



Directive

Subject	Social Media	Number	2
Issue Date	February 23, 2012	Revision	
Issue Department	Public & Media Affairs		
Title	Policy for Social Media	Approved By	Page 1 of 4
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PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for City of Garland employees who use social media websites and online social networking on behalf of the City of Garland organization.

This policy applies to all departments and organizations within the City of Garland.

GOALS

The use of social media and networking by City of Garland employees should support the following City goals.

- Promote a positive image of the City of Garland community
- Promote citizen engagement in local government and community affairs
- Share and communicate information that is of interest to Garland citizens and customers

DEFINITIONS

Social Media: Various forms of discussion and information-sharing tools, including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards and online forums. Technologies include picture and video sharing, wall postings, e-mail, instant messaging, and music sharing. Examples of Social Media applications include, but are not limited to, Facebook, MySpace (social networking); YouTube (social networking and video sharing); Flickr (photo sharing); Twitter (social networking and microblogging); LinkedIn (business networking); Google and Yahoo Groups (reference, social networking); Wikipedia (reference); and news media comment sharing/blogging.

Social Networking: The practice of expanding one's business and/or social contacts by making connections through clubs, organizations, phone contacts, written correspondence or through web-based applications. This policy focuses on Social Networking as it relates to the Internet to promote such connections through Web-based groups established for that purpose.

RESPONSIBILITY

- The Information Technology Board is responsible for establishing the City of Garland's Social Media Policy and approving procedures created to implement this policy.

- The City Web Governance Committee (WGC) will establish procedures for the use of social media and networking by city employees.
- The Information Technology Services (ITS) Department will administer and monitor all IT systems required to support this policy.
- City Departments and employees who want to engage in Social Media/Networking in an official capacity must coordinate this activity with the WGC.
- Managing Directors, Department Directors, supervisors and the individual employees engaged in Social Media/Networking must comply with all City policies and procedures related to this activity.

Guidelines

- The City of Garland shall participate in an official capacity with only those sites approved by the WGC. A limited number of channels shall be implemented on each site to provide a consistent brand and message for the City of Garland.
- City of Garland social media sites must adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies, including all IT and City Records Management policies and other applicable City policies.
- Freedom of Information Act and a-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
- The City of Garland social media sites must include an introductory statement that clearly specifies its purpose and topical scope.
- Whenever possible, all City of Garland social media and networking sites should link back to the official City of Garland's Internet site for forms, documents and other information.
- All Social Network Sites must clearly indicate that any articles and other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
- All Social Network Sites must include or link back to the Disclaimer Language in Appendix A.
- The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable laws. Social Networking content or comments containing any of the following will not be allowed for posting:
 - a. Comments or material not topically related to the site or article being commented upon;
 - b. Profane language or obscene content;
 - c. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;
 - d. Personal attacks, insults or threatening language;
 - e. Plagiarized material; private, personal material published without consent; or potentially libelous material;
 - f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - h. Commercial promotions or spam;
 - i. Organized political activity.

Employee Conduct

City employees representing the City government via Social Media Sites must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with all Human Resources Policies. The policies and guidelines outlined herein also apply to employees posting City-related information on personal (non-City) Social Media Sites.

Employees using City of Garland Social Media Sites, whether as an administrator, City-named or City-sponsored account owner / shared owner or as a responder to a posting, will follow these guiding principles:

- a. When responding on behalf of the City from an account that is not sponsored by the City, maintain transparency by using your real name and job title, and by being clear about your role in regards to the subject.
- b. Write and post about your area of expertise, especially as related to the City and your assignments. When writing about a topic for which you are not the City's expert, make this clear to readers.
- c. Keep postings factual and accurate. If a mistake is made, admit to it and post a correction as soon as possible.
- d. Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- g. Ensure your comments do not violate the city's privacy, confidentiality and applicable legal guidelines for external communication. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties with whom the City may be in litigation without the appropriate approval.

Related Policies and Directives:

[Electronic Systems Use #1 – Email and Internet Use](#)

[Electronic Systems Use #2 -Information Technology Security Policy](#)

[Policy for Public Communications](#)

Appendix A Required Disclaimer Language for All Social Media Sites

The City of Garland's presence on social media sites is intended for informational purposes only. If you wish to contact City officials or to request City services, please visit the City's official website, www.garlandtx.gov, or call City Hall at 972-205-2000.

This is a moderated channel, meaning a/1 comments will be reviewed for appropriate content. Moderation will take place during City Hall's normal business hours. We reserve the right to determine which comments are acceptable for this page. Comments must fall within the following guidelines:

Comments must be civil and may not contain slanderous, libelous, malicious, offensive, threatening, profane, or insulting language.

References to the personality of individuals or personal attacks will not be permitted.

Advertising or promotional announcements are not permitted.

Comments must be within the scope of the topic under discussion.

Comments cannot include personally identifiable information, such as an address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information.

Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.

Comments containing links to other web sites or pages must be relevant to the topic.

Comments cannot serve electoral campaign purposes. Political messages will not be published.

Participants are responsible for what they post. Comments must not breach any law, confidentiality, or copyright.

Some of the links on the City's social media pages may lead to resources outside the City of Garland's municipal government. The presence of these links should not be construed as an endorsement by the City of these sites or their content. The City is not responsible for the content of any such external link. The responsibility for content rests with the third party organizations that are providing the information.