

PURPOSE

The City of Sedalia endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication and collaboration. This policy serves two primary purposes: (1) First, it is intended to guide city employees, city volunteers, city elected officials and others who use and monitor City provided Social Media sites. (2) Secondly, this policy also addresses city employees, city volunteers, city elected officials and others who represent themselves as speaking for the City on non-City provided Social Media sites. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, rather social media in general. This policy excludes public safety social media attached to all confidential law enforcement related efforts.

DEFINITIONS

- D1** **Blog** – A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for “Web log.”
- D2** **Copyright** – The exclusive legal right, given to an originator or an assignee to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material, and to authorize others to do the same.
- D3** **Code of Conduct** – Refers to Sedalia Ordinance No. 10194, approved by the Sedalia City Council on July 7, 2014.
- D4** **Official social media site** – A site authorized and managed by the City of Sedalia to represent the City.
- D5** **Official use of social media** – Any comment or posting that represents the position of the City of Sedalia, made by people who are authorized to do so.
- D6** **Page** – The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
- D7** **Post** – Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- D8** **Site Administrator** – The person who monitors and maintains a social media site on behalf of the City of Sedalia
- D9** **Social Media** – Internet-based resources, such as text, images, audio, and video, that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites, Facebook, Twitter, microblogging sites, photo- and video-sharing sites, wikis, audio sharing, chatrooms, blogs, LinkedIn and news sites.
- D10** **Social Networks** – Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies. The type of network and its design vary from site to site.

- D11 Speech** – Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.
- D12 Trademark** – A symbol, Logo, word, or words legally registered or established by use as representing a company or product.

PROCEDURE

1. APPLICABILITY

- 1.1. This policy applies to:
- 1.1.1. The official and overt use of social media sites by City employees, City volunteers and city elected officials to engage with the public or communicate internally to achieve work related goals.
 - 1.1.2. All official social media sites created to engage with the public.
 - 1.1.3. The policy applies to any online post by an employee, volunteer or elected officials that:
 - a. Occurs during working or non-working hours;
 - b. Is posted to an official City of Sedalia social media site; or
 - c. Identifies the City, links to information about the City or identifies the employee’s position or an elected official’s position with the City.
- 1.2. The policy also applies to any subsequent posts by the City employee/elected official on the same forum (e.g., the same Facebook page, blog, etc.).
- 1.3. In addition to being subject to the policy outlined below, all such online activity is subject to the same rules and guidelines that apply to an employee’s activities in general, including but not limited to the City of Sedalia Employee Handbook and the elected officials Code of Conduct (Ord 10194).
- 1.4. The policy does not apply to the use or creation of social media sites for police undercover, investigative or intelligence purposes).
- 1.5. The absence of, or lack of, explicit reference to a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

2. AUTHORIZATION TO POST ON OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- 2.1. Proposals for ~~significant~~ new social media projects or platforms must be approved by the Office of the City Administrator.

- 2.2. Employees (non-elected officials) authorized to represent the City on official social media sites shall be approved by the Department Head. Only those officially designated by the Department Head to represent the City of Sedalia have the authorization to speak on behalf of their respective department.
- 2.3. Authorization to post information may be limited or revoked at any time.
- 2.4. If a social media site requires the use of an email address, authorized employees shall use the email address assigned to them through the City of Sedalia IT Department (name@cityofsedalia.com).

3. OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

- 3.1. Official social media site names must clearly be connected to the City, one of its Departments, or an activity it sponsors .
- 3.2. Each Department Head will appoint a site administrator(s) for each official social media site associated with their department.
 - 3.2.1. The Office of the City Administrator, or his/her designee, shall have administration rights to all official social media sites.
- 3.3. The site administrator shall have primary responsibility for the maintenance of the social media platform within his/her department.

4. NON-CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- 4.1 On non-City social media sites, neither City employees, nor elected officials shall represent themselves as speaking for City Government unless given authorization by the Mayor, City Administrator or a majority Council vote to do so. If there is the unintended possibility of this occurring, a disclaimer should be included that the person is only speaking for himself or herself and not the City of Sedalia. Elected officials shall use the Code of Conduct, Ord. No. 10194 as a guide.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE SETTINGS

- 5.1. Some social media sites contain administrative functions, which can assist moderation and hide from public view, limit or highlight defamatory, discriminatory, or offensive comments. Other filters can enable the creation of key word lists to auto-hide, flag or highlight words or phrases. *(See Paragraph 11 below for specifics related to requirements for Records Retention and the Missouri Sunshine Law, Chapter 610 RSMo.)*

- 5.2. In setting automatic restrictions, such as offensive and discriminatory language, the administrator must ensure that the restrictions do not unnecessarily limit the ability of the social media site to fulfil its objectives of being a tool to inform citizens.
- 5.3. Where possible, official social media page(s) should link to the City's official website.
- 5.4. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the City of Sedalia.
- 5.5. Social media pages should include the Social Media & Web User Agreement Policy ([Appendix B](#)), where possible, or a link to the agreement on the City's website.

6. USE AND MAINTENANCE OF OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

6.1. Site Administrator

- 6.1.1. Each Department Director is responsible for ensuring the content of official social media sites are regularly reviewed, updated and maintained to ensure the currency, accuracy and appropriateness of content and contact details.
- 6.1.2. All employees authorized to post to an official social media site must act as site administrators, ensure that postings are regularly reviewed and, as applicable, responses to questions are timely provided.

6.2. Potentially Discriminatory, Defamatory or Offensive Public Comments

- 6.2.1. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated.
- 6.2.2. Comments that are potentially defamatory, discriminatory or offensive, and identified by the moderator or by a requesting party as such, shall be evaluated as soon as reasonably possible and, if necessary, shall be removed from public view. (See Paragraph 11 below for specifics related to requirements for Records Retention and the Missouri Sunshine Law, Chapter 610 RSMo.)

6.3. Removal of Posts

- 6.3.1. Site Administrators shall remove any postings that do not comply with requirements set out in the [Social Media & Web User Agreement Policy \(Appendix B\)](#), following the guidelines in [Site Administrator's Guide, \(Appendix A\)](#)

7. CONTENT MANAGEMENT

7.1. Content in General

- 7.1.1. The best, most appropriate uses of social media tools fall generally into two categories:
 - a. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency snow route information).
 - b. As marketing/promotional channels which increase the City's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
- 7.1.2. Wherever possible, content posted to official social media sites should contain links directing users back to the City's official websites for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Sedalia.
- 7.1.3. Official social media sites should contain identifiable content relating to City functions, expertise or subject matter.
- 7.1.4. Posts must be consistent with the interests of the City. If in doubt, check with the relevant supervisor.
- 7.1.5. Site Administrators should encourage people to share requests and urgent posts, such as emergency snow route information, etc.

7.2. Postings

- 7.2.1. City employees and elected officials authorized to post to official social media sites shall:
 - a. Post as the moderator or with a username that identifies them as an employee or elected official of the City;
 - b. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City and adhere to all guidelines;
 - c. Communicate accurate and timely information to the public in a professional manner;
 - d. Present information that is respectful, professional and truthful, to the best of their knowledge;
 - e. Issue corrections, when needed;
 - f. Not alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so;
 - g. When responding to a negative post, objectively and unemotionally state facts and provide supporting information, then exit the discussion. Do not engage in an on-going conversation that is not progressing toward a greater

understanding; Ensure that the Department Head is informed of the context of the issue.

- h. On City social media sites, be supportive of the decisions, policies, or practices of the City of Sedalia and City Departments.
- i. On non-City social media sites, neither City employees nor elected officials shall represent themselves as speaking for City Government and/or the City Council unless given authorization by the City Administrator or Mayor to do so. Elected officials shall use the Code of Conduct, Ord. No. 10194 as a guide.

7.3. Copyrights

- 7.3.1. When posting, ensure that any material published on official social media sites, which is not the property of the City, does not infringe any third party intellectual property rights, including copyright in relation to text, music, images or videos, and trademarks.
- 7.3.2. Site Administrators will abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to official social media sites.
- 7.3.3. Be advised that the City of Sedalia pays annual fees to ASCAP/BMI for the use of certain copyrighted music materials.

7.4. External Links

- 7.4.1. Provision of a link to an external site posted on a Sedalia Social Media Site is prohibited unless authorization is given by an official City of Sedalia site administrator. Confirmation of the authorization shall be provided to the City Administrator.
- 7.4.2. Links to non-government websites must avoid any implication of City endorsement or sponsorship.

8. SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

- 8.1. Employees using official social media shall not transmit information or knowingly connect to sites for an unlawful or prohibited purpose, including, but not limited to:
 - 8.1.1. Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or any other characteristic or basis protected by federal, state, or local laws;
 - 8.1.2. Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile act that relates to race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or any other characteristic protected by law;

- 8.1.3. Display, circulation or communication of any sexually suggestive, explicit, graphic or offensive objects, pictures or materials of any kind or sites containing sexual content or the transmission of obscene materials;
- 8.1.4. Transmission of sexually explicit, graphic, abusive, degrading, intimidating or offensive jokes, comments, remarks or gestures or other similar types of unwelcome sexually-related materials;
- 8.1.5. Expression of any support for a specific candidate for public office, political or religious beliefs;
- 8.1.6. Speech involving themselves or other City employees reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible; and
- 8.1.7. Conduct of a personal, outside business, or other financial benefit or gain.
- 8.1.8. The City of Sedalia Seal and logo shall not be used on any social media site without prior written permission from the office of the City Administrator.

9. **COMPLAINTS**

9.1. **Issues – Possible Complaints**

- 9.1.1. If a concern cannot be quickly resolved, site administrators should contact the author of the complaint and advise them of the option to make a formal written complaint to be addressed to the City Administrator. The Department Head should be immediately notified of the issue.

10. **SOCIAL MEDIA & WEB USER AGREEMENT POLICY**

- 10.1. The [Social Media & Web User Agreement Policy \(Appendix B\)](#) sets rules that must be followed by members of the public when they contribute to official social media sites.

11. **RECORDS RETENTION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION**

11.1. **Records Retention**

- 11.1.1. Pursuant to Chapter 109 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, records retention schedules for local government records have been established, depending on the type of record. The City shall preserve social media

records for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original records. The City may use a third-party vendor or may develop their own method that complies with statutory retention requirements.

11.2. Open Records

11.2.1. City of Sedalia social media sites shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 610 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, as amended, the Missouri Public Records (Sunshine) Law.

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APPENDIX A: SITE ADMINISTRATOR’S GUIDE

In all of the recommended actions in Appendix A it is further suggested, when possible, to create and file a screenshot of the problem post

Issue	Recommended Action
Text of Posts	
Spelling errors and typos Grammatical or typographical errors as well as spelling mistakes.	Leave as is. Delete if errors make the text unreadable.
Incorrect business or place names Incorrect spelling of the name of a location or person.	Leave as is. Delete if errors make the text unreadable.
Nonsense Material that cannot be understood or is deemed unrelated to the original post.	Delete.
Obscene language Swearing within the text or a video either through the use of audio or video overlay.	Many sites and services offer a customizable list of terms that are not permitted. Delete what cannot be blocked.
Obscene posts or username Material which is offensive, indecent or pornographic, including any material of a sexual nature.	Delete. For serious cases, ban user account and report to channel e.g. Facebook, and consult the Sedalia City Attorney to determine if the post is illegal.
Foreign language Comments posted in foreign languages.	Translate to assess content, if practical. Delete if unable to translate or if inappropriate.
Partial breaches of this guide - One element of a comment breaches the moderators guide, but the rest is okay e.g. text is okay but not video.	For all inappropriate breached sections, delete comment(s) from those sections. If this makes the remaining post non-understandable – then delete complete posting.
Misleading comments Posts which either knowingly or unknowingly provide misleading information.	Allow. Use site administrator comment to correct unless the post breaches another major rule. For serious cases, delete and ban user account.
Risk to safety Material that describes or encourages activities that could endanger the safety or well-being of others.	Delete post and ban the user account. Provide copy to appropriate Department Director as relevant. This should be a zero-tolerance offense.

Confidentiality	
Confidential information Secret or confidential information including personal information or addresses.	Delete confidential information. Members of the public may from time to time post confidential information about a Person of Interest (POI) or details of a crime to a social media site. When this occurs capture the information, remove it from the site, forward it to the Sedalia Police Department.
Government information owned or held by a government department that has not been officially released to the public.	Delete. For persistent cases, ban user account.

Links, Advertising and Spam	
Advertising Blatant or suspected stealth advertising— Posts with a self-interest in advertising a service or business.	Refers to City recognized event - Publish. Blatant but no event – Delete. For persistent cases, ban user account. Suspected stealth advertising – seek the advice of a supervisor. If there is a strong enough reason to suspect it is stealth advertising, delete with a message such as: “This post appears to be advertising a service or business.”
Spam The abuse of the forum through unsolicited bulk messaging.	Delete. For persistent cases, ban user account. If you judge that the poster does not have a legitimate reason to be on the site (e.g. they are an overseas spammer), ban immediately.
Duplication More than one copy of the same post.	Delete.
Web links (URLs)	Delete. Determine if the link should be included on site.
Links Including links to material the site administrator determines to be a violation of Appendix B.	Delete. For serious cases, ban user account and report to channel i.e. Facebook.

Potentially Harassing and Offensive Behaviors	
Aggressive or potentially harassing posts Unwanted conduct or degrading comments (including insults and 'jokes') affecting the dignity of another, including written attacks on another person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability or other similarly sensitive issues.	Delete. Ban user account.
Negative posts Posts which are critical and in context but not defamatory.	Allow.
Misleading Comments, Defamation and Slander	
Misleading comments Posts which either knowingly or unknowingly provide misleading information.	Allow. Use site administrator's comment to correct unless the post breaches another major rule. For serious cases, delete and ban user account.
Risk to safety Material that describes or encourages activities that could endanger the safety or well-being of others.	Delete post and ban the user account. Provide copy to appropriate Department Director as relevant. This should be a zero-tolerance offense.
Other Issues	
Content Conflicts with Policy Content conflicts or is otherwise incompatible with any City of Sedalia policies.	Delete. For serious cases, ban user account.

APPENDIX B: Social Media & Web User Agreement Policy

The following User Agreement ("Agreement") governs the use of official City of Sedalia social media and web sites, and pages, to include social networking pages, facebook, twitter, web blogs and file sharing, along with all policies applicable to the City of Sedalia's web presence. The purpose of those sites, pages, web blogs and file sharing sites is to serve as a mechanism for constructive communication between the City and members of the public, and is considered a limited public forum. Always call 9-1-1 in an emergency.

Please read the rules contained in this Agreement carefully. Your use of any aspect of the web sites will constitute your agreement to comply with these rules. If you cannot agree with these rules, please do not use the web sites. Continued access of the Web site by you will constitute your acceptance of any changes or revisions to the Agreement.

Your failure to follow these rules may result in suspension or termination of your access to the Web sites, without notice.

AGREEMENT POLICY

Comments By Others

The City of Sedalia does not necessarily endorse, support, sanction, encourage, verify or agree with the comments, opinions, or statements posted on the social media and web sites. Any information or material placed online, including advice and opinions, are the views and responsibility of those making the comments and do not necessarily represent the views of the City of Sedalia, or its third party service providers. By submitting a comment for posting, you agree that City of Sedalia and its third party service providers are not responsible, and shall have no liability to you, with respect to any information or materials posted by others, including defamatory, offensive or illicit material, even material that violates this Agreement.

Deleting, Blocking and Reporting

The City of Sedalia reserves the right, but undertakes no duty, to review, edit, remove or delete any material submitted as a comment to the social media or web sites, in its sole discretion, without notice. We hope to receive constructive submissions from all viewpoints. By using any City of Sedalia social media or web sites and pages, to include social networking pages, web blogs and file sharing and web sites, all participants agree with, and accept, the following terms:

- Only questions or comments directly related and relevant to the City of Sedalia shall be posted.
- Submissions containing the following are prohibited and may be removed or hidden, and the submitting source may be blocked and reported, all without notice:

- Obscene or threatening language, or language that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or any other characteristic or basis protected by federal, state, or local laws
- Sexual content or links to sexual content
- Personal attacks or other abusive, degrading, or mean-spirited language directed toward an individual(s)
- Conduct in, or encouragement of, illegal activity
- Comments not topically related to the particular social media or any other article being commented upon
- Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns or ballot measures
- Solicitations of commerce
- Promotion of services or products (not including non-commercial links that are relevant to the topic)
- Personal or sensitive information (phone numbers, email or postal addresses)
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, such as copyrighted, trademarked or service marked material
- Confidential or proprietary information
- The City Seal/logo may not be used on the web without prior written permission from the City. Additionally, images or the likeness of City Department patches, uniforms vehicles, buildings or photographs of operations or personnel may not be used without city permission.

NOTE: Submissions that violate any article of the User Agreement may be removed, and the submitting source may be blocked and/or reported, all without notice.

Disclaimer

Reference herein to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the City of Sedalia. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the City of Sedalia, and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes. With respect to documents available from this server, neither the City of Sedalia nor any of its employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, including the warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights.

Any information provided as comments may be publicly available on the respective site and the privacy policies of that respective site apply. The City of Sedalia disclaims any liability for any loss or damage resulting from any comments posted on its social media sites and pages to include social networking pages, web blogs and file sharing and web sites, and any other web presence.

Unless stated otherwise, these sites and resources may not be used for the submission of any claim, demand, informal or formal complaint, or any other form of legal and/or administrative notice or process, or for the exhaustion of any legal and/or administrative remedy.

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