

Social Media

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1.0 POLICY

Employees are expected to act responsibly and exercise good judgement when interacting with social media resources. When using social media resources for personal and private reasons, employees must ensure a distinct separation between personal and organizational views, and must not speak as a representative of the Town.

2.0 PURPOSE

The Town respects the rights of employees to use blogs and social media sites on their own time as a medium of self-expression and public conversation and does not discriminate against employees who use these media for personal interests and affiliations or for other lawful purposes. Employees are encouraged to exercise sound judgment and discretion in contributing to social media sites where information is available to numerous users. This is especially encouraged on personal sites to ensure a distinct separation between personal and organization views as inappropriate usage of social media may be grounds for disciplinary action. Employees are expected to follow the guidelines and policies set forth below to provide a clear line between themselves as an individual and as an employee.

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Town of Carolina Beach employees.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Social Media - For the purposes of this policy, social media will include websites or blogs or other forms of social media or technology to include, but are not limited to, video or wiki postings, social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, chat rooms, YouTube, personal blogs or other similar forms of online journals, diaries, or personal newsletters not affiliated with the Town of Carolina Beach.

5.0 ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

While the Town encourages its employees to enjoy and make productive use of their personal time, certain activities on the part of employees may become a concern if they have the effect of impairing the work of any employee, harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile working environment for any employee, disrupting the smooth and orderly flow of work within the organization, harming the goodwill and reputation of the Town among its citizens, or eroding public confidence in the Town as an organization.

In the area of blogging or social media (as defined in Section 4.0), employees may use such media in any way these choose as long as such use does not produce the adverse consequences noted above for the Town. For this reason, the Town advises its employees that the following guidelines apply in their use of social medial on their own personal time and personal computer resources.

- 5.1 If an employee publishes any personal information about themselves, another employee of the Town, the organization, a citizens, or a customer in any public medium that:
Has the potential or effect of involving the employee, their coworkers, or the Town in any kind of dispute or conflict with any other employees or third parties;
- Interferes with the work of any employee;
 - Creates a harassing, demeaning, or hostile working environment for any employee;
 - Disrupts the smooth and orderly flow of work, or the delivery of services to the citizens;
 - Harms the goodwill and reputation of the Town around citizens or the community-at-large;
 - Erodes the public's confidence in the Town organization;
 - Tends to place in doubt the reliability, trustworthiness, or sound judgement of the person who is the originator or subject of the information;

THEN:

The employee(s) responsible for such problems will be subject to coaching, counseling and/or disciplinary action, up to and potentially including termination of employment, depending on the severity and repeat nature of the offense.

- 5.2 Employees are further prohibited from the following in connection with social media:
- Using blogs or social networking sites to harass, threaten, discriminate or disparage against employees or anyone associated with or doing business with the Town.
 - Posting the name or logo of the Town of Carolina Beach or any business with a connection to the Town on personal blogs or other sites;
 - Posting privileged information, including Town issued documents;
 - Posting photographs or names of co-workers, vendors, suppliers, citizens, or other person engaged in business with the Town *without their consent*; and
 - Using a town-issued work email address in social networking activities.
- 5.3 Use of social medial that involves any kind of criminal activity or harms the rights of others may result in criminal prosecution or civil liability to those harmed, or both.
- 5.4 Employees are reminded that personal postings may not only be read by friends and family but also by co-workers, supervisors, Town residents, and the media. An online identity can be discovered relatively easily even if posting anonymously or under a pseudonym, therefore employees should exercise caution when deciding what to include in a post or comment.
- 5.5 The Town may require the immediate removal of, and impose discipline for, material that is disruptive to the workplace or in any way impairs the mission of the Town.
- 5.6 Misuse of social media, whether on or off-duty, is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The policy shall not be construed to prohibit any activities that constitute legally protected activities or constitutionally protected speech.

6.0 PROCEDURES

Employees should have no expectation of privacy while using the Internet. Postings can be reviewed by anyone, including the Town Manager and contracted IT personnel. In addition, the Town reserves the right to lawfully and respectfully monitor social media postings and other online activities for compliance with Town policies. Monitoring can occur through multiple methods, such as staff 'friending' one another or a citizen bringing inappropriate material from an employee's posting

to the attention of Town Management. Town Management further reserves the right to use search tools and software to monitor blogs, other types of personal journals and discussion forums.

- 6.1 Employees are encouraged to report any violations, including possible or perceived violations, to supervisors, Department Heads or Human Resources. Violations include but are not limited to the areas identified in Section 5 above, discussions regarding the town and its employees or vendors, discussion of proprietary information, and any other unlawful activity related to blogging or social networking.
- 6.2 The Town reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in prohibited or unlawful conduct.

7.0 SCOPE OF USAGE BY THE TOWN

- The Town of Carolina Beach's primary website (www.carolinabeach.org) and Facebook Page ([Town of Carolina Beach Government, NC](#)) will remain as the primary and predominant internet presence for the Town. However, with the approval of the Town Manager, departments and other Town sponsored event committees (such as the Parks & Recreation Department Facebook page) may engage in social media to achieve certain business and communication goals including disseminating time-sensitive information such as during public safety emergencies; marketing and promoting Town services and products; and encouraging public input for Town projects, programs, and initiatives. Whenever possible, content posted to these additional social media sites should also be available on the Town's main website or contain links directly to the Town's main website.
- Detailed requests for approval to establish additional social media sites should be addressed in writing to the Town Manager. Such requests should be submitted well in advance of the "go live" date and must include the following minimum criteria:
 - A. Purpose – the purpose shall include the goal and objectives of the site or application, which cannot be accomplished through the Town's primary sites.
 - B. Strategy – The social media effort should support a larger communication strategy with the identification of audiences, messages, and other tactics.
 - C. Implementation and Resources – This includes the implementation plan, as well as a process for managing site accounts such as frequency and protocol associated with posting and updating information.

While social media sites are free, they require constant monitoring and updating in order to be effective. The department initiating the social media tool is responsible for tasks such as updating information, monitoring content, replying to site users, and fulfilling public information requests.

Further, all social media sites must adhere to standing Town policies and protocols such as:

- All sites must maintain administrative standards in the use of the Town logo.
- All sites are subject to State of North Carolina public records statutes.
- All sites must adhere to laws and policies regarding copyrights, use of photographs, personal privacy, the First Amendment, the Americans with Disabilities Act and HIPPA.
- All sites must adhere to website policies concerning linking to third party sites, privacy, and guidelines for accessibility for the disabled.
- The social media sites shall not contain any political information or be used for political activity.
- Blogs or posting from the public are prohibited; the additional social media sites should direct all public feedback to the sponsoring Town staff.

- The sites shall comply with policies and procedures for information security
- All Town of Carolina Beach social media sites shall be used only as a vehicle for communicating the Town's message and shall not be utilized in a manner that allows members of the public to post comments or through the social media vehicle.

All social media sites shall include the following statement predominantly displayed on the site:

The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in the Town of Carolina Beach, including its many residents, businesses and visitors. The purpose of this site is for the dissemination of information; it is not intended to be a public forum.

You may submit your questions and comments in response to our posts, however please note that this is a moderated site and the following policy is in effect:

The Town reserves the right to delete submissions that contain (1) vulgar language; (2) personal attacks of any kind; (3) offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, or religious group (4) posts which are not in the public interest; and

Further, the Town reserves the right to delete comments that are (1) spam or include links to other sites; (2) clearly off topic; (3) advocate illegal activity; (4) promote particular services, products, or political organizations; (5) infringe on copyrights or trademarks; or (6) use personally identifiable medical information. We strongly recommend you not share any of your medical information on our Facebook pages.

Note: The comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Town of Carolina Beach government or its officers or employees. If you have any questions concerning this operations of this page, please contact the Town Manager's office.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Employees are required to sign a written acknowledgement that they have received, read, understand, and agree to comply with the Town of Carolina Beach's Social Media Policy.

9.0 APPENDIX, APPENDICES

Acknowledgement of Social Media Policy