



Personal Use of Social Media Policy

Social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, the Town has established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all employees who work for the Town of Apex without regard to whether their social media activity is conducted in or outside the workplace, while on or off-duty, or anonymously or through the use of pseudonyms (false names).

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 employed or affiliated with the Town of Apex, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the Town's conduct-related personnel policies apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. 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 employees, or otherwise adversely affects residents, customers, and people who work on behalf of the Town may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and follow the rules

Carefully read these guidelines, along with Town personnel policies, including, but not limited to: Ethical Conduct, Use of Town Time and Equipment, Appropriate Dress & Use of Town Logo, Workplace Harassment, and the Town's Information Technology Policy, to ensure that your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include 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. Keep in mind that while it is your right to post, what you post could adversely impact workplace culture and how your ability to provide services is viewed by our residents and visitors.



Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees and members of public. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers, supervisor, or Human Resources Department 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 fellow employees or members of the public 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 Town 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 Town employees or members of the public.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

- Maintain the confidentiality of the Town's private or confidential information. This may include personnel record information or other confidential communications, and also includes information that may not have intentionally shared, but was able to be viewed/identified in pictures you post.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a Town of Apex website without identifying yourself as a Town of Apex employee.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Town of Apex. If the Town is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of Town of Apex, fellow employees or members of the public. If you do publish a blog or post online content related to the work you do with the Town or other Town employees, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of Town of Apex. 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 Town of Apex."



- Be mindful of the Town's policies regarding the use of the Town's logo when posting pictures that may show you in Town apparel or in Town vehicles or facilities.

Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent with the Town's "Information Technology" policy and the "Use of Town Equipment & Supplies" policy. Do not use your Town of Apex email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Retaliation is prohibited

The Town prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee 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.

Media contacts

Employees should not speak to the media on the Town's behalf without contacting the Town's Communications Manager. All media inquiries should be directed to the Town's Communication Manager or department public information representative.

Interpretation and Application

Nothing in this policy is intended to or will be applied in a manner that violates any employee's constitutional rights, including rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, or federal or state rights to engage in any statutorily-protected activity.

For more information

If you have questions or need further guidance, please speak with your supervisor or contact the Human Resources Department.