

# CITY OF THREE RIVERS, TEXAS

## Policy on Use of Social Media



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### **1. Purpose & Acceptable Use.**

The purpose of the City of Three Rivers' social media policy is to govern the administration and monitoring of site content, set ground rules for public input and comments, and adopt policies for employee usage of social media.

The City has a legitimate government interest in effective, efficient and consistent communications with the public. The City also strives to have a productive workplace. Certain activities on the part of its personnel may become a problem if such activities could:

- a. Impair the work of any City official or employee; create a harassing, demeaning or hostile work environment; or
- b. Disrupt the smooth and orderly flow of work; or harm the goodwill and reputation of the City among its citizens or in the community.

For these reasons, the City reminds its personnel that the following guidelines apply in their use of social media, while both on and off duty.

## **2. Disclaimer.**

- a. The City's social media networking sites are a "limited or designated public forum". In a "limited or designated public forum", a city may impose restrictions on speech as long as the restrictions are reasonable and content-neutral.
- b. Under this Policy, the City disavows, and is not responsible for any sites, posts, opinions, or content not coordinated through and approved by the City Administrator.
- c. If City personnel posts data purporting to be on behalf of the City while using a social media site without the approval of the City Administrator, the City is not responsible for said posted content, such content is not to be construed as reflecting the view or opinions of the Mayor, City Council, or City staff and such action may be grounds for disciplinary action.

## **3. Account Management.**

- a. City Administrator Authority.
  - i. The City Administrator or his designee shall have the sole authority and responsibility for the implementation of this Policy. The City Administrator may also make interpretations on issues that are not clearly articulated or not included in this Policy, so long as the City's Administrator's discretion is exercised in a manner consistent with the direction from the City's governing body.
  - ii. Only the City Administrator or his authorized designee, shall be authorized to perform any of the following functions:
    1. Create, establish, register, or otherwise initiate any social media account on behalf of the City on which appears to be established by the City;
    2. Modify the content of any social media account;
    3. Set, remove or otherwise modify any user-controlled settings associated with a City social media account;
    4. Publish any information on a social media platform on the City's behalf, or in any fashion which could be attributable to the City;
    5. Create, destroy, or modify a social link to the social media account of any other person or entity;
    6. Use and function of a social media platform which states (or implies) an opinion or position held by the City regarding any person or entity.
    7. Modify the City's social media platform.

- b. Records Retention.
  - i. Pursuant to Section 441.158 of the Texas Government Code, the Texas Library and Archives Commission promulgates records retention schedules for the records of local governments. The City shall preserve records in accordance thereof.
  - ii. Open Records. The City's social media sites are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA), found in Ch. 552, Texas Government Code. Content in the City social media, including a list of subscribers and posted communications is a public record.
- c. This Policy will be posted on the City's website for review by the public at any time. If technologically feasible, any social media account established by the City will include a copy of this Policy or a link to this Policy published on the City's website. If technologically feasible, the City shall also label the social media account as a "Limited or Designate Public Forum" and "Do Not Use to Report an Emergency. Call 9-1-1."
- d. Questions or comments regarding any subjects or issues addressed in this Policy may be directed to:  
City of Three Rivers  
Attn: City Administrator  
105 N. Harborth Ave.  
PO Box 398  
Three Rivers, Texas 78071

#### **4. Social Media Content.**

- a. Any content posted as representative of the City, or content posted to a City-sanctioned social media site containing any of the following is prohibited:
  - i. Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being comment upon;
  - ii. Profane language or content;
  - iii. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability;
  - iv. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - v. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - vi. Information that may tend to compromise the safety and security of the public or public systems;
  - vii. Content that violates legal ownership interest of any other party'
  - viii. Information that is incorrect or misleading;
  - ix. Information that is in conflict with an approved City policy, ordinance, directive or plan; and/or
  - x. Anything else that creates a disruption in the workplace.
- b. Any comment posted by a member of the public is not the opinion of the city. The City reserves its rights to allow the City Administrator to remove content that violates this policy or any applicable law.
- c. Emergency Service Requests. Requests for emergency services, such as those seeking assistance from police, firefighting, or EMS/ambulance services should NOT be directed to the

City's Social Media Presence. Persons needing immediate help should contact 9-1-1 or request such emergency services by some other recognized and reliable method.

**5. Employee Access.**

- a. While on duty, the use of City equipment or internet service by personnel must be limited to work-related tasks. Social media activities shall never interfere with work commitments.
- b. City employees shall have no expectation of privacy while using the Internet on any city-owned computer, cell phone, or other internet equipped electronic device.

**6. Employee Conduct.**

- a. City Personnel Policy applies to the City's Social Media Policy.
- b. It shall be a Policy violation for any City personnel to post online content as a representative of the City, or on the City's behalf of the City without the City Administrator's prior approval.
- c. All City personnel posting City-related issues online, but not as an approved representative of the City or on the City's behalf, shall explicitly clarify they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the City by displaying the following disclaimer: "This is my own opinion and not necessarily the opinion or position held by the City or City Council."
- d. Employees shall not use the City's logo, trademark, or other symbol without written consent from the City.
- e. Each employee is required to sign a written acknowledgment that they have received, read, understand, and agree to comply with the City's social media policy.

**7. Legal Issues.**

- a. Content posted on the city's social networking site is subject to the Texas Public Information Act and record retention laws, regulations and policies.
- b. Content posted on city's social networking site is subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- c. Content posted on social media sites may be subject to e-discovery laws.
- d. Any information protected by copyright or trademark should not be posted or maintained on the social media site unless permission has been granted by the owner of the intellectual property.

**8. Security.**

- a. Applications (such as streaming, video, music, photos, subscriptions to RSS feeds) that may be useful to a City social media site's purpose can cause clutter and security risks. An application should only be used to serve a City purpose and add to the user experience, and only if it comes from a trusted source.

**I have read, reviewed acknowledge receipt of the City's Social Media Policy.**

**EMPLOYEE NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_