

Social Media Use Policy

Purpose

This Policy is intended to provide employees with guidelines for appropriate online activity. Although this Policy cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use, it is intended to offer guidelines to employees, thereby helping employees to avoid potentially costly missteps online. The nature of the Internet is such that what you “say” online will be captured forever and can be transmitted endlessly without your consent or knowledge. Employees should remember that any information that is shared online instantly becomes permanent and public. Employees should be aware that, while certain types of speech may be subject to protection under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the City does have the right to discipline an employee whose comments may affect the efficiency of the public services by the City.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees’ use of the Internet, including participation in and use of social media; regardless of whether such use occurs in the workplace and regardless of whether such use involves the City of Greenville’s electronic equipment or other property.

“Social Media” Defined

The rapid speed at which technology continuously evolves makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify all types of social media. By way of example, social media includes: (1) social-networking sites (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn); (2) blogs and micro-blogs (i.e. Twitter, Blogger); (3) content-sharing sites (i.e. Scribd, Slide Share); and (4) image sharing sites (i.e. Flickr, YouTube). This list is for illustrative purposes only, however, and all online activity is governed by this Policy.

Application of Other Policies

All of the City of Greenville’s employment policies apply to conduct that occurs online in the same way that they apply to conduct that occurs in the workplace.

For example, Employees' online conduct must comply with the City's Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, Confidentiality, and Conflicts of Interest policies.

Association With the City

Employees who identify themselves online as being associated with the City Of Greenville must comply with the rules set forth in this section.

Federal law requires that, when endorsing or promoting his or her employer, an employee must disclose his or her affiliation with (i.e., employment by), the City. Although the City of Greenville appreciates the loyalty and enthusiasm of its employees, employees must disclose their employment if they endorse the City online. If you the employee should choose to disclose your affiliation or relationship with the City of Greenville, for example in your online profile, you must use an appropriate disclaimer to make clear that you are speaking only on behalf of yourself and not on behalf of or as an agent of the City. An example of an appropriate disclaimer follows:

The opinions and viewpoints expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position or opinion of the City of Greenville, Mississippi.

To ensure continuity of the City of Greenville's message, employees may not represent themselves to be speaking on behalf of the City unless expressly authorized to do so.

Prohibited Conduct

Employees are prohibited from engaging in any of the following in their online activities and posts:

- Disparaging the City's services, clients, executive leadership, employees, or strategy;
- Making any false or misleading statements;
- Promoting or endorsing violence;

- Promoting illegal activity, including the use of illegal drugs;
- Directing any negative comment towards or about any individual or group based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national
- Disclosing any confidential or proprietary information belonging to the City or obtained by the employee as a result of his employment with the City; and
- Posting, uploading, or sharing any recording or images (including audio, pictures, and videos), taken in the workplace or at any City-sponsored event without express advance authorization.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to or will be applied in a manner that limits employees' rights to engage in protected concerted activity.

Duty to Report

Employees have an ongoing duty to report any violations of this policy by any other employees. The City considers the duty to report to be a critical component of its efforts to ensure the safety of its employees and to preserve the City's reputation and goodwill in the community. Therefore, any employee who fails to report any conduct that reasonably appears to be in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline for such failure.

Questions About This Policy

Social media changes rapidly and there will likely be events or issues that are not addressed in this policy. If, at any time, you are uncertain about the application of this policy or if a question relating to the appropriate use of social media arises that is not fully addressed by this policy, you should seek the guidance of the appropriate person *before* posting or otherwise engaging online. When in doubt, employees always should ask for guidance first because, once the information is online, it can never be deleted.

(Adopted by council 06/05/12)