



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

I. Purpose

Social networking in government serves two primary functions: to communicate and deliver messages directly to citizens and to encourage citizen involvement, interaction, and feedback. Information which is distributed via social networking must be accurate, consistent, and timely and meet the information needs of the City's customers. Since social media is used for social networking, this policy seeks to ensure proper use of the City of Anoka's social media sites by its representatives.

The City of Anoka wishes to establish a positive and informative social media presence. City representatives have the responsibility to use the City's social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner pursuant to all existing City and departmental policies. This policy also provides guidelines and standards for city representatives regarding the use of social media for communication with residents, colleagues and all other followers.

II. Policy

The City of Anoka determines, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources are designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy. City social media sites may be modified or removed by the City at any time and without notice, as described in this document.

City of Anoka social media accounts are considered a City asset and administrator access to these accounts must be securely administered in accordance with the City's Computer Use policy. The City reserves the right to shut down any of its social media sites or accounts for any reason without notice.

All social media websites created and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties will be identified as belonging to the City of Anoka. The City of Anoka does not create or maintain social media accounts for its elected officials.

III. Scope

This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media websites sponsored, established, registered or authorized by the City of Anoka.

IV. Definition

Social media are internet and mobile-based applications, websites and functions, other than email, for sharing and discussing information, where users can post photos, videos, comments and links to other information to create content on any imaginable topic. This may be referred to as "user-generated content" or "consumer-generated media."

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Nextdoor
- Blogs
- Social news sites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed
- Video and photo sharing sites such as YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, and Flickr
- Wikis, or shared encyclopedias such as Wikipedia
- An ever emerging list of new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed above

As used in this policy, “employees and agents” means all City representatives, including its employees and other agents of the city, such as independent contractors or Councilmembers.

V. **Rules of Use**

City employees and agents with administrator access are responsible for managing social media websites. Facilities or departments wishing to have a new social media presence must initially submit a request to Communications Manager in order to ensure social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number and policies are followed. All approved sites will be clearly marked as the City of Anoka site and will be linked with the official City website www.anokaminnesota.com. No one may establish social media accounts or websites on behalf of the City unless authorized in accordance with this policy.

If a City of Anoka social media site is not utilized on a regular basis, discussion shall be held to determine if the site should be closed temporarily or permanently.

Administration of all social media websites must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as proper business etiquette.

City social media accounts accessed and utilized during the course and scope of an employee’s performance of his/her job duties may not be used for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to City employment relations matters.

Account passwords shall be provided to the Communications Manager and will promptly be reset if an employee is removed as an account administrator.

No social media website may be used by the City or any City employee or agent to disclose private or confidential information. No social media website should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential or sensitive, contact the Assistant City Manager.

When using social media sites as a representative of the City, employees and agents will act in a professional manner. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Adhere to all City personnel and Computer Use policies
- Use only appropriate language and content that does not promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental or sexual orientation

Be aware that content will not only reflect on the writer, but also on the City of Anoka as a whole, including elected officials and other city employees and agents. Make sure information is accurate, free of grammatical errors and presented in a professional manner.

- Not providing private or confidential information, or using such material as part of any content added to a site. Use discretion when including names.
- Not negatively commenting on community partners or their services, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
- Not providing information related to pending decisions that would compromise negotiations.
- Be aware that all content added to a site is subject to open records/right to know laws and discovery in legal cases.
- Always keep in mind the appropriateness of content.
- Improve content accessibility by limiting the use of emoji®.
- Comply with any existing code of ethical behavior established by the City.
- City Staff may decline requests to post messages on city platforms on behalf of the public and will use discretion while sharing posts from other entities; keep it to local civic and non-profit organizations in which the City supports or those that promote Anoka businesses in a positive manner.

Where moderation of comments is an available option, comments from the public will be moderated by City staff, with administrative rights, before posting. Where moderation prior to posting is not an option, sites will be regularly monitored by City staff.

City of Anoka's staff with administrative rights will not edit any posted comments. However, comments posted by members of the public may be hidden from public view by administrators if they are abusive, obscene, defamatory, in violation of the copyright, trademark right or other intellectual property right of any third party, or otherwise inappropriate or incorrect. The following are examples of content that may be hidden by City staff before or shortly after being published:

- Potentially libelous comments
- Obscene or racist comments
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language directed at city staff or elected officials
- Plagiarized material
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Comments totally unrelated to the topic of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion

VI. **Personal Social Media Use**

A. **Employees & Agents**

The City of Anoka respects employees and agents' rights to post and maintain personal websites, blogs and social media pages and to use and enjoy social media on their own personal devices during non-work hours. The City requires employees and agents to act in a prudent manner with regard to website and internet postings that reference the City of Anoka, its personnel, its operation or its property. Employees, agents, and others affiliated with the City may not use a city brand, logo or other city identifiers on their personal sites, nor post information that purports to be the position of the City without prior authorization.

City employees and agents are discouraged from identifying themselves as city employees when responding to or commenting on blogs with personal opinions or views. If an employee chooses to identify him or herself as a City of Anoka employee, and posts a statement on a matter related to City business, a disclaimer similar to the following must be used:

“These are my own opinions and do not represent those of the City.”

Occasional access to personal social media websites during work hours is permitted, but employees and agents must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the City’s Computer Use policy. Employees and agents should also review the Data Ownership section of this policy (below).

There may be times when personal use of social media (even if it is off-duty or using the employee’s own equipment) may spill over into the workplace and become the basis for employee coaching or discipline. Examples of situations where this might occur include:

- Friendships, dating or romance between co-workers
- Cyber-bullying, stalking or harassment
- Release of confidential or private data; if there are questions about what constitute confidential or private data, contact the Assistant City Manager.
- Unlawful activities
- Misuse of city-owned social media
- Inappropriate use of the city’s name, logo or the employee’s position or title
- Using city-owned equipment or city-time for extensive personal social media use

Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because the laws in this area are complex. If you have any questions about what types of activities might result in discipline, please discuss the type of usage with the Assistant City Manager.

B. Data Ownership

All social media communications or messages composed, sent, or received on city equipment in an official capacity are the property of the City and will be subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. The Assistant City Manager is the responsible authority for responding to any public records request on the City’s social media sites.

The City of Anoka also maintains the sole property rights to any image, video or audio captured while a City employee is representing the City in any capacity.

The City retains the right to monitor employee’s social media use on city equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users should have no expectation of privacy. Social media is not a secure means of communication.

C. **Policy Violations**

Violations of the Policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.

Policy History

Initially Adopted: 12.19.2011

Revised: 07.18.2022

Revised: 06.26.2023