

**LEVY COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Subject: SOCIAL MEDIA	Effective Date:	Number: 810A
Applies to: All Employees and Volunteers of the Levy County Board of County Commissioners	Last Amended:	Page: 1 of 3

Policy:

The County understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, co-workers, and others. However, the 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, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media. They are intended to provide you with an understanding of both the proper and improper uses of social media. In addition to compliance with this policy, employee use of social media is subject to all other County policies, including, but not limited to, policies pertaining to confidentiality, ethics, standards of conduct, privacy, and inappropriate discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

I. Applicability and Scope.

This policy applies to all County employees. 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 blogs, journals or diaries websites, social networking sites, web bulletin boards, chat rooms, and the like. This policy governs all activities pertaining to these online resources, whether personal or County-sponsored.

Given the nature of social media and the pace of technological changes and advancement, this policy is subject to modification at any time by the County. The responsibility for the interpretation and application of this policy rests exclusively with the County Coordinator, or the County Coordinator’s designee.

Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict employees from the right to speak freely on matters of public concern and to engage in other protected concerted activities, as defined and interpreted by applicable law.

II. Guidelines and Prohibitions for Social Media Use.

Ultimately, each employee is solely responsible for what he or she posts online. Before creating online content, employees should consider some of the risks and rewards involved. Keep in mind that any conduct, including social media activities, that adversely affects an employee’s job performance or the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise undermines the County’s legitimate interests and operations, may result in disciplinary action. As public employees, County personnel must be sensitive to the fact that employee conduct, both online and offline, is often subject to greater scrutiny in the community and the media. Each employee is expected to exercise good judgment in his or her social media activities so as not to cast the County in a negative light. Accordingly, with respect to social media use by employees, the following guidelines apply:

- A. Employees shall refrain from the personal use of social media during working time. Working time does not include meal or break time.

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- B. Employees shall refrain from using County computers, phones, equipment, or other resources to engage in personal social media activities, whether on or off duty. The County reserves the right to monitor and/or search any of its electronic equipment and resources, including network and email systems, at any time and for any reason. There shall be no expectation of privacy with respect to the use of County equipment and resources.
- C. The use of a County-provided email address to register for personal social networking sites, or to engage in personal social media activities, is prohibited.
- D. Employees whose job responsibilities include engaging in official social media activities on behalf of the County must only post official content specifically authorized by the County. Employees who are not authorized by the County to engage in official County-sponsored social media activity, must refrain from doing so. County employees shall not create links to personal websites on County-sponsored sites or vice versa, absent prior approval from the County. Passwords for County-sponsored sites and accounts are the property of the County, should be safeguarded at all times, and must not be shared with anyone other than authorized personnel. County-sponsored sites shall not be used for private purposes or to solicit for any purpose unrelated to County business or operations.
- E. Employees shall not communicate with the media, or other outside entities or individuals, on the County’s behalf, unless specifically authorized to do so. All media inquiries or other similar requests seeking information on behalf of the County, should be referred to the County Coordinator’s office or the public information officer.
- F. When engaging in personal social media activities, employees must avoid stating, implying, or creating the impression that they are speaking in an official capacity or on behalf of the County, or that their activity is otherwise endorsed by the County. When posting comments that pertain to the County, an effective way of distinguishing personal views from matters that fall within official County business is to include a disclaimer in connection with personal media postings to make it clear that the views expressed are personal views and not those of the County.
- G. Employees shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any confidential or other sensitive information to which they have access as a result of, arising from, or incident to, their employment with the County without authorization. All requests for public records and information shall be directed to the appropriate employee responsible for handling such requests on the County’s behalf.
- H. Employees must respect all intellectual property laws, including laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, trademarks, and any other intellectual property.

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- I. Employees shall not engage in social media activities that violate the County’s policies prohibiting inappropriate discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, or that otherwise violates the County’s standards of conduct. In this respect, employees should be respectful when engaging in social media activities. Employees should always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, elected officials, members of the public, and any others who work or interact with the County. Employees should keep in mind that work-related complaints are more likely to be resolved by speaking directly with co-workers than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if an employee decides to post complaints or criticism, he or she must avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include, but is not limited to, offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone’s reputation, or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on race, sex, pregnancy, disability, religion, national origin, ethnicity, marital status, veteran status, or any other status protected by law or company policy.

- J. Employees should be open, honest, and accurate when engaging in social media activities. Employees must refrain from posting information or rumors which you know to be false.

III. For More Information.

If you have questions or need further guidance regarding the interpretation or application of this policy, contact Human Resources.