

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **Employee Social Media Policy**

Policy Category: **Administration Policy**

Policy No.: A-002

Department: Corporate Services

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Attachments:

Related Documents/Legislation: Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy, Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Respectful Behaviour Policy

Key Word(s): Twitter, Facebook, social media, code of conduct, employee use of social media

POLICY STATEMENT:

Both the City of Waterloo and its employees use social media in a variety of ways: to share information publicly and privately, to participate in communities of interest, and to engage others in online conversations. At the corporate level, social media is a strategic component of business plans developed by the communications and marketing division. Personal social media usage by employees and elected officials is also encouraged to help these individuals connect and develop relationships with constituents and other community stakeholders.

PURPOSE:

This policy governs the public use of social media networks by city employees and elected officials. It aims to:

- Outline corporate social media governance;
- Provide employees and elected officials with public usage guidelines;
- Protect the city's reputation.

DEFINITIONS:

Social media: social media are defined by the City of Waterloo as online communication channels in which the objective is to publicly share information and create dynamic interaction between two parties (ie, the corporation and a citizen, or a councillor and a constituent). These channels can include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram,

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and LinkedIn, as well as blogs, mobile applications, websites, photo boards, discussion boards or any other online location where commentary is publicly shared and attributed to an employee or elected official.

Corporate and personal accounts: corporate accounts are defined as any social media networks bearing official corporate branding (i.e., a visual identity or other insignia) and identified as representing the corporation or one of its divisions.

Personal accounts are social media networks created and maintained by individual employees or elected officials, and can be identified as such through profile photos, bios (which mention corporate affiliation) or implicit association (i.e., an employee who is known to the public, but does not have his/her city affiliation in a bio).

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all City of Waterloo employees, including permanent, part-time, temporary, casual, contract, and co-op students, as well as elected officials, who use social media networks and/or websites to post commentary available to the public. The codes of conduct mentioned in this policy refer to the Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy, and Code of Conduct for Members of Council.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

The policy will be communicated internally via the corporate intranet, posted on the corporate website, and reviewed with staff on an ongoing basis as part of new employee and new councillor orientation sessions.

POLICY:

Social media governance

Corporate social media accounts are created and maintained by the division responsible for communications and marketing. This division holds credentials to all corporate social media accounts, provides access and training to those from other divisions using city networks, and monitors all content in accordance with its internal social media guidelines. No employee may use a corporate social media network without the consent of the director of the division responsible for communications and marketing.

This policy governs the use of social media by city employees in both corporate and personal settings. It is reviewed by the communications and marketing division on a biannual basis.

Usage guidelines for employees and elected officials

1. In all forms of social media usage, employees and elected officials should assume the same representative standards as in other public meetings and

consultations. Even if not identified with an explicit city affiliation, employees and elected officials implicitly represent the corporation and will be held to the same expectations.

2. Maintaining the public trust and city's reputation, as per the applicable codes of conduct, is a requirement of all social media use. Employees and elected officials should also strive to demonstrate the corporation's guiding principals of service excellence, personal leadership, effective communications, fiscal responsibility, and healthy workplace, especially when publicly commenting on city business or municipal affairs.
3. When an employee or elected official is using social media as part of his/her job function, s/he should operate with the expectation of a respectful workplace as per the Respectful Behaviour Policy (A-009) and the Code of Conduct for Members of Council.
4. Senior staff and elected officials must be particularly aware of their commentary surrounding issues currently before them in council so as to not prejudice the public process.
5. While common disclaimers such as "retweets don't imply endorsement" or "all views are my own" may help clarify the context of personal social media messages, they do not absolve the responsibility of the individual to uphold the code of conduct policy.
6. Inappropriate content posted by city employees will be brought to the attention of the director of communications and marketing, and the relevant member(s) of the operational leadership team (OLT) to determine an appropriate course of action.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.