

EL PASO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER



Commissioners Court Social Media Policy

Adopted Date: November 18, 2019

Revised Date:

Overview:

El Paso County endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity with employees, customers, citizens and other stakeholders.

El Paso County's official Social Media Accounts - Facebook, Twitter and others will be maintained by the El Paso County Administration Department. All information on the County's social media platforms will be dedicated to promoting and sharing relevant information with the public.

County departments and elected officials may maintain separate and specific Social Media Accounts and policies providing additional department-specific requirements, which must also abide by the County's overall policies.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set forth general guidelines that must be adhered to with respect to utilization, administration, and oversight of social media sites for official El Paso County purposes. Questions regarding this Policy should be directed to the El Paso County Chief Administrator or designee. These guidelines may be supplemented by more specific administrative procedures and rules. Furthermore, this Policy may be amended from time to time, and is meant to be read in conjunction with all other applicable policies and procedures.

II. Policy:

County-owned technology resources are the property of El Paso County, as is all data created, entered, received, stored, or transmitted via County-owned equipment. All use of social media or similar technology is subject to all County policies, including but not limited to Information Technology Computer Use & Etiquette policy, as well as County's Personal Conduct and Affairs policies. El Paso County permits departments to utilize social media sites and social networking sites to further enhance communications with its residents and various stakeholders in support of department goals and objectives. County officials and departments have the ability to publish articles, facilitate discussions and communicate information through such media to conduct official business.

- A. This policy applies to all El Paso County employees, volunteers, or anyone acting on behalf of a County Department or Elected Official.
- B. Social Media Platforms include but are not limited to:
- Twitter
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - YouTube
 - Flickr
 - Pinterest
 - LinkedIn
 - Tumblr
 - Snapchat
- C. Departments with County-sponsored social media sites:
1. Should notify County Administration of its presence,
 2. May request for a post or site to be reviewed by County Attorney, and
 3. Should be published using social media platforms and tools approved by the Information Technology Department.
- D. All County social media sites shall adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies including the Public Records Law, Public Records retention schedules, Copyright Law and other applicable policies.
- E. The contents provided on all County social media sites are for informational purposes only and must not be construed as a legal notice.
- F. The County disclaims liability for ads, videos, promoted content or comments accessible from any external web page. The responsibility for external content or comments rests with the organizations or individuals providing them. Any inclusion of external content or comments on social media sites does not imply endorsement by the County.
- G. Public Records Law and e-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content. Accordingly, such content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws. Furthermore, once such content is posted on a social media site, it should stay posted, unless it is changed to fix spelling or grammar errors.
- H. All social media sites and entries shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted is subject to public disclosure.

- I. The County reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. This may include:
 - 1) Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
 - 2) Illegal, profane, obscene, or vulgar language or content;
 - 3) Submissions that are defamatory, threatening, invade privacy, or which may be considered to be offensive to anyone;
 - 4) Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, gender identity, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, disability, maternity leave, genetic information, or active military status;
 - 5) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - 6) Spam or links to other sites;
 - 7) Promotion of particular products, services, or vendors;
 - 8) Contents advocating for a particular political party, candidate, or point of view;
 - 9) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - 10) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - 11) Content that may infringe upon the intellectual property or violates legal ownership interest of any other party.

- J. Employees must abide by laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others. Never reprint whole articles or publications without first receiving written permission from the publication owner. Never quote more than a short excerpt of someone else's work and, if possible, provide a link to the original.

III. General Guidelines for Authorized Sites

- A. All County social media sites must be sponsored by a department. The department must include a link to this site from their departmental home page and the County's official social media directory, on the El Paso County's official website.

- B. All County sanctioned social media sites should, at minimum, contain the following elements:
 - 1) Clear Identification of the County Department
 - 2) Link to the County Social Media Policy
 - 3) Official contact for the social media site

- C. The sponsoring department will be responsible for all management of an authorized social media site and it is the responsibility of the department

director/elected official to maintain compliance with this policy and all other applicable policies or laws in the management of their social media site(s).

- D. The accuracy, quality and timeliness of all content on an authorized social media site are the responsibility of the sponsoring department. Likewise, the authorization of the appropriate staff to maintain such a site is also the responsibility of the sponsoring department.
- E. When using an El Paso County social media site, page, etc., all posts must comply with this policy and the following guidelines:
 - 1) Protect Confidential Information- Never post legally protected personal information obtained from the County that is not public information, or whose dissemination is restricted under applicable County, Federal, or State privacy laws or regulations. .
 - 2) Consider the content- As informal as social media sites are, any content, on a government domain or a government identity are still considered official government communications. Thorough consideration is needed to use social media in a way that benefits both the County and the public. Employees should not comment about rumors, political disputes, or personnel issues, and any other contents which violates this policy.
 - 3) Respect the Audience and Fellow Employees. Do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in workplace. As representatives of the County and accordingly, all posts/contents must adhere to all County's policies and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum. Self-expression is permitted to the degree that does not impair working relationships of the County, impede the performance of duties, subvert discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the County.

IV. Information Technology Department

- A. The Information Technology Department does not manage or maintain content on social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.). The Information Technology Department is responsible for maintaining an organization-wide Content Management System (CMS) that delivers web pages via www.epcounty.com. This system allows individual departments to create, update and manage internet content applicable to their specific function(s), while maintaining control over a uniform "look & feel" of the site.
- B. The Content Management System utilized is administrated through a secure network and makes use of secure user authentication. Each

authorized user that is given authority over the content for the particular set of web pages is assigned access and permissions rights as authorized by the department head. Changes requested directly to the Information Technology Department (e.g. telephone requests) are only implemented as authorized by the applicable department head or their representative.

- C. Each department is responsible for their content and to monitor its use.
- D. Social Media activity is not a function that the Information Technology department manages or controls.

V. Violations

- A. Any County employee, official or anyone acting on behalf of a County Department or Elected Official who becomes aware of, or having knowledge of a posting of any website or webpage in violation of the provision of this policy should notify his or her supervisor, County Administration, ITD or the Human Resources Department immediately.
- B. Employees have a duty to report any conduct that violates this policy to an immediate supervisor or manager.
- C. Any violation of this Social Media Policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination.
- D. The County network and computer resources will not be used to:
 - 1) Seek or gain unauthorized access to County information or resources.
 - 2) Seek or gain unauthorized access to resources on the internet.
 - 3) Conduct or participate in any actions, which are illegal.
 - 4) Violate any County policies; city, state, or federal laws.
 - 5) View, display, transmit, or receive any sexually explicit material.
 - 6) Conduct commercial or private/personal business.
 - 7) Promote private businesses, product advertisement, or political lobbying.
 - 8) Transmit unsolicited commercial information (i.e. junk mail, advertising, etc.) or material, which may be deemed offensive to its recipient.
 - 9) Support or solicit on behalf of groups, organizations, etc. that are not related to the County.
 - 10) Advocate racial, ethnic, religious, or gender-based slurs.
 - 11) Destroy the integrity of computer-based information.
 - 12) Disrupt the functions of the County network or other computer resources, including, but not limited to, propagation of worms or viruses or other debilitating programs.

- 13)Threaten or harass others.
- 14)Compromise the privacy and/or security of others.
- 15)Circumvent legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs and data.
- 16)Send, receive, display, print, or otherwise disseminate material that is fraudulent, harassing, illegal, embarrassing, sexually explicit, obscene, intimidating, or defamatory.