

CITY OF INKSTER
POLICY FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

PURPOSE:

In the City of Inkster ("City"), we understand that social media can be used by the City's elected officials, departments, commissions and committees as an expedient way to not only connect with City residents but also provide them with transparency in government. However, the use of social media in an official City capacity must be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the current local, state and federal laws. This includes complying with the First Amendment rights of members of the public who wish to access or post comments in response to, social media content published by the City. This policy applies to all City social media, including social media used by elected City officials, representatives, committee members used in an official capacity.

Carefully read these guidelines and policies and ensure that your content is consistent with these policies.

Definition:

For the purposes of the City of Inkster ("City") Social Media Policy, the following terms are defined as provided below:

1. Social Media: social media is content created by individuals using accessible and scalable technologies through the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Instagram, etc.
2. Blog: (an abridgment of the term web log) is a City website with regular entries of commentary descriptions of events, or other material such as graphic video.
3. City Official Social Media page: Is a City social media outlet (as defined above). This includes government officials that own or operate social media pages for the purpose of acting in their official capacity as a public body (private personal pages are not included).
4. Content: Is an original posting of information that can be shared with others on social media.
5. Comment: A response to a City social media content submitted by a commenter including but not limited to likes, comments, shares, messages, tags, replies and retweets.

Approval and Administration:

The City has appointed _____ as the Social Media Administrator. The Social Media Administrator shall be trained regarding the terms of this policy. It is the duty of the

Social Media Administrator to oversee the City's social media presence. This includes reviewing and confirming that said social media content complies with this policy and applicable laws. The Social Media Administrator reserves the right to remove any City department, official, commission, committee and official's social media content, should the content violate this policy. Upon removal, the content must be properly retained to comply with the City retention policy, the Freedom of Information Act and all local, state and federal e-discovery laws.

All City social media and content must be approved by the Social Media Administrator, the requesting Department Head, and the City Attorney. Each approved social media page must have a designated department employee or volunteer ("Designee") controlling its content. The Designee must have a complete understanding of this policy and have appropriate content and technical experience. The Designee must provide the Social Media Administrator with the login information and password.

Introductory Statement:

All City official social networking pages and elected government official personal pages being used in the official capacity as a public body shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the social network page. The introductory statement shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the City or an elected official and shall have City contact information prominently displayed, along with contact information for the Designee administering the social media content, for purposes of addressing issues with the social media content. The introductory statement shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.

Content Policy

Understand that as a City official social networking page, you are representing the City. The purpose of this page is to add value to the City through your interaction. Therefore, adhere to the following:

1. Do not use ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, or engage in any unlawful conduct.
2. Avoid comments or topics that may be objectionable or inflammatory.
3. Correct all mistakes quickly. Do not alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.
4. Protect the privacy of the City's citizens. Follow all privacy protection laws, *i.e.*, HIPAA.

5. Follow all copy right laws, public records laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and any other laws that might apply to the City or your functional area.
6. Do not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without their approval.
7. Do not include advertisements.

Comment Policy:

The most useful feature of social media is the ability for interaction between the public and the government. This interactive aspect creates what is known as a public forum under the First Amendment, which could lead to financial sanctions if violated. Consequently, per this policy a City Official Social Media Page (including a government official personal page being used in the official capacity as a public body) **must** refrain from blocking, restricting, and/or banning an individual from the City Official Social Media Page. These pages must further refrain from deleting, removing, and or hiding an individual's Comments.. With approval of the Social Media Administrator, a City Official Social Media Page may remove the following:

1. Content that uses profane language or is sexually explicit, including masked profanity;
2. Content that advertises, promotes or solicits a commercial product or service;
3. Content that violates any federal, state, or local law;
4. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
5. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party (copyright or trademark);
6. Content that is obscene, incites violence, contains true threats, is defamatory, or contains fighting words as defined by case law.

A City official social media **MAY NOT REMOVE, DELETE, HIDE, BLOCK, BAN, or RESTRICT IN ANY WAY** an individual or the individual's comments for the viewpoint they are expressing.

A City official social media may opt to be used as a platform to simply release information, and not to enter into a dialogue with the public. If that is the case, the social media platform must not allow for ANY Comments or public posts. A Designee cannot simply pick and choose to put comments on the social media platform, rather all comments/posts

must be precluded from the platform. This type of municipal social media platform MUST be approved by City Attorney.

Furthermore, City official social media content may be subject to the Open Meetings Act. Therefore, City official social media must refrain from contemporaneous discussions or debates of public business. This includes discussion open to the public on posts and discussions in private such as chat rooms, direct messages, messaging, and all other private ways of communication on social media pages.

Disclaimer

All City official social media pages, if applicable must post a disclaimer stating the following:

This page is monitored and managed by the City of Inkster, Michigan. Please be advised, posting on this page constitutes acceptance of the following terms:

- "Friending"/"Following" between this page or its employees and a citizen does not indicate endorsement of that person's actions or comments.
- The City reserves the right to remove all comments as set forth in the City's Social Media Policy [provide link]
- The City welcomes a person's right to express his/her opinion and encourages individuals to keep comments related to the original post.
- All content posted on this page are subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and all local, state and federal e-discovery laws.

Training

The Social Media Administrator, departments, commissions and committee members who use or may need to interact with City social media pages shall be trained on the Policy once annually. Elected officials shall be trained on the Policy once upon entering office. Any new Social Media Administrator, department, commission and/or committee member who uses or may need to interact with City social media pages shall be trained on the Policy during their onboarding training and once annually thereafter. Each person trained will receive a copy of the Social Media Acknowledgement Form and must acknowledge and sign the Form before administering a city social media page.

Appeals

Users may appeal any restrictions on their social media accounts. To appeal, the user must submit to the Social Media Administrator, [email]; [phone number], a written statement asking for reinstatement. Requests shall be responded to on a reasonably timely basis. A statement that the user will abide by this Policy in the future shall be sufficient to remove any restrictions, except when a user has continued to violate the

Policy after having made such a statement. In the latter case, the user must submit a written statement providing grounds for reinstatement, and access shall be restored after it is determined the grounds for reinstatement is sufficient.

Any denial of reinstatement by the Social Media Administrator shall also be done in writing signed by them and specifically describe the grounds for denial.

Any user denied reinstatement is entitled to seek reinstatement after a reasonable period (six-months) of time.

Compliance with Laws

All City official social media shall adhere to applicable state, federal, and local laws, regulations and polices including all Information Technology and Records Management City polices and other applicable City policies. All City official social media content, whether a public post or a private message, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies. Therefore, all content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with these laws.

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the City Attorney.

Appendix A
Social Media Policy Acknowledgment Form

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the City of Inkster Social Media Policy dated _____.

I understand that this policy replaces any and all prior verbal and written communications regarding the City of Inkster policies relating to social media, as defined in the social media policy.

I have read and understand the contents of the social media policy and will act in accord with these policies and procedures.

I understand that if I have questions or concerns at any time about the social media policy, I will consult Social Media Administrator or the City Attorney for clarification.

Finally, I understand that the contents of the social media policy may change at any time.
Please read this social media policy carefully before you sign this document.

Signature

Date

Name (Please Print)