

City of Richmond

Administrative Manual

SUBJECT: Social Networking Policy

SECTION: Information Technology

POLICY NUMBER: AP 655.1

INITIAL DATE PREPARED: July 22, 2013

I. OFFICIAL CITY BUSINESS

The City uses Social Networking (such as personal websites, blogs, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, online group discussions, text messaging, message boards, chat rooms, etc.) as a way to communicate with members of the public. The City is also committed to ensuring that the use of social media serves the needs of the government by maintaining the City's identity, integrity, and reputation. Further, the City has a public business interest in protecting its logo, City name, and other intellectual property and in making sure that its employees do not violate criminal or civil law, or privacy rights. To protect the City's identity, integrity and reputation, employees must adhere to the following rules:

- Only authorized employees may post on the City's social networking websites on behalf of the City, and only authorized employees may have access to the City's social networking passwords. The IT Director shall maintain an updated list of all authorized employees.
- Information posted or pages created on behalf of the City must conform with the following:
 - Must present the City in a positive light and relate directly to the City and/or its community members.
 - Only public information may be posted. Confidential, private, and/or information protected by any federal, state, or local law or policy is not permitted. (e.g. social security numbers, home addresses, private medical information).
 - May not contain any personal identifying information except the names and contact information of employees who are available for public comment.
 - May not contain copyrighted photographs or images without the express release of the photographer and the signed release of any person, or parent of a minor depicted.
 - May not incorporate the City's logo or seal unless approved in advance.

- Any conduct which is impermissible under the law if expressed in any other form or forum is impermissible if expressed through a social networking site. For example, posting material relating to the City and its employees that is discriminatory, defamatory, libelous or malicious is not permitted. The City's policies prohibiting discrimination, retaliation, and/or harassment based on race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious beliefs or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law, as well as the City's workplace violence policies, apply to any postings. For example, postings may not include any inappropriate language that is abusive, inflammatory, offensive, sexually explicit, lewd, obscene, racial, political, and/or religious.
- May not be of a commercial nature.

The public's ability to respond to social networking websites provides members of the public with a forum to express approval of the City's policies and actions, and constructive criticism of the City. The City must have the ability to delete or remove comments that violate the City's policies and guidance regarding use of social media. The IT Director or his or her designee may remove comments if they violate the following guidelines:

1. Comments not topically related to the particular social media post being commented upon;
2. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
3. Profane language or content;
4. 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;
5. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
6. Solicitations of commerce;
7. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
8. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or the public systems; or
9. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

City of Richmond

Administrative Manual

Social Networking Policy

Comments that are critical of the City should not be removed unless they violate one of the aforementioned guidelines.

Any new social media tools proposed for City use must be approved by the IT Director or his or her designee.

Any employee who violates this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The City reserves the right to monitor its website and official sites, including its Facebook page, public blogs and public social networking forums for the purpose of protecting its interests and maintaining compliance with this policy.

II. Other Than Official City Business

The City recognizes that Social Networking (such as personal websites, blogs, social communications, online group discussions, text messaging, message boards, chat rooms, etc.) are used by many employees. The City respects the right of employees to maintain a blog or post a comment on social networking sites. The City is committed to maintaining its identity, integrity, and reputation; and the City has a legitimate public interest in protecting its logo, City name, and other intellectual property, and in making sure that its employees do not violate criminal or civil law, or privacy rights.

To protect the City's identity, integrity and reputation, employees must adhere to the following rules:

- The City's electronic communication systems are primarily for business use.
- Employees may not post on a blog or social networking site during their working time or at any time using City equipment or property. However, employees are authorized to post on the City's website if the post relates to employees' wages, benefits, working conditions, or terms and conditions of employment with the City. If an employee identifies himself or herself as an employee of the City on any social networking site, the communication must include a disclaimer that the views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the City.
- All City policies and rules regarding confidential information apply in full to blogs and social networking sites. Public information that can be obtained through a Public Records Act request may be posted.
- Any impermissible conduct under City rules or the law is impermissible if expressed through a social networking site. For example, posting material relating to the City and its employees that is discriminatory, defamatory, libelous or malicious is not permitted.
- The City's policies prohibiting discrimination, retaliation, and/or harassment based on race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability,

religious beliefs or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law apply equally to employee comments concerning the City and its employees on social networking sites, even if done on non-working time. Employees are encouraged to review those sections of the City's policies for further guidance.

- Employees are prohibited from misappropriating or using without permission the City's logo and City intellectual property on any social networking site or other online forum. Employees are reminded that there are civil and criminal penalties for posting copyrighted material without authorization.

Any employee who violates this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The City reserves the right to monitor public blogs and public social networking forums for the purpose of protecting its interests and maintaining compliance with this policy.

Current employees will receive a copy of the Social Networking Policy by the Human Resources Management Department.

If you have any questions at all regarding this, please feel free to contact the Human Resources Management Department at (510) 620-6602.