



# OFFICE OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS

CITY OF SYRACUSE, MAYOR BEN WALSH

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

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Director

Social media has become a mainstream way of communicating thoughts, experiences and opinions. The City of Syracuse recognizes the prevalent use of social media and the role that it plays in the personal lives of City of Syracuse personnel. However, the use of social media presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in exercising good judgement, along with making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers who work for the City of Syracuse.

Employees and volunteers of the City of Syracuse may also be subject to supplemental department social media requirements. Employees and volunteers in their respective departments should review any such supplemental social media requirements, if any, for additional guidance.

### **GUIDELINES**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the City of Syracuse, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Please be aware that online content, once posted to social media, is no longer under your control; and potentially may be viewed by others, regardless of intent. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow co-workers or others or otherwise adversely affects constituents, customers, stakeholders, suppliers, contractors, or people who work with or on behalf of the City of Syracuse or the City of Syracuse's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **KNOW AND FOLLOW THE RULES**

Carefully read these guidelines, the City of Syracuse Code of Ethics Policy, Computer Use Policy, Mobile Communication Devices Policy, Harassment in the Workplace Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, Workplace Violence Prevention Policy, and all City of Syracuse department specific policies and procedures, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include, but are not limited to, discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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### **BE RESPECTFUL**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow co-workers, volunteers, constituents, customers, stakeholders, suppliers, contractors or people who work with or on behalf of the City of Syracuse. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers, supervisors or union representation than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage co-workers, volunteers, constituents, customers, stakeholders, suppliers, or contractors or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or City of Syracuse policy.

### **BE HONEST AND ACCURATE**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered.

Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the City of Syracuse, fellow co-workers, volunteers, constituents, customers, stakeholders, suppliers, contractors or people working with or on behalf of the City of Syracuse.

### **POST ONLY APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL CONTENT**

- Maintain the confidentiality of the City of Syracuse trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trades secrets may include, but not be limited to, information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the City of Syracuse. If the City of Syracuse is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee or volunteer and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the City of Syracuse, fellow co-workers, volunteers, constituents, customers, stakeholders, suppliers, contractors or people working with or on behalf of the City of Syracuse. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the City of Syracuse, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the City of Syracuse. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Syracuse."

### **USING SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK OR ON CITY OF SYRACUSE EQUIPMENT**

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor and consistent with the City of Syracuse policies and procedures. Do not use the City of Syracuse email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

## **PERSONAL USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The City of Syracuse understands that its employees and volunteers may use social media in a variety of ways in their personal lives. Whether intended or not, the content you post in your personal lives may be viewed as a representation of the City of Syracuse. Therefore, you need to exercise good judgment as you engage in social media in your personal life as well.

## **CITY OF SYRACUSE ISSUED DEVICES**

Utilize care when downloading applications (“apps”) to electronic devices used for City of Syracuse business. When downloading apps to your City of Syracuse issued computer or mobile device, do not allow the transfer of your City of Syracuse contact lists or address books to third party social media networking or other online websites or databases, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Do not allow social media sites to access your email contact lists, such as your contact lists from your Outlook account that is located in your City of Syracuse hardware and software. Applications or apps for purposes of this policy are defined as software, typically a small specialized program, downloaded onto mobile or other electronic devices.

## **RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED**

The City of Syracuse prohibits taking negative action against any employee or volunteer for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee or volunteer who retaliates against another person, individual or entity for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **INVESTIGATING VIOLATIONS**

Any reports of possible violations of this policy are to be investigated by a supervisor and/or department head. The supervisor and/or department head may enlist the City of Syracuse Department of Information Technology (“IT”) as part of its investigation. Prior to taking any disciplinary action for violations of this policy, the supervisor, department head and/or IT will consult with the City of Syracuse Office of Personnel and Labor Relations.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this policy may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

Employees and Volunteers should not speak to the media on the City of Syracuse’s behalf without proper authorization and/or contacting the Mayor’s Office. All media inquiries should be directed to either the Mayor’s Office, your supervisor or department head.

## **EMPLOYEE RIGHTS**

This policy is not intended to interfere with, restrain or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights under Article 14 of the New York State Civil Service Law or other applicable law.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the City of Syracuse Department of Personnel and Labor Relations.