



## **Deschutes County Administrative Policy**

**No. GA-21 Effective Date: June 26, 2017**

**Updated: June 2025**

### **DESCHUTES COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

#### **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It is the policy of Deschutes County that social media is an effective outreach tool to disseminate information, and promote programs, initiatives and services.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- **Social Media Channels** - Digital platforms that allow users to create and share information, ideas or questions with other users or audiences.
- **Social Media Presence** - The specific account /profile that a user or organization has on a social media channel.
- **Post** - Any content generated or shared on social media presences. Posts can include, but are not limited to, messages, links, images, maps videos and emoticons.
- **Comment** - A post made in response to a post.
- **Official** - For the purposes of this policy, "official" refers to any social media presence set up by the County.

#### **APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and agents of Deschutes County. It does not apply to elected officials, or their staff, although all employees are encouraged to use this policy as a guideline.

#### **POLICY & PROCEDURE**

To best manage online relationships and conversations, the County Administrator will appoint a designee or designees as the administrators of social media content. The designee will manage the County's social media accounts and will be responsible for content deployment. The designee will also have the authority, in coordination with the County's Communication's Director, to establish and terminate social media accounts, monitor, and respond to comments from the public and post updates on behalf of the County.

If departments or offices would like to create new social media accounts on behalf of the County, they shall submit requests to the Communications Director for review.

## **Social Media Communications on Behalf of Deschutes**

### **County Selection of Social Media Channels**

- Use of any new social media channels must be approved by the County's Communications Director in coordination with the Legal Department and IT Department.

### **Establishing New Social Media Presences**

Authorized representatives who set up accounts on behalf of the County should use a County email account, whenever platform configuration allows.

- Accounts should link to the County's Social Media Terms & Conditions.

### **Content Development**

- Wherever possible, content posted to the County's social media sites will also be made available on the County's website.
- Wherever possible, content posted to the County's social media sites must contain hyperlinks directing users back to the County's official website for in-depth information.
- Content shared on official County social media channels will endeavor to reflect the values and priorities of Deschutes County.
  - Content created and shared by the County shall not:
    - Use vulgar, profane, violent, sexist, racist, threatening, or other offensive language or imagery.
    - Post information for personal gain.
    - Use inappropriate humor.
    - Be in violation of any applicable federal, state or local laws, or promote the violation of such.
    - Infringe on copyright or intellectual property rights. This includes using copyrighted photographs, music, logos, artwork, etc. without the owner's permission.
    - Engage in political advocacy.
    - Violate any County policies.
    - Promote or perpetuate, in any fashion, discrimination in any form on the basis of race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, color, age, gender identity, marital status, national origin, disability, or other aspects or traits.
    - Promote solicitation of commerce or specific businesses (unless a purpose can be demonstrated).
    - Compromise the safety or security of the public.
    - Violate the privacy of its subjects (images or information).

- o Provide false, libelous or defamatory information.
  - o Be automated.
- Content developed for social media use should link to the County's official website [www.deschutes.org](http://www.deschutes.org) whenever possible.

### **Brand Management**

- All County social media presences should be clearly identified as official Deschutes County assets, using the County's logo or department logo as the identifying image. They should also include Deschutes County in the account name.
- Social media presences (and content) should be designed to emulate the County's brand.

### **Public Comments/ Engagement**

- A driving goal of social media is to promote effective two-way communication with members of the public and other key stakeholders. As such, comments from all parties are to be encouraged and welcomed, often directly by a post itself. Both positive and critical comments about Deschutes County, its programs or policies are welcome.
- Any comment, reply or similar communication from followers/users should be allowed to remain posted, provided it does not violate the County's Social Media Terms & Conditions.
- Deschutes County reserves the right to ban or block users from any of its social media presences for violations of its Social Media Terms & Conditions. If a comment, private/direct message or other communication is taken down or deleted, staff should coordinate with the Communications Director and Legal Counsel about appropriate retention and documentation.

### **Existing Department Presences**

- It is essential that County social media presences share content on a regular basis. Each year, the Communications Director, or their designee, will review existing Deschutes County social media accounts to determine whether they are operating in accordance with County policy.

## **Records Retention / Public Records**

- All content related to County business that is posted or exchanged on county social media channels is a public record and is subject to Oregon Public Records Law ([ORS Chapter 192](#)) Content shall be maintained in accordance with Oregon Archives Division's records retention schedules.
- Any content that is removed from a county site will be documented with a description detailing why the content was removed or deemed unsuitable and maintained in accordance with OAR 166, County Records Retention Schedule.

## **Related Policies**

All County authorized use of social media shall comply with the appropriate County policies and standards, including but not limited to:

- [IT User](#)
- [Communications Policy](#)
- [HIPAA](#)
- [Public Records](#)
- [County Personnel Rules](#)

## **Guidelines for Professional Use of Social Media by Employees**

Employees who need to use social media for professional reasons should follow procedures developed by their departments and offices. Those accounts will generally be used to review and monitor content, but will not be used to create content on behalf of the organization.

## **Guidelines for Private Use of Social Media by Employees**

Unless required for official business use, Deschutes County employees are not permitted to use a County affiliated email address when using social media in personal capacities.

- Work-related content (including information, audio, photos or video) that is created when the employee is acting in an official capacity may not be used or shared on personal social media accounts without a supervisor's approval.
- All employee use of County-sponsored social media and any internet resources is subject to Policy IT-1: Computer, Email and Mobile Computing Device Use.
- If you identify yourself as a Deschutes County employee when conducting personal social media activities, please state in your profile that your

comments/views are not authorized by, or necessarily representative of Deschutes County government.

- Employees not acting in their official capacity shall not represent or give the impression that they are acting in their official capacity.
- Whether or not you specify on your personal social media accounts that you work for Deschutes County, your employment with the County is public record under Oregon Public Records Law. Be mindful that whenever you discuss issues online, whether in a personal or professional capacity, your comments could be attributed to your employment with Deschutes County.
- Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent an employee from exercising his or her right to make a complaint of discrimination or other workplace misconduct, engage in lawful collective bargaining activity, or to express an opinion on a matter of public concern that does not unduly disrupt county operations.

Approved by the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.

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Nick Lelack, County Administrator



