

MONO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Subject: SOCIAL MEDIA	Policy Number: A-5	Page Number: Page 1 of 5
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	Revisions:	

POLICY

This policy sets forth the social networking and social media policy for Mono County. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, County Departments may use social media tools to reach a broader audience. The County encourages Department use of social media to further the goals of the County and the missions of its Departments where appropriate. Section 2 does not apply to the Sheriff's Office, as this department is under a law enforcement specific policy related to personal social media use guidelines.

The County understands that its employees use personal social media sites to share events in their lives, to communicate, and to discuss their opinions with others, including family, friends and co-workers. However, the use of personal social media may present certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist employees in making responsible decisions about their use of personal social media, the County has established this policy and guidelines for appropriate employee use of personal social media.

All employees are required to sign a copy of this policy and provide it to their Department Head, who shall retain a copy in the employee's personnel file and provide a signed copy to Human Resources.

1. COUNTY SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA SITE USE GUIDELINES

All communication through County operated/sponsored social media should remain professional in nature and should be conducted in accordance with the requirements set forth in this Policy. Employees shall not use County social media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities. County employees shall be mindful that inappropriate use of County social media can be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

As clarified in this policy, only individuals authorized by the County may publish content to a County website or County social media account.

A. Social Media Requirements for Departments

1. Departments utilizing social media for official County business shall:
 - i. Provide social media account credentials for all platforms to the IT Director.
 - ii. Connect all social media accounts to Archive Social.
 - iii. Establish a well thought out social media work plan that complements countywide policies and considers the department's mission, goals, audience, legal risks, technical capabilities, security issues, emergency response procedures, etc. The work plan shall be submitted to the IT Director, County Counsel and CAO's Office for review. The CAO's

Office may choose to include the Public Information Officer or equivalent in the review process as well.

- iv. Ensure that all content is fully accessible to any person requesting documents from the social media site.
- v. Designate a Social Media Coordinator(s) responsible for overseeing the department's social media activity, policy compliance, and security.

B. Authorized Use

1. In addition to the IT Department, each department shall maintain a list of all social media accounts utilized by the department. The list should include the date the site was established and, if applicable, the date the site was terminated. Each department is responsible for the maintenance of their department's accounts.
2. Department Heads are responsible for designating appropriate levels of official County department social media usage.
 - i. Official County Social media authorization and usage shall be limited only to those employees with a clear business purpose.
 - ii. Appropriate usage levels include identifying what sites an individual is approved to use, as well as defining access restrictions such as publish, edit, comment, or view only.

C. Establishing County Social Media Site Authenticity

1. County department social media sites shall be created and maintained with identifiable characteristics of an official County site that distinguishes them from unofficial and personal sites. If there is a government option available through the social media platform, this option shall be used when establishing the account.
2. County social media accounts shall be created using an official County email address when possible. The IT Director must be added as an Administrator on all applicable accounts.
3. Contact information should display an official County email address, include a statement about the site being the official account for the department, and provide a link to the County website.
4. Each account shall conform to the following requirements:
 - i. Be identified as sponsored by the County.
 - ii. Contain contact information for the County Department and/or Program.
 - iii. Comply with all applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies including, but not limited to, copyright, records retention, California Public Records Act (PRA), First Amendment, privacy laws, employment-related laws, and County-established policies.
 - iv. Not contain content in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates, or ballot measures.
 - v. Not contain information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
 - vi. Not contain content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

D. Posting on a County-Sponsored Social Media Site by Employees, Consultants, or Any Person Acting on Behalf of the County

County social media sites must be clear, precise and follow industry best practices for posting updates. Posts must comply with all applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies.

E. Site Content

1. Departments are responsible for establishing and maintaining content posted to their social media sites by employees, consultants, contractors, or anyone else acting on their behalf.
2. Social Media Coordinators shall review site activity daily for misuse.
3. The following forms of content posted to a Department social media site by an employee, consultant, contractor, or other person acting on behalf of the County may be subject to hiding or removal (upon connection to Archive Social or similar platform):
 - profane language or content,
 - discrimination or harassment against protected classes,
 - sexual harassment,
 - solicitations (including promotion or endorsement),
 - promotion or endorsement of political issues,
 - conduct or encouragement of illegal activity,
 - information that may compromise the safety or security of the public,
 - content intended to defame any person, group, or organization,
 - content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party such as trademark or copyright infringement,
 - false or malicious statements concerning any employee, the County, or its operations,
 - violent or threatening content,
 - disclosure of confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information, or content advocating for alteration of hours, wages, and terms and conditions of employment for County employees.
4. Unacceptable content shall be removed in consultation with County Counsel. Repeat individual violators may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

F. Retention of content on a County Social Media Site

1. Content on County social media sites is subject to the California Public Records Act and the Mono County Records Retention Policy. Any content produced or maintained on a County social media site, including communication posted by the County and communication received from citizens, may be a public record.
2. The County utilizes an automated archiving solution provided by Archive Social to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill the above record retention requirements.

G. Registering a New County Social Media Site

1. All County social media sites shall be (1) approved by the Department Head, IT Director, and the CAO, (2) published using approved social networking platforms and tools, and (3) administered by the Department's Social Media Coordinator(s).

H. Unregistering an Existing County Social Media Site

1. If a social media page is no longer of use, department heads must: (1) notify the CAO and IT Director, (2) ensure records have been archived according to agency guidelines, (3) unpublish and delete the page.

I. Media Contacts

1. The County strives to anticipate and manage crisis situations in order to reduce disruption to our employees and the public we serve, and to maintain the County's reputation as a credible messenger of public information. To best serve these objectives, the County will respond to the news media in a

timely and professional manner only through its designated spokesperson. Employees are not authorized to comment for the County, whether through social media or otherwise, and should direct inquiries regarding the County's position to their department head.

2. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE GUIDELINES

A. Personal and Social Media Use Must Not Impact the Workplace

1. To the extent that personal social media use impacts County employees and clients, employees must follow County policies and regulations as applicable, including but not limited to those that protect individual privacy rights, anti-discrimination and harassment, and anti-workplace violence personnel rules. To the extent a County employee does not follow such applicable policies and regulations, the County may take corrective or disciplinary action in accordance with the County's personnel rules.
2. County employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the extent that their speech does not impair working relationships within the County, does not adversely affect their job performance or the performance of co-workers, and does not adversely impact the provision of County services. If an employee engages in speech that results in any of the aforementioned impacts, the County may take corrective or disciplinary action in accordance with the County's personnel rules.
3. Employees must never disclose information that may violate client or employee rights, for example, another individual's social security number, medical information or financial information. If an employee engages in such speech, the County may take corrective or disciplinary action in accordance with the County's personnel rules.
4. Employees are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with their co-workers or via other channels such as by speaking with the County's Human Resources Department. If an employee nevertheless decides to post work related complaints or criticism, the employee must avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as unlawful harassment or discrimination or other violation of the law such as unlawful threatening conduct. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation or any other status protected by law. Examples of unlawful threatening conduct include posting material that would make a reasonable person afraid for their safety or the safety of their family. If an employee engages in such speech, the County may take corrective or disciplinary action in accordance with the County's personnel rules.

See Hernandez v. City of Phoenix, 43 F.4th 966 (2022)

B. Accuracy of Information Related to County

1. While work-related social media posts made on personal accounts are not recommended, employees should strive for accuracy in any blog or post and include a link to sources of information. Mistakes shall be corrected or retracted promptly.
2. Employees must never post any information or rumors that they know (or should know) are false about their co-workers, the County, County staff, County officials or County clients.

3. If an employee chooses to publish a blog or post online content associated with the County, the employee must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the County. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Mono County.”

C. Suggestions to Improve Privacy of Personal Social Media

1. Employees who want to keep their personal life separate from their professional or work life should use privacy settings to restrict personal information on public sites. Employees should consider whom they invite or accept to join their social network as those individuals will have access to their profile, photographs, etc.
2. Even if an employee has a privacy setting, those invited into their network can easily print, save, cut, paste, modify or publish anything that is posted. Material can be archived on the Internet even after the account holder has removed it.

D. Using Personal Social Media at Work or During Work Hours

1. Employees may not use working hours when not on break or meal period for personal social media activities. Employees may not use County email addresses or passwords to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use. If a County employee engages in such use of social media sites, the County may take corrective or disciplinary action in accordance with the County’s personnel rules.

For more information

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the County’s Human Resources Director or designee.

User Acknowledgment Form:

I have received, read, and understand the County’s Guidelines for Using Social Media.

Print Name

Signature