

Social Media

Section 1.6

PURPOSE

The use of social media as a communication platform is continuously increasing among various demographics. The City recognizes the value of social media in communicating with the public and furthermore, encourages the use of social media platforms to advance the City's goals.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of social media as a means to disseminate information regarding City programs, projects, activities, events, news and more. Additionally, this policy will help regulate the City's presence on social media and employees who administer the social media profiles.

The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting information posted on its social media sites and content that is attributed to the City. With the integration of a social media policy, the City will ensure that it maintains a professional image and successful digital communication efforts.

DEFINITIONS

"Social media sites" means internet based applications where users create content that exists electronically. The internet based applications are accessible, expandable and upgradable. Examples of social media sites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

"City social media sites" means social media sites which the City establishes, maintains, and controls all postings with the exception of advertisements or hyperlinks by the social media site's owners, vendors or partners.

"Post" or "posts" means information, articles, photos, videos or any other form of communication posted on a City social media site.

"User(s)" refers to individual(s) on the internet who are interacting and engaging with social media sites.

"Comment" refers to a response by a user left on a post.

"Share" refers to the action when a user spreads a post from a page on their personal account or another social media page.

"Tagging" refers to the action when a user identifies another user in a post.

POLICY

A. General

1. The City's official website www.elmonteca.gov will remain the City's primary means of internet communication.
2. The City will utilize social media to augment its communication efforts with stakeholders and residents in El Monte and surrounding communities.
3. This policy applies to all City employees, officers and elected officials acting in an official capacity and when communicating with the public on behalf of the City.

B. Administration

1. The Office of the City Manager is responsible for administering and enforcing this policy.

2. The Office of the City Manager will maintain a list of approved social media sites for City use.
3. As a result of the fast-changing nature of social media sites, the City reserves the right to update and amend the policy at any time.
4. A copy of this policy should be made available to users as a hyperlink on all City social media sites.
5. The Office of the City Manager will monitor the content on the City social media sites to ensure it adheres to the policy.

C. Guidelines for Creating Social Media Sites

1. The City has approved the use of the following social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.
2. Currently, the City only utilizes Facebook; however, in the future, the City plans to implement the use of other social media sites. The addition of new social media sites will allow the City to reach more stakeholders and community members.
3. The City shall use the City name in the title of the profile, whenever possible.
4. The City seal shall serve as a profile photo.

D. Administrator Accounts

1. Department Directors must submit a request to the Office of the City Manager for staff to be added as administrators on the City social media sites. The City Manager or designated representative will review and approve requests.
2. All City employees designated as site administrators must use official City contact information when establishing an account. The use of personal email accounts or phone numbers is not allowed.
3. The City reserves the right to terminate City social media administrator accounts at any time.
4. The Office of the City Manager will maintain a list of all City employees with administrator access to the City social media sites.

E. Adherence to Laws, Policies and Regulations

1. All City social media sites must adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies. In addition, all City social media sites shall comply with existing City policies and standards, such as the *Political Activity Policy*.
2. City social media sites are subject to the *California Public Records Act*. Content pertaining to City business that is maintained in a social media format is considered a public record; this includes posts and list of subscribers. Content related to City business must be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be released in response to a request.
3. City social media sites shall be managed in accordance with the *California Ralph Brown Act (Brown Act)*. Members of the City Council and City Commissions should refrain from responding to any published postings or use the site or any other form of electronic communication to blog or engage in serial meetings or otherwise discuss deliberate or express opinions on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Council or Commission.
4. Members of the City Council and City Commissions may share content from City social media sites and comment on their own pages, but should refrain from tagging other members of the Council in their post, in order to stay in accordance with the *Brown Act*.
5. Members of the City Council, City Commissions or other elected officials shall refrain from posting information pertaining to elections and campaign activities, such as events and fundraisers. General information encouraging users to register to vote is permissible.

F. Employee Conduct

1. Employees representing the City on social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative in accordance with all City policies.

2. Employees who wish to identify themselves as City employees on social media shall include a disclaimer indicating that the opinions listed on the social media site are their own and do not necessarily reflect that of the City.
3. Employees authorized to post on the City social media sites shall only reflect views of the City, and should refrain from expressing personal views or concerns.
4. Employees or City representatives who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be denied access to the City social media sites.

G. Content Standards

The content of City social media sites shall only pertain to City related business including but not limited to programs, services, events and news.

1. Whenever possible, posts on the City social media sites should include a hyperlink to the City website www.elmonteca.gov.
2. Posts should contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential.
3. Posts should be checked for accuracy, spelling and grammatical errors. In addition, content should follow standard Associated Press writing style, and should be free of jargon and abbreviations.
4. Content on the City social media sites should follow branding guidelines in accordance with the City Style Guide.
5. Postings may not contain personal information, except for the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public.
6. Users should note that comments by the public on City social media sites reflect the opinion of the user. The publication of a comment on the City social media sites by a private user does not imply endorsement by the City nor do such comments reflect the opinions of the City.
7. By posting a comment, users agree to indemnify the City and its representatives from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages and costs incurred by any of them, which arise out of content posted by users. If a user does not agree to these terms, the user should refrain from using the City's social media sites as a violation of these terms may lead to legal liability.
8. The City reserves the right to moderate, remove and block comments/users if they are:
 - i. Not topically related to the particular posting being commented upon;
 - ii. Profane, obscene, pornographic, abusive, offensive, threatening, defamatory or contain violent language;
 - iii. Discriminatory on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or any other basis protected by state or federal law;
 - iv. Trolling, which refers to posts that are deliberately offensive, provocative or disruptive and intend to take over the City content or create angry responses from employees or other visitors;
 - v. Soliciting commerce or advertisements for non-City business;
 - vi. Compromising the safety or security of the public;
 - vii. Violations to City policies and procedures.
9. City representatives and employees should report to their direct supervisor any content that violates the aforementioned guidelines to the Office of the City Manager/Public Information Officer.
10. Content that is removed or hidden should be retained including time, date and identity of the user when available.