



Town of Allenstown
New Hampshire

FINANCIAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Town of Allenstown, NH

Title

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy No
#2014-004

Original Adoption Date
00/00/2014

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Section 1.0: Purpose

The Town endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity. This policy establishes the Town's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

Section 2.0: Organization Affected

All departments and/or functional areas of the Town of Allenstown.

Section 3.0: Definitions

Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for "Web log."

Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

Post: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Profile: Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.


Social Media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo- and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).

Social Networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

Web 2.0: The second generation of the World Wide Web focused on shareable, user-generated content, rather than static web pages. Some use this term interchangeably with social media.

Wiki: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

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Section 4.0: Policy

4.1 Social Media Usage

A. Town-Sanctioned Presence

1. Determine strategy
 - a. Where possible, each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the Town’s presence on the website.
 - b. Where possible, the page(s) should link to the department’s official website.
 - c. Social media page(s) shall be designed for the target audience(s).
2. Procedures
 - a. All department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Town Administrator or his or her designee and shall be administered by staff designated by the Town Administrator.
 - b. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the department and shall have department contact information prominently displayed.
 - c. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology and records management policies.
 - (1) Content is subject to public records laws. Relevant records retention schedules apply to social media content.
 - (2) Content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with open records laws and e-discovery laws and policies.
 - d. Where possible, social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Town/department.
 - (1) Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the Town/department reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, and personal attacks.
 - (2) Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.
3. Town-Sanctioned Use
 - a. Town personnel representing the Town via social media outlets shall do the following:
 - (1) Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Town and, accordingly, shall adhere to all Town standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
 - (2) Identify themselves as a member of the Town.



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(3) Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning pending prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to department training, activities, or work-related assignments without express written permission.

(4) Not conduct political activities or private business.

- b. The use of department computers by department personnel to access social media is prohibited without authorization.
- c. Department personnel use of personally owned devices to manage the department's social media activities or in the course of official duties is prohibited without express written permission.
- d. Employees shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.

4.2 Potential Uses

1. Social media can be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to
 - a. road closures,
 - b. special events,
 - c. weather emergencies, and
 - d. missing or endangered persons.
2. Persons seeking employment and volunteer positions use the Internet to search for opportunities, and social media can be a valuable recruitment mechanism.
3. This Town has an obligation to include Internet-based content when conducting background investigations of job candidates.
4. Searches should be conducted by a non-decision maker. Information pertaining to protected classes shall be filtered out prior to sharing any information found online with decision makers.
5. Persons authorized to search Internet-based content should be deemed as holding a sensitive position.
6. Search methods shall not involve techniques that are a violation of existing law.
7. Vetting techniques shall be applied uniformly to all candidates.

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8. Every effort must be made to validate Internet-based information considered during the hiring process.

4.3 Personal use

A. Precautions and Prohibitions

Barring state law or binding employment contracts to the contrary, Town personnel shall abide by the following when using social media.

1. Town personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of this Town for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Town.
2. As public employees, Town personnel are cautioned that speech on- or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties—that is, that owes its existence to the employee’s professional duties and responsibilities—is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the Town. Town personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and this Town.
3. Town personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access as a result of their employment without written permission from the Town Administrator or department head of the department they are employed or are a volunteer for.
4. For safety and security reasons, Town personnel are cautioned not to disclose their employment with this Town or shall they post information pertaining to any other member of the Town without their permission. As such, Town personnel are cautioned not to do the following:
 - a. Display Town logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal web pages.
 - b. Post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause them to be identified as a Town employee of this Town.
5. When using social media, Town perrsonnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to the Town’s personnel policy and this policy is required in the personal use of social media. In particular, Town personnel are prohibited from the following:
 - a. Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule,



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- malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals.
- b. Speech involving themselves or other Town personnel reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.
6. Engaging in prohibited speech noted herein, may degrade or undermine the creditability of Town officials.
 7. Town personnel may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this Town without express authorization.
 8. Town personnel should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for
 - a. publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation);
 - b. publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;
 - c. using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or
 - d. publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
 9. Town personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.
 10. Town personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the Town at any time without prior notice.
 11. Reporting violations—Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy shall notify his or her supervisor immediately for follow-up action.



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Section 5.0: Procedures

Section 6.0: Implementation

To facilitate conduct in accordance with this policy, a copy of this policy shall be made available to department heads, employees, volunteers, board and committee members, appointed or elected to office and at such other times as may be necessary.

Section 7.0: Signature

	Position	Signature	Date
<u>Original Policy Prepared By:</u> Shaun Mulholland	Town Administrator		00/00/2014
<u>Original Policy Reviewed & Approved By:</u> Jason Tardiff	Board of Selectman Chairperson		00/00/2014
Jeff Gryval	Board of Selectman		00/00/2014
Kate Walker	Board of Selectman		00/00/2014



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Section 8.0: Policy & Procedure Revision History

	Section	Changes Made	Approvals	
			By	Date
Original Adoption				
Amendment				
Amendment				
Amendment				

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