

2.18 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Given the multitude of concerns (legal, political and ethical) raised by social networking, this Social Media Policy establishes prudent and acceptable practices regarding City officials and employees use of the internet.

Purpose

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:

1. Impair the work of any City Official or employee; create a harassing, demeaning, or hostile work environments; or
2. 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.

Disclaimer

1. Under this Policy, the representatives of the City for social media are the City Administrator, City Clerk, EDC Director and Public Works Director.
2. 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.
3. If City personnel posts data purporting to be on behalf of the City while using a social media site without the prior approval of the City Administrator, the City is not responsible for said posted content, such content is not to be construed as reflecting the views or opinions of the Mayor, City Council or City Staff and such action may be grounds for disciplinary action.
4. The absence of explicit reference herein to a particular site does not limit the extent of the application of this Policy. If any City personnel is uncertain, he/she must consult their supervisor before proceeding.

General Guidelines

1. 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.
2. 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 without the City Administrator's prior approval.
3. 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."

Guidelines for Official City Sites

1. All City-sanctioned social media sites shall be the purview of the City Administrator. Any content to be posted on City-sanctioned social media sites must meet the approval of the City Administrator or their designee, before it is posted.
2. All personnel that engage in social media activities and/or visit any City-sanctioned social media site on the City's behalf shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies, including the Texas Public Information Act and the records retention schedule. All content must be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
3. Any personnel that posts online content as a representative of the City, or on the City's behalf shall clearly state within said post that said content is subject to all applicable records retention and public disclosure laws. All City-sanctioned social media sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to records retention and public disclosure.
4. Any content posted as representative of the City, or content posted to a City-sanctioned social media site containing any of the follow is prohibited:

- a. Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
 - b. Profane language or content;
 - c. 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;
 - d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - e. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - f. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - g. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
 - h. Information that is incorrect or misleading;
 - i. Information that is in conflict with an approved City policy, ordinance, directive, or plan; and/or
 - j. (10) Anything else that creates a disruption in the workplace.
5. Content submitted for posting on a City -sanctioned social media site that is deemed unsuitable for posting by the City Administrator because it violates criteria in the preceding item (Item 4, immediately above) of this Policy, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason for which specific content is deemed unsuitable for posting.
 6. Any hyperlinks posted on a City -sanctioned social media site shall be accompanied by the following disclaimer: "The City guarantees neither the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of the link, website, or content linked thereto."
 7. Personnel found in violation of this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including
 8. Termination of employment
 9. Any content posted as representative of the City, or content posted to a City -sanctioned social media site is owned by the City and is subject to the Public Information Act and the record retention schedule.

Prohibited Sites

In accordance with Texas S.B. 1893,

1. No one shall install or use the social media site, TikTok, or any successor application or service developed or provided by ByteDance Limited or an entity owned by ByteDance Limited, on any device owned or leased by the City of Mount Vernon.

2. Any such existing application must be removed.

Exceptions to this prohibition:

Installation and use may be permitted to the extent necessary for:

1. Providing law enforcement

2. Developing or implementing information security measures

Permitted use must use measures to mitigate risks to the security of City information during the use of the application; and documentation of those measures must be filed with the City Secretary