

Social Media Policy

Scope

This policy shall govern the use of social media by Oakland County employees when posting for Oakland County. Sharing information about County programs, news and activities through social media is an effective way to engage and inform the community. However, it needs to be done properly. If you use social media to post on behalf of Oakland County, you must follow this policy. Social media sites shall include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram and all other sites that are similar in content and/or character.

Seek Approval

You must have approval from your Department Head or his/her designee to use social media on behalf of the County. Once your Department Head or his/her designee has approved, you must contact the County's Information Technology Department to establish a social media account through the I.T. Service Center. I.T. must approve the social media site. Only social media sites approved by I.T. may be used on behalf of the County. The I.T. Department will retain password and log-in information for all County-sponsored social media. You must follow the I.T. standards for managing County-sponsored social media sites. To ensure the County has a consistent image on its social media sites, refer to I.T. standards for the look and feel of County-sponsored social media sites.

Respect County Resources

It is appropriate to use social media at work only when your use has been approved by your Department Head or his/her designee and is directly related to accomplishing work goals. You should participate in personal social media use on your own time. Personal social media use is use that has no connection to your work at the County.

Be Accurate and Authentic

All County-sponsored social media sites must clearly identify that they are maintained by Oakland County and prominently display County contact information. Your comments on such sites will directly reflect upon the County. Make sure posts are factually accurate. Cite and link to your sources where possible. If you make a mistake, admit it and correct it. When you post on behalf of the County you must identify your position with the County. Anonymous postings by County commentators are not allowed.

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Be Aware of Legal Considerations

In order to avoid liability for yourself and the County, do not make comments that:

- 1) discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, weight, height or genetic information;
- 2) are sexual in nature;
- 3) compromise the safety or security of the County or individuals;
- 4) support or oppose a political candidate or ballot measure;
- 5) promote illegal activity;
- 6) violate another party's copyright, trademark or other protected property;
- 7) are obscene or profane.

Use good judgment when providing personal information and be aware of legal requirements and County/Department policies protecting a person's right to privacy. (e.g., HIPAA -- the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act protects a person's health information.) Ask for permission before posting someone's image, information, or intellectual property. Do not post information about employees, citizens, vendors, patients or clients being served by the County without first obtaining their written consent.

Retain posts

Because social media sites are not government sites, they do not follow the State of Michigan Record Retention Laws and Policies for Local Government. But social media conducted on behalf of the County is subject to these laws and policies and to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act. You must follow the State's record retention laws and policies¹.

¹ More information about them can be found at the State of Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget website. http://www.michigan.gov/dmb/0,4568,7-150-9141_21738-96210--,00.html

Under the State's record retention rules, many of the items and documents you might post, such as notices of special events or holidays, and copies of documents already kept in your department do not need to be saved permanently. You must save a copy of these materials only until the event has passed, the case is closed, the project is completed, or the information has served its useful purpose. Most tweets and posts fall into this category because of their transient and temporary nature and because they do not perform a governmental function or create a County policy. However, you must also be prepared to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests or to produce documents and materials in a lawsuit. If you post something that is the only record of a County operation or is the only record that a County function has been performed, you must keep a copy.

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Post Disclaimer and Removal

Prominently display the following statement on all sites that accept comments from the public:

“The County reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments including those that are discriminatory, obscene or sexual in nature, threaten or defame an individual or entity, support or oppose political candidates or proposals, violate the intellectual property rights of another party, promote illegal activity or commercial products or services or are not related to the topic in the original posting. Keep in mind that all of your posted comments are public records and subject to disclosure. Requests for public records may be submitted to corpocounsel@oakgov.com.” Remove all posts that meet the criteria for removal stated above and keep a copy of the post.

Use of County Servicemarks and Logos

Before using a County servicemark (e.g., logo), you need to get the correct copy of the servicemark from the I.T. Media Management System. Do not use a specialized service mark, like the Sheriff’s badge or the Water Resource Commissioner’s water droplet unless you are posting on behalf of that department. You must use a County-owned servicemark exactly as it appears in the County’s Media Management System. If you change a registered County servicemark, you could jeopardize the County’s registration/ownership of the mark. If you want to make a significant change to a registered County servicemark, it must be approved by Corporation Counsel. If you display material that belongs to someone other than the County, you must give credit to the source or author of the material in your posting. Failure to cite a third party author or source could be a violation of federal law.

Compliance with County Policies

All County policies and Merit Rules apply when you use social media on behalf of the County. This includes the **Electronic Communications Policy** (use County equipment for business purposes), **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy** (prohibits inappropriate conduct towards others because of their race, sex, age, etc.), **Sexual Harassment Policy** (prohibits inappropriate conduct or hostile work environment), **Workplace Violence Policy** (prohibits violence or threats of violence), **Standard of Conduct for Oakland County Officers and Employees** (prohibits sharing of confidential information, profiting from County employment, etc.), **Political Activities** (prohibits political activities during work hours, in a County uniform, etc.). You may not use Social Media to advertise for private individuals, firms, or corporations, or imply in any manner that Oakland County endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

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Personal Social Media

You may list your County position in your personal social media accounts but you are not authorized to speak or comment on behalf of the County. It is recommended that you keep your privacy and security in mind when engaging in personal social media use. Even with good security measures, the comments you make may be forwarded to others and accessible for others to see for a long time.

Violations

Employees found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment pursuant to the County's Merit System Rules, and, if applicable, may be subject to prosecution under federal or state laws.