



# City of Sonora Social Media Policy

## I. Definitions:

- a. Administrator:
  - i. The single person who oversees and, ultimately, controls all official Social Media Sites for the City. The Administrator will be the City Administrator or their designee.
- b. Authorized Users:
  - i. City employees, staff liaisons for governing bodies, attorneys, and any consultants, providers, and contractors that are using social media in an official capacity for City business. The Administrator will determine, in their sole discretion, who is an Authorized User.
- c. City Officials:
  - i. Any elected or appointed official sitting on a Legislative Body of the City. These may include, but are not limited to, City Councilmembers, commissioners, board members and committee members.
- d. Comment:
  - i. Any reply on a post on an official Social Media Site. Comments may appear organized as threads, depending on the Social Media Site. A public user may add a comment, and an Authorized User may reply to that comment with another comment, depending on the situation.
- e. Legislative Body:
  - i. The City Council and any City Boards, Commissions and/or Committees.
- f. Message:
  - i. Any direct, private written communication from the public to an Official Social Media Site.
- g. Official Social Media Site:
  - i. Any Social Media Site controlled by an Authorized User that is used to promote, discuss, carry out, or reference City-related business and/or activities. These sites will clearly communicate they are representative of the City as a whole or of a specific Department as applicable.
- h. Post:
  - i. Any content an Authorized User initially publishes on an official Social Media Site. The medium of a post can range from plain text, hyperlinks, images, videos, etc. This definition also applies to more ephemeral content such as Facebook/Instagram "Stories."
- i. Social Media:
  - i. Online sources that allow people to communicate, share information, photos, videos, audio, and exchange text and other multimedia files with others via some form of online or cellular network platform. These online sources may include, but are not limited to, channels, networks, and technology, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor, YouTube, and similar platforms or kinds of electronic networking services (collectively, "Social Media Networks").
- j. Tag or Mention:
  - i. Any reference to a username of the referenced user's Social Media Site.



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## II. Purpose and Scope:

- a. Social Media networks offer substantial opportunities to communicate to a significant segment of the population. If used properly, they may provide a benefit to the City of Sonora by providing an additional avenue of public outreach and dissemination of information. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the City encourages the use of social media (where appropriate) to further the goals of the Sonora City Council and City leadership.
- b. However, as with other interactive uses of the internet, posting information on social media is not without risks. Use of such networks for official City purposes raises legal issues that are unique to public entities and generally do not affect private persons or entities.
  - i. This includes, for example, the Brown Act and the California Public Records Act.
  - ii. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of the information posted on its official Social Media Sites in the name and on the behalf of the City.
- c. This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the City of Sonora of social media sites (including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X, formerly known as Twitter, as a means of conveying City of Sonora ("City") information to its citizens.
- d. The intended purpose behind establishing City of Sonora social media sites is to disseminate information from the City, about the City, to its citizens. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City on City social media sites.
- e. For purposes of this policy, the "Social Media Policy" is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, Instagram, blogs, RSS, YouTube, X, LinkedIn, and Flickr. For purposes of this policy, "comments" include information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communicative content posted on a City social media site.

## III. Policy:

- a. Creation and use of any such Official Social Media Site must be approved by the City Administrator.
  - i. The City Administrator may, at their sole discretion, approve, deny, or modify the creation of such sites.
- b. City social media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the City of Sonora and that they follow the City's Social Media Policy.
- c. Wherever possible, City's social media sites should link back to the official City of Sonora website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City.
- d. Each departments Authorized User will monitor content on the City's social media sites to ensure adherence to both the City's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Sonora City Council.



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- i. When posting on Official Social Media Sites on the behalf of the City, authorized users are serving as a voice for the City.
- ii. Before posting all authorized users must check the most current Social Media Policy to ensure compliance.
- iii. Each authorized user will comply with the designated social media network policies and terms and conditions.
- iv. Photographs, videos, or images:
  - 1. Consent is implied within public spaces or at City-sponsored events, unless otherwise stated.
  - 2. Authorized Users may consult the Administrator for guidance on using media from/for special projects or campaigns.
- e. City Officials' Use of Social Media.
  - i. The City does not create or provide support for individual social media accounts for City Officials.
  - ii. City Officials who maintain personal social and other digital media accounts should be aware that, similar to City email or any other written or recorded communication related to the official conduct of city business, digital communications, Social Media Posts and Messages by City Officials regarding matters that are before the City for action or within City jurisdiction can be "official city business" subject to laws and policies regarding freedom of speech, records retention and production, and public transparency. Those laws and policies include, but are not necessarily limited to:
    - 1. The California and United States Constitution.
    - 2. The California Public Records Act
    - 3. The Ralph M. Brown Act.
    - 4. The City's records retention regulations.
- f. City Employees' Use of Social Media.
  - i. While employees may voluntarily choose to engage with the City on its Official Social Media Sites, the City does not encourage or require any employee to follow or "like" Official Social Media Sites.
  - ii. The City does not condone the personal use by employees of social media during working hours, including by using City owned equipment.
    - 1. Employees have no right or expectation of privacy when using City issued devices or systems.
    - 2. The City reserves the right to monitor, search, or disclose employee use of City resources.
  - iii. When an employee uses social media in a personal capacity, they are doing so for themselves, and they are not speaking nor communicating on behalf of the City.
  - iv. Employees should make certain that it does not appear that they are speaking or posting for the City unless authorized to do so.
  - v. Employees are prohibited from using the City logo or seal or any variation of the City logo or seal, representing the City, or representing that they speak on behalf of the City within their personal social media account(s) or site(s).
- g. The City reserves the right to restrict, remove or hide any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy, or any applicable law.
- h. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.



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- i. The City of Sonora's website at [www.Sonoraca.com](http://www.Sonoraca.com) will remain the City's primary and predominant internet presence.
- j. All City social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and policies.
- k. The City's social media sites are subject to the California Public Records Act.
  - i. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure.
- l. Employees representing the City's government via City social media sites must conduct themselves as a representative of the City and in accordance with all City policies.
- m. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time.
- n. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Sonora may be removed.
- o. The City does not endorse any links or advertisements that may be displayed on any social media page.

## IV. **Comment Policy:**

- a. The intended purpose behind establishing City of Sonora social media sites is to disseminate information from the City, about the City, to its citizens.
- b. By posting or commenting on the City of Sonora's social media sites you agree to the terms of use of the City of Sonora's social media comment policy as provided herein.
- c. As a public entity the City must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
- d. The City of Sonora social media content is intended to be "family friendly."
  - i. The City requires that each poster follows the City's posting guidelines described within this policy.
  - ii. Please note that the City utilizes automatic content filtering features on all sites, when available.
- e. All City of Sonora social media content is subject to monitoring.
  - i. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on City of Sonora social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by each departments Authorized User:
  - ii. Comments not related to the original topic, including:
    - 1. Random or unintelligible comments.
    - 2. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language.
    - 3. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin.
    - 4. Defamatory or personal attacks.
    - 5. Threats to any person or organization.
    - 6. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures.
    - 7. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale.
    - 8. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law.



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9. Encouragement of illegal activity or violence.
  10. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
  11. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.
  12. Harassment or content which constitutes and/or facilitates stalking.
  13. Content which violates the right to privacy.
  14. Repetitive content.
  15. Comments which may reasonably interfere with, inhibit, or compromise law enforcement investigations, police tactics, police responses to incidents and/or the safety of police staff and officers.
  16. Posts or comments that contain any external links.
- iii. All comments posted by a member of the public on any City of Sonora social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of Sonora, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Sonora.
  - iv. The City of Sonora reserves the right to deny access to City of Sonora social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Sonora's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
    1. Comments posted will be monitored and inappropriate content as defined above will be removed as soon as possible and without prior notice.
  - v. If you need to contact the City of Sonora Police Department, please call their front desk at (209) 532-8143, or if it is an emergency, call 911 and ask for assistance.
    1. While comments posted on the City's social media pages are monitored, posting a comment is neither the recommended nor best way to contact the City of Sonora or Sonora Police Department.
  - vi. When a City of Sonora employee responds to a comment, in their capacity as a City of Sonora employee, the employee's name and title should be made available, and the employee shall not share personal information about themselves, or other City employees.
  - vii. All comments posted to any City of Sonora Facebook site are bound by Facebook's Terms of Service and Community Standards, located at [www.facebook.com/terms.php](http://www.facebook.com/terms.php), and [www.facebook.com/communitystandards](http://www.facebook.com/communitystandards), respectfully.
  - viii. The City of Sonora reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Terms of Service and/or Community Standards to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.
  - ix. By posting or commenting on the City of Sonora social media platforms you agree to our terms of use. You participate by your own choice, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username, and any information you provide therein.