



Title: Social Media Policy	Internal/External: Internal/External
Department: Corporate Services	Policy Number: CS-037
Approval Date: May 11, 2021	Implementation Date: May 11, 2021

BACKGROUND

The Town of Paradise uses social media as a strategic communications tool for engaging with the public. The Town also acknowledges that employees independently post, comment or otherwise participate in personal social media that may potentially involve or impact the Town of Paradise.

OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to employees who are authorized to use social media on behalf of the Town and to inform the public of Town social media practices. This policy also provides direction to all employees on their personal use of social media where Town interests may be involved.

DEFINITIONS

“Town” means the Town of Paradise

“Posted” means published online, whether through a public post or a private message.

“Content” is any text, images, video, audio, or links that are published online.

“Inappropriate use” includes, but is not limited to: transmitting any materials in violation of local, provincial or national laws; using vulgar, profane or inappropriate language; transmitting or posting threatening, abusive, discriminatory, or obscene material; duplicating, storing or transmitting lewd materials; suggesting or supporting illegal activity; posting material that is likely to compromise the safety or security of the public or systems; and engaging in any disrespectful or harassing behavior as defined in the Town of Paradise Respectful Workplace and Harassment Policy.

“Posting” means to publish or transmit content on an online platform or social media website.

“Social Media” means any application, tool or software used for online information and publication including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs.

“Town Social Media Sites” are platforms that are sanctioned to be operated by the Town of Paradise.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Paradise uses social media to share time-sensitive information; increase public awareness of notices, news, projects, events, and employment opportunities; respond to inquiries regarding services; encourage public participation, feedback and sharing of ideas; and to develop and foster community and stakeholder relationships.

Employees may choose to support Town social media activities by sharing posts; however, they must ensure personal accounts are not linked to their Paradise email address and that the Town logo or brand is not used.

Employee published content must not undermine the employment relationship, the Town of Paradise, its council, or employees. If identifying as an employee while posting to social media, it must be explicitly clear that content does not represent the Town in any official capacity.

All employees have a responsibility to avoid posting content that is insulting, derogatory, or offensive toward coworkers or other persons, even if a specific individual is not identified. Employees may be held personally liable for any defamatory or discriminatory content posted or observed. A disclaimer does not by itself exempt employees from this responsibility.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

1. Corporate Use of Social Media

- a. Town social media accounts are considered a strategic communications tool and are used to enhance, not replace, other communication methods. The Town website is central to its online social presence.
- b. Town of Paradise social media channels are administered by the Department of Corporate Services. Communications staff work with all departments to review social media content requests, responses, and ideas. Corporate Services may edit posts and exercise discretion to ensure that content is suitable, and that it aligns with communications best practices and overall organizational strategy and culture.
- c. All content posted on Town social media platforms is used to enhance information and communication about Town events and services. The Town is a neutral body and does not endorse or share third party content that is not directly related to or supported by Town business.
- d. Information posted or shared on the Town's social media channels shall maintain consistency, professionalism, and guidelines of all Town communications materials and approaches.
- e. Unless specified, all social media platforms are monitored during business hours only. For urgent or emergent matters, posts may occur outside of regular hours.
- f. The Town of Paradise makes every effort to respond to legitimate inquiries and questions from the public in a timely manner.
- g. The Town of Paradise does not allow or condone posts, comments or messages made by the public on a Town page that foster discrimination, are inappropriate in nature, support illegal activity, or defame Town employees. Where possible, any such posts are removed from the Town's social media pages and any individual who repeatedly uses derogatory or offensive content are blocked or ignored.

2. Employee / Personal Use of Social Media

- a. In all circumstances, Town employees should exercise common sense and good judgement when using social media. Employees must not post comments, images or video that may damage the reputation or otherwise negatively impact, disrespect, or harass the Town, its officials, or employees. The Town does not condone content or comments by employees in any forum, made at any time, that undermines the employment relationship
- b. By virtue of their position, employees should consider whether personal thoughts published online may be misunderstood to be the opinions of the Town.
- c. All Town policies regarding privacy and confidentiality of corporate information are to be followed. Strict adherence to the Access to Information and Privacy Act, 2015 is required of all employees.
- d. Employees are reminded that once something is posted on social media, control over that content may be lost. Comments may be saved and retransmitted or accessed through search engines even after they have been deleted from various platforms. Even in cases where privacy settings are enabled, there is a possibility that content can be made visible to a wider audience.

3. Compliance and Administration

Social media channels for the Town of Paradise are administered by the Director of Corporate Services through the Manager of Communications or designate. The Department of Corporate Services retains discretion to authorize new or deactivate Town social media accounts in accordance with communication needs, benefits, and risks.

The Town of Paradise monitors compliance with this policy and addresses any reported concerns. This may include investigations into compliance, and, if appropriate, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is subject to annual review.

APPROVAL

Director of Corporate Services: _____

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Chief Administrative Officer: _____

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