or more authorized employees to post authorized information and ensure that particular

social media is up to date. All content must be expressly approved by the department head for any department social media, and by the City Manager for any City social media.

6. Authorized employees shall participate in training in the use of the specific social media to be used prior to posting. Training will be provided by the City.
7. Posting on social media on behalf of the City is subject to applicable policies of the City regarding use of City computers and technology.
8. All City social media shall utilize authorized City contact information for account setup, monitoring, and access. The use of personal email accounts or phone numbers by any City employee is not allowed for the purpose of setting up, monitoring, or accessing City social media.
9. Users of City social media will be notified that the intended purpose of such platforms is to serve as a means of communication between the City's Departments and members of the public, and is not intended to create a quasi-public or public forum.
10. Users shall be informed by posting to the City's social media platforms that the City disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials posted on these platforms.
11. The City's "Social Media Policy for Public Use," provided below, must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on this Social Media Policy for Legislative Bodies and Employees and Social Media Policy for Public Use must be retained for a reasonable period, including the time, date, identity of the poster when available, and the reason for removal.
12. Administrators of City of Carson-affiliated social media platforms must have permission from the City Manager and the Information Technology Manager to handle operations of those platforms.
13. The Information Technology Manager and the City Manager will have administrative and editing privileges and oversight on any and all City of Carson-affiliated social media.
14. Departments may request review and approval of additional social media platforms, as needed.
15. Authorized employees' use of social media platforms:
 - (a) Use of the City's social media by authorized employees, when acting within the scope of their employment, shall only be for communication from the City to the public, and for the purpose of fulfilling job duties.

- (b) Employees shall not comment or post on any non-City social media platforms or any City social media platforms or other online forums on behalf of the City or a City-affiliated Department or organization, unless specifically authorized by the City Manager as an authorized employee.
- (c) All posting, checking, viewing, or responding by authorized employees related to any of the City's social media platforms shall be solely conducted on City information systems, computers, and equipment.
- (d) All posting, checking, viewing, or responding to any notification or communication by authorized employees related to any non-City social media platforms and any of the City's social media platforms shall be solely conducted on City information systems, computers, and equipment. If any personal devices or technology is used, then such devices and technology may be subject to a court proceeding.
- (e) Postings by authorized employees on any of the City's social media platforms shall only be made while such authorized employees are on duty during the City's normal business hours, except where emergency information must be disseminated or where directed otherwise by the City Manager.
 - (i) However, there may be circumstances that authorized employees may be required to post, check, view, or respond to notifications or communications related to a City's social media platforms while off duty. Any posting, checking, viewing, or responding to any notifications or communications related to any City's social media platforms occurring off duty, requiring more than a *de minimis* amount of time (e.g., greater than five minutes), shall be subject to the following:
 - (A) All such work shall be pre-authorized and subject to the overtime regulations found in the City's adopted personnel rules and regulations.
 - (B) All such work shall be logged and submitted by to the City for labor compliance purposes.
 - (C) Authorized employees shall in no event work off duty without logging their hours worked.
- (f) When posting on behalf of the City, authorized employees shall conduct themselves as a professional representative of the City and shall review, be familiar with, and comply with all of the City's policies and procedures. Authorized employees shall:

- (i) Not post personal comments or personal photos on the City's social media sites while acting in the course and scope of performing their City duties.
 - (ii) Be transparent and truthful when posting. Always be careful and considerate. Once the words are out there, they cannot be taken back.
 - (iii) Be timely – Authorized Employees should regularly review the City's social media sites they are assigned to ensure content is current, accurate, and appropriate.
 - (iv) Be cautious – ensure efforts are transparent, do not violate the City's privacy, confidentiality, and legal guidelines and requirements. Do not publish any material that is confidential or internal to the City.
 - (v) Admit mistakes – be upfront and quick with a correction, and promptly notify the relevant Department head.
- (g) Prior to being authorized, each Employee shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt of this Policy which also indicates that he or she has read and understands this Policy and agrees to be bound by the Policy's provisions.
- (h) Information and communications should be organized in a manner that avoids the posting of duplicative or conflicting information.
- (i) Security
- (i) Department heads will maintain complex passwords.
 - (ii) The Information Technology Manager's Office will hold all username and passwords for social media accounts.
 - (iii) Any documents, videos, photos, etc. will be scanned using anti-virus tools before they can be posted.
 - (iv) An application must not be used unless it serves an appropriate and valid City purpose, adds to the user experience, and comes from a trusted source. All new social media tools and applications proposed for City use will be approved by the Information Technology Manager or his/her designee. An application may be removed at any time by the IT Office if the IT Manager determines that it is causing a security breach or spreading virus or creating performance problems with the websites or network .

- (v) The City reserves the right to implement or remove any functionality of its social media platform when deemed appropriate by the City Manager or the IT Manager.
- (vi) The platform must provide a mechanism for staff to remove posts that violate City policy. Any platform that does not provide such a mechanism cannot be used.
- (j) The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
- (k) Except as expressly provided in this policy, accessing any of the City's social media platforms shall comply with all applicable City policies pertaining to communication with the public and the use of the internet by employees, including email.

D. Content of social media platforms

Departments utilizing social media are responsible for establishing, publishing, and updating such social media. The City Manager will monitor the content on such social media to ensure that a consistent City-wide message is being conveyed and ensure adherence to this Social Media Policy.

1. All departments shall use a consistent template provided by the Information Technology Office.
2. City social media may display advertisements or hyperlinks over which the City has no control but which must still be monitored for appropriateness and possible cancelation of City's participation if inconsistent with City goals and/or image.
3. Posts should be timely, informative, and related to the interests of the City of Carson community.
4. Postings will use proper grammar and avoid jargon, abbreviations, and acronyms.
5. Any video posted to a third party platform on behalf of the City must also be posted to the City's website for archive purposes.
6. Posted content will:
 - (a) Present the City and Carson officials in a positive light.
 - (b) Pertain directly or be closely related to the interests of the City of Carson.
 - (c) Contain information that is freely available to the public and that is not made confidential by any policy of the City, or by any other

local, state, or federal law. Some examples of freely available information include press releases, news, City events, street closures, traffic issues, weather, police announcements, job postings, and emergency notices.

- (d) Only pertain to City-sponsored or City-endorsed programs, services, and events. Content includes, but is not limited to, information, photos, video, and hyperlinks directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City.
 - (e) The City will obtain the appropriate permission to post any content that is not fully created and owned by the City.
7. Posted content will be removed if it contains any of the following:
- (a) Any personal information except the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public.
 - (b) Photos or images at public social events.
 - (c) Any unauthorized use of the City's logo or seal (see City of Carson Municipal Code §§ 4131, 4132, 4133).
 - (d) Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or military and veteran status of any person.
 - (e) Sexual content or links to sexual content.
 - (f) Solicitations of commerce.
 - (g) Illegal conduct, or encouragement of illegal activity.
 - (h) Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public, law enforcement, or public systems.
 - (i) Content that violates the legal ownership interest of any other party.
 - (j) Political, campaign or election content.
 - (k) Any content that violates any local, county, state or federal law or regulation.

E. Violations

Use of City-provided Internet and email is a privilege. Unauthorized use, violations of this Social Media Policy, or violations of the Internet Use Policy may result in the loss of access for the user and may result in disciplinary action.

V. Public participation with interactive City social media

The following policy shall be prominently displayed on all of the City's interactive social media.

As a public entity, the City must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner. The City's interactive social media is intended to be a limited public forum. The City intends to regulate the content posted by the public using the City's social media reasonably in light of the purposes of the social media, and in a viewpoint-neutral manner.

A comment posted by a member of the public on any City social media is the opinion of the commentator only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of or agreement by the City, nor do such comments reflect the opinions or policies of the City. The City may deny access to City social media platforms to any individual or group who violates this policy at any time and without prior notice.

This policy may be revised at any time.

The City does not endorse any hyperlink or advertisement placed on or made in connection with City social media by the social media owners, vendors, or partners, and over which the City has no control.

Comments on any and all City social media platforms that contain any of the following are prohibited and will be removed, regardless of viewpoint. Any content thus removed will be retained by the City for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date, and identity of the poster, when available.

1. *Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments.*
2. *Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or military and veteran status of any person.*
3. *Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language.*
4. *Content that is demonstrably false as a matter of fact.*
5. *Comments in support of or in opposition to any political campaigns or ballot measure.*

6. *Content that contains religious messages or images and/or advocates, promotes or disparages religious beliefs.*
7. *Solicitation of commerce including, but not limited to, advertisement of businesses and products.*
8. *Promotion or advocacy for the sale or use of tobacco, alcohol, controlled substances, firearms, or weapons of any kind.*
9. *Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law.*
10. *Encouragement of, or content depicting, illegal activity under federal, state, or local law.*
11. *Specific or imminent threats to a person, business, or organization.*
12. *Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public, law enforcement, or public systems.*
13. *Comment on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City.*
14. *Content that is libelous, defamatory, or constitutes a personal attack.*
15. *Content that violates a legal ownership of any interest.*

VI. Exceptions

There are no exceptions to this policy unless expressly approved by the City Council.

BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CITY COUNCIL, AS APPROVED ON

_____ Date

_____ Agenda Item No.

ATTACHMENT "A"

CITY OF CARSON
EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

I hereby acknowledge receiving a copy of the City's Social Media Policy, and I understand that the City's social media system and computer network are for City business only and that I am not to establish and/or use a private social media account for City business. I further understand that all information contained on or communicated through the City's social media system and computer network are subject to monitoring, review, and disclosure. Consequently, I may not assume that any information stored on or communicated through any City system or network is confidential or private. To the contrary, I acknowledge I have no reasonable expectation of privacy in any communications, data or information on any City system, network or equipment. Finally, I understand that violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department and Title: _____