

## City of Garden City Social Media Policy

The City of Garden City has an interest in engaging, informing, and cultivating its stakeholder audience using traditional as well as new media. Social media has become one of the main channels of communication for many and is an excellent communication tool for public organizations. By leveraging social media as a primary communication tool, the City is engaging its customers on their terms and supporting the goals of service, community, and performance.

Communication informs, educates, listens, and responds. Sharing information from other agencies, individuals, businesses or organizations can help the public better understand the issues, influences, concerns, challenges, and opportunities before us as a public entity. Sharing our own original content personalizes our messages and demonstrates our “social persona.” In social media, there are appropriate occasions for both original and shared content.

Everything the City does on social media ties back to its brand and informational campaigns.

The City uses social media for:

- City press releases, media, events, photos, job opportunities, project updates, and municipal-related interest news and resources.

The City does not share or post:

- Political advocacy information (endorsements) or crude, rude, offensive, or derogatory statements.

The City encourages dialogue with our audience regarding City services and related topics where communication and self-expression are made with respect and courtesy to others. As such, municipal site administrators will remove a comment if it violates our terms of use.

## EXTERNAL POLICY/TERMS OF USE

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish regulations that are intended to help facilitate and enhance the exchange of information and ideas through the City’s social media. The following guidelines must be displayed to users on all social media sites or made available by hyperlink.

### **Third Party Content**

This City social media site serves as a limited public forum and all content published is subject to monitoring. User-generated posts will be rejected or removed (if possible) when the content:

- is off-subject or out of context (Comments not related to the topic of conversation)
- contains profanity, obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest
- contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information
- contains offensive terms that target protected classes
- is uncivil, threatening, harassing or discriminatory
- contains defamatory remarks, personal attacks, or threats against any individual person or group of people
- incites or promotes violence or illegal activities
- contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
- advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual
- solicits donations, except for official City-sponsored activities

- promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates
- violates a legal ownership interest of any party
- is in violation of or inconsistent with federal, state, or local laws and ordinances
- Content that reflects negatively on the City, its employees, or public officials, unless such comment relates to a matter of public concern and is otherwise in compliance with the remaining provisions of this policy;
- Links to any outside websites that are inconsistent with this policy;
- Any content not listed herein but that is otherwise inconsistent with the spirit of civility intended by these Terms of Use & Comment Policy.

Any comment posted by a member of the public on an official City social media page or Department social media page is the opinion of the commentator only, and its publication on such page shall not imply endorsement of or agreement by the City.

The City reserves the right to remove content that is deemed in violation of this policy, applicable law, or the City's employee handbook. Any participant on a City social media page or Department social media page that repeatedly violates the commenting guidelines as set forth in this policy may be permanently removed from the City's social media page(s). The City of Garden City reserves the right to temporarily or permanently suspend access to any page at any time.

### **Public Records Law**

City social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to City business, including communication posted by the City and communication received from citizens, is a public record. The Department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for social media content.

## **INTERNAL POLICY**

### **Purpose**

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for the City of Garden City. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, City departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on its behalf on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

City employees are encouraged to follow and engage with our social media platforms (City Personnel policies still apply). Social networking is meant to be social, so having employees interact with our posts enhances information sharing, morale, and education throughout the organization and our service area.

All social media accounts will be managed by City staff. Oversight and quality control is the responsibility of the Communications division, who is ultimately accountable for content.

## PERSONAL USE

All City employees may have personal social networking, Web 2.0 and social media sites. These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or nonwork-related information. Following this principle helps ensure a distinction between sharing personal and City views. City employees must never use their City e-mail account or password in conjunction with personal social networking, Web 2.0 or social media site. The following guidance is for City employees who decide to have a personal social media, Web 2.0 or social networking site or who decide to comment on posts about official City business:

- State your name and, if relevant, role, when discussing City business;
- Use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and don’t reflect or represent the opinions of the City for which I work.”

The City understands that social media and social networking sites can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world; however, the use of these sites also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social networking, Web 2.0, and social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use.

### Guidelines

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the internet, including to your own, or someone else’s, weblog or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the City, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The principles and guidelines found in this policy apply to your activities online. The City respects your First Amendment rights; ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards involved. Keep in mind that any conduct adversely affecting your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or that otherwise adversely affects members of the public, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of the City may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and follow the rules. Carefully read these guidelines, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be respectful. Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage members of the public, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone’s reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or company policy.

Be honest and accurate. Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors you know to be false about the City.

Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the City. If the City is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the City, fellow employees, residents, contractors, or people working on behalf of the City. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the City, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the City. 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 the City.”

### **Using Social Media at Work**

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment provided by the City unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent with the City's Equipment Policy. Do not use your City email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

### **Retaliation is Prohibited**

The City prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Media Contacts**

Generally, employees should not speak to the media on the City's behalf. All media inquiries should be directed to the Communications Division or to the appropriate Department Head.

### **PROFESSIONAL USE**

The City encourages the use of social media to enhance customer's capacity to learn and to enhance communication. It is important that the City take a measured, strategic approach to the implementation of social media to avoid potentially damaging consequences such as the presence of out-of-date information, the failure to provide appropriate information to citizens who have requested it, or the misrepresentation of City policies, services, or values.

Personal social media accounts established by employees should not be presented as official voices of the City, and departmental or project-based accounts should only be established by or in collaboration with the IT & Communication Department and with the approval of the City Manager.

All official City-related communication through social media, Web 2.0 and social networking outlets should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with the City's communications policy, practices, and expectations. Employees must not use official City social media, Web 2.0 or social networking sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities. City employees should be mindful that inappropriate usage of official City social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites can be grounds for disciplinary action. If social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites are used for official City business, the entire City site, regardless of any personal views, is subject to best

practices guidelines, and standards. Only individuals authorized by the City may publish content to a City website or social media site.

### **Approval and Registration**

All City Web 2.0, social media, and social networking sites shall be (1) approved by the City Manager; (2) published using approved platforms and tools; and (3) administered by the Communications Division or their designee.

Departments requesting a presence on an approved social media site must submit a written request to the City Manager. Once approved, the Department Head will meet with Communications Staff to establish the social media account.

### **Oversight and Enforcement**

Departments that use Web 2.0, social media, and social networking sites are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. This included adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), The Kansas Open Meetings Act, The First Amendment, privacy laws, and information security policies established by the City.

Employees representing the City must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in City social media sites, blogs, or other social media features. Information must be presented following professional standards for good grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity, and accuracy, and avoid jargon, obscure terminology, or acronyms. City employees recognize that the content and messages they are public and may be cited as official City statements. Social media should not be used to circumvent other City communication policies, including news media policy requirements. City employees may not publish information on City social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information
- Copyright violations
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or spam

Violations of these standards may result in the removal of department pages.

### **Records Retention**

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the City and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the Kansas Open Records Act. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (for example, digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.
- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e., ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.

- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.
- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g., PDF).
- Each employee who administers one or more social networking sites on behalf of the City has self-service, read-only access to search and produce relevant social media records to fulfill public information and legal discovery requests as needed.

The City utilizes an automated archiving solution provided by ArchiveSocial to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill the above record retention requirements. The City archive is available at [archivesocial.com](http://archivesocial.com).

### SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICANT SCREENING

Social media can be used to screen applicants that have applied for employment opportunities with the City of Garden City in accordance with this policy.

The Human Resources Department will complete all applicant screening to ensure compliance with local, state and federal laws. Managers or employees involved in the hiring process must request applicant screening to be completed by the Human Resources Department once applicants have completed a first round interview. Managers or employees will not be authorized to conduct applicant screening from City social media accounts, or an employee's personal social media account without authorization from the Human Resources Department.

The Human Resources Department will conduct applicant screening to verify accurate information was provided by applicants in written material such as application forms or verbally in initial interviews as well as to ensure that the applicant meets standards set forth by the organization through job descriptions, mission statement, or any other written documentation that describes functions necessary for the open position. The Human Resources Department will provide managers or employees with a report of information from the applicant screening to include job-related information only. Any information collected to include identifying information such as race, color, religion, gender, age, genetics, national origin, ancestry, handicap and veteran status will not be reported to manager/employees taking part in the hiring process or used in any hiring decisions.

All Applicant Screening reports and supporting documentation will be kept on file for one year from the date of the screening.