

JEFFERSON COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Jefferson County departments, officials and organizations may utilize social media platforms to further enhance communications with members of the public and other organizations in support of County goals and objectives. Social media provides the ability to publish content and communicate information to facilitate discussion of County issues, operations and services by providing members of the public with the opportunity to connect to County resources using the internet.

I. PURPOSE.

This Social Media Policy is intended to promote the safe, orderly, responsible and consistent use of social media by Jefferson County through its departments, officials, agents and employees. Jefferson County encourages, within the rules set forth herein, the use of social media. The County employs social media for the express and limited purpose of communicating with the public on issues of public concern and allowing the public a limited forum in which to communicate with the County. This policy does not create any open public forums for expressive activity of the public. The County reserves the right to edit or remove any content that violates this or any other policy of the County or any Federal, State or local law.

This policy is further intended to provide a framework for use of social media when authorized by the County as part of a department's official's, agent's or employee's job duties and to provide general guidelines for the use of social media by all County departments, officials, agents and employees of Jefferson County. Departments have discretion to create guidelines specific to their department or social media posts as long as such guidelines are not inconsistent with this policy. The forms of social media or technology referred to in this policy include, but are not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, Yammer, YouTube, video or wiki postings, chat rooms, personal blogs or other similar forms of online journals, or newsletters affiliated with Jefferson County. County-owned technology resources are the property of Jefferson County, as is all data created, entered, received, stored, or transmitted via County-owned equipment.

II. APPLICATION.

This policy applies to all County programs, divisions, departments, officials, agents, employees, subunits (boards, committees, commissions, other bodies) and agencies; to all County official websites, both internet and intranet; to all other websites hosted by the County; to any division, department, agency, or subunit receiving direct services from Jefferson County Management Information Systems (MIS). Anyone subject to this policy who fails to comply with the terms of this policy is acting outside the scope of their employment or official duties and may be subject to discipline, up to and including involuntary termination of employment and personal civil liability.

III. POLICY.

1. All Jefferson County social media platforms shall be approved by the County Administrator and the department head of the requesting department. All content must be published using approved County social media platform and tools set forth in this policy or other County policies, including additional requirements specific to a department or social media platform. All content must be approved by the assigned site administrator as defined below before posting. Any fundraising efforts through social media must be approved by the County Administrator and reviewed by the Corporation Counsel prior to posting.

2. All Jefferson County social media platforms shall adhere to applicable Federal, State and local laws, regulations and County policies including, but not limited to, the Jefferson County Computer, Internet, and Telephone Use Policy as well as the Harassment Policy, including Sexual Harassment; the Jefferson County Ethics Policy and Personnel Policy. Employees may be subject to discipline, up to and including involuntary termination of employment for conduct that violates County policies, rules and regulations, whether such conduct occurs on duty or off-duty.

3. Public records laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws. All social media platforms and entries shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.

4. Content deemed not suitable by Jefferson County because it is not topically related to the particular objective, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria in this or other policies, may be taken off the platform, but shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.

5. The County reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

6. Each Jefferson County social media platform shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the platform. Social media platforms may include links to information and content from other non-county media platforms and websites provided that there is no copyright infringement or use in violation of the social media or website policy. Where possible, social media platforms should link back to the official Jefferson County internet site for forms, documents and other information.

7. Each Jefferson County social media platform account is proprietary and created for the exclusive use of Jefferson County for the benefit of the public. Site administrators are authorized to create and post content on behalf of Jefferson County, but do not own the accounts. When the function of site administrator ends, that person shall surrender all rights, including administrative authority and passwords, to these accounts.

8. Jefferson County social media content and comments containing any of the following shall **not** be allowed for posting:

- a. Non-topically related content
- b. Profane language or content
- c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation or other protected class
- d. Sexual content or links to sexual content unless such content is topically related
- e. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- f. Content that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- g. Content that violates copyright or other legal interest of any other party
- h. External links constituting official endorsement or representative views on behalf of the Jefferson County
- i. Content promoting political outcome, a political candidate, or political party
- j. Content promoting or endorsing any religion or religious organization

- k. Content regarding or relating to any private commercial transactions or engagement in private business activities
 - l. Duplicate comments, i.e. posting the same comment multiple times by the same person for no apparent reason
 - m. Posting of links with no text which do not advance the discussion or make the commentator's point of view clear
 - n. Other non-topically related content outside the limited public forum established to discuss specific County issues, operations and services
9. All County social media site administrators shall be trained regarding the terms of this policy, including their responsibilities to review content to ensure compliance with the Social Media Policy and guidelines.
10. All social media platforms shall clearly indicate they are owned and maintained by Jefferson County and shall have Jefferson County contact information prominently displayed.
11. Where appropriate, County Management Information Systems (MIS) policies shall apply to all social media platforms and related content.
12. All County-related communication through social media tools shall be professional and conducted in accordance with County policies, practices and expectations.
13. Jefferson County logos, marks, and insignia may be used on County social media platforms owned and maintained exclusively for County business and related County purposes. Jefferson County's name, logos, marks and insignia may not be used to promote any political party, candidate or for any other political purposes or to conduct private commercial transactions or activities.
14. Anyone subject to this policy found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including involuntary termination of employment.
15. Administrative Structure: Any County authorized social media site will require the following:
- Site Administrator:** this person will be responsible to ensure that the use of the social media site adheres to this policy and all related County policies. The name of the proposed site administrator must be filed with the County Administrator along with the request for an authorized social media platform, or if a social media platform has already been established, within 30 days following enactment of this policy. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring department head or official to update this information should authorized personnel change.
- Backup Site Administrator:** To prevent issues related to site administration during the absence of the site administrator, all authorized sites must have a named backup site administrator to be filed as part of the request for an authorized social media platform, or if a social media platform has already been established, within 30 days following enactment of this policy. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring department head or official to update this information should authorized personnel change.
- Approved content authors:** Sponsoring departments and elected officials must authorize all content authors for their department or official social media platform who will be directly responsible for posting to social media sites.

Login and Password Information: Login and password information for all social media sites must be filed as part of the request for an authorized social media platform, or if a social media platform has already been established prior to enactment of this policy, within 30 days following enactment of this policy. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring department head to update this information should authorized personnel change.

16. The County Administrator may approve exceptions to this policy in writing on a case by case basis for good cause.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS.

Content: Text, graphics, video, icons, images and avatars.

Content Authors: Persons responsible for creating and posting social media content on behalf of Jefferson County. This includes, but is not limited to, comments, text, graphics, video, icons, images and avatars.

Platform: Social media sites including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogger and YouTube.

Posts: Content on a social media platform.

Publish: Posting, pasting, commenting, etc., to any social media platform.

Profile: Information that users provide about themselves when signing up for a social networking site. This may include a picture and other basic information.

Site Administrators: Jefferson County employees, authorized agents and/or contractors, designated as such in writing, whose duties are to review content to ensure compliance with the Social Media Policy and guidelines.

Social Media: Tools and platforms used to publish, converse, and share content online.

V. SOCIAL MEDIA RULES.

Maintain Confidentiality: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Jefferson County or its employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow County policies and federal requirements, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Maintain Privacy: Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media platform without their permission. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum.

Maintain Professionalism: Post only about your area of expertise as it relates to your position with the County. The line between professional and personal opinions can be difficult to distinguish. Be thoughtful about content and clear that the views expressed are those of Jefferson County.

Think Before You Post: If you are about to publish something that makes you the slightest bit uncomfortable, take a minute to think about what you are posting. If you are still unsure, check with your site administrator or supervisor.

Topic Restrictions: Do not post any links or write any content that involve or are related to the following:

- Current or possible litigation involving the County
- Nonpublic information
- Materials unrelated to County business
- Defamatory, libelous, or demeaning material
- Argumentative exchanges with members of the public
- Personal opinions about posted topics or comments made by members of the public
- Personal matters about yourself or others
- Disparaging or threatening comments about or related to anyone
- Sensitive or confidential information of any kind

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and by my signature below agree to comply with the Jefferson County Social Media Policy and Guidelines.

Name: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

(Print Name)