**OMAG**

**Two Sample Employee Social Media Policies**

**DISCLAIMER:** These policy templates are meant to provide general guidelines and should be used as a reference. They may not take into account all relevant ordinances, charters, policies, practices or organizational structure particular to your City. REVIEW CAREFULLY and revise as needed.

Electronic monitoring of employee communications may give rise to First Amendment freedom of speech rights for public-sector employees. Therefore, it is very important that public employers are very careful when drafting and enforcing social media policies so that they don’t interfere unnecessarily with employees’ First Amendment rights.

Attached are two different Sample Employee Social Media Policies that have been prepared as generic models by OMAG staff. Choose the policy that works best for your city or you can mix the two policies if there are parts of each you would like to use.

To avoid any legal issues this should be reviewed by your City attorney before distribution to ensure that it accurately reflects any laws, policies, procedures and practices adopted by the governing body.

If you have questions, please call OMAG and ask for:

Monica L. Coleman Ambre Gooch

Associate General Counsel/ Associate General Counsel

Director of Personnel Services 1-800-234-9461 (toll free)

1-800-234-9461 (toll free) 405-657-1447 (direct)

405-657-1422 (direct) [agooch@omag.org](mailto:agooch@omag.org)

[mcoleman@omag.org](mailto:mcoleman@omag.org)

**OMAG SAMPLE 1**

**EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

**Guidelines**

*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 web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with [City/Town], as well as any other form of electronic communication.  You are solely responsible for what you post online. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow associates or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of [City/Town] or [City/Town’s] legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Know and follow the rules**

Carefully read these guidelines, the [City/Town] Statement of Ethics Policy, the [City/Town] Information Policy and the Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Policy, 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 associates, customers, members, suppliers or people who work on behalf of [City/Town]. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolved work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Open Door Policy 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 customers, members, associates or suppliers, 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 on the basis of 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 that you know to be false about [City/Town], fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, people working on behalf of [City/Town] or competitors.

**Post only appropriate and respectful content**

* Maintain the confidentiality of [City/Town] trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trades secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.
* Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a [City/Town] website without identifying yourself as a [City/Town] associate.
* Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for [City/Town]. If [City/Town] is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an associate and make it clear that your views do not represent those of [City/Town], fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers or people working on behalf of [City/Town]. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with [City/Town], make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of [City/Town]. 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 [City/Town].”

**Using social media at work**

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

**Retaliation is prohibited**

[City/Town] prohibits taking negative action against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any associate who retaliates against another associate 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**

Employees should not speak to the media on [City/Town’s] behalf without contacting the Town Administrator/City Manager/Mayor/Public Information Officer. All media inquiries should be directed to them.

**OMAG SAMPLE 2**

**EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA/NETWORKING POLICY**

Social media, including networking sites and blogs, are increasing in popularity and activity. MUNICIPALITY believes that social media can assist in raising visibility and support for its business. MUNICIPALITY is also aware that social media is not used exclusively for MUNICIPALITY’s business and that employees are utilizing blogs and social networking sites for personal use. However, it is important to keep in mind that what is posted is traceable and permanent.

When employees create their own blogs, comment on a blog, create a LinkedIn profile, Twitter, use Facebook and/or contribute to or through any of the other online media (i.e., Wikis, blogs, chat rooms, Internet forums, electronic mailing lists, etc.), they are impacting their personal image and potentially impacting MUNICIPALITY. If your online profile indicates that you work for MUNICIPALITY, then that activity is associated with MUNICIPALITY. Therefore, MUNICIPALITY asks all employees to follow the guidelines below regarding online behavior.

The sites covered in this policy include any electronic form of communication, including social networking sites such as FaceBook and MySpace; professional networking sites such as LinkedIn; and live blogging tools like Twitter, as well as employee’s personal blogs and those hosted by other organizations that you either author or where you post comments.

Follow these guidelines when creating and/or publishing work-related or non-work-related content online:

* **Maintain confidentiality.** Never divulge proprietary or confidential information about MUNICIPALITY, our employees or our clients.
* **Represent yourself accurately**. If you are participating in an online community and commenting on topics related to our business, you must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of MUNICIPALITY.
* **Be accurate.** When posting content, your overall goal should be to provide value through accurate information. You may not post anything that is knowingly false.
* **Be respectful.** Respect the opinions of others. You may have disagreements, but please make your opinions respectfully. MUNICIPALITY does not tolerate intimidating or threatening comments.

Please keep the following guidelines in mind regarding your online identity:

* Follow the rules regarding the use of MUNICIPALITY email outlined in the MUNICIPALITY’s Personnel Polices.
* Even when using social media sites on a personal basis, please remember to follow MUNICIPALITY’s policies prohibiting threats and intimidation.
* MUNICIPALITY is not interested in limiting your ability to participate in personal social networks with a personal email address outside of the workplace. However, what you publish on these sites should never be attributed to the MUNICIPALITY. Please make it clear that you are speaking for yourself. Furthermore, even if you do not mention MUNICIPALITY, that information is readily ascertainable and could reflect poorly upon you and MUNICIPALITY. Please use common sense when making online comments, even if you intend for them only to be personal in nature. If you choose to use your work affiliation on a social network, then you should regard all communication on that network as you would in a professional network.
* Be aware of your association with MUNICIPALITY in online social networks. If you identify yourself as a MUNICIPALITY employee, ensure your profile, photographs and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and clients. In particular, if your name on Twitter is related to MUNICIPALITY’s business, be sure that the majority of your “tweets” are on this topic.
* As they are in the public domain, MUNICIPALITY reserves the right to monitor social media sites and blogs.
* Any violators of these guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.