

## CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE

### SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY

#### 1. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

The purpose of this policy is to establish City of East Providence (City) general standards and responsibilities for the acceptable use of social media. The policy governs the use, administration, management, monitoring, and retention of social media and social media content, consistent with state law, federal law, City laws and regulations, and city and department goals.

This policy applies to all uses of social media by city employees maintaining, using, or providing oversight of social media tools. Employees include, but are not limited to, full-time and part-time employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers who access or contribute content. This policy also applies to members of the public who comment or otherwise interact with the City through its social media websites.

All content created, received, transmitted, stored on, or deleted from City information systems is exclusively the property of the City or, to the extent provided by applicable law, of the person or entity that created or owns the copyright or trademark rights to that content.

#### 2. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

When used in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as prudent operational security, and privacy considerations, Web-based social media tools can (at little to no cost):

- Enhance the speed, reach, and targeting of communications (particularly during disaster/emergency incidents);
- Facilitate collaboration;
- Improve information exchange between residents and employees;
- Increase citizen engagement and dialogue;
- Streamline processes;
- Foster productivity improvements; and
- Increase the City's ability to broadcast messages to the widest possible audience (City, region, nation, world).

#### 3. DEFINITIONS

**“Social Media”** means and includes Internet technologies that facilitate and promote interactive communications, participation, and collaboration. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to: Blogger, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Tumblr, Foursquare, Flickr, YouTube, Yelp, Second Life, Wikipedia, and the interactive tools and functions they provide to users.

**“Authorized social media user”** or “authorized user” means and includes any City employee, contractor, consultant, vendor, and any other City employee responsible for the use, administration, management, monitoring, and/or retention of social media, social media tools or web sites, and/or social media content, in the name of or on behalf of the City or any City agency.

**“Social media content”** means and includes any materials, documents, photographs, graphics, and other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted using social media Internet sites or social media tools.

#### **4. STANDARDS OF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

All uses of social media on behalf of the City or any city department, or in any manner that appears to represent the City, or constitute communication by the City, must comply with the following standards:

- a) Department and Department Heads
  - i. No City department may establish, use or terminate a social identity, account, profile, page, site (collectively, social media account(s) or account(s)) without the approval of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) or designee and the City Manager.
  - ii. Department Heads, with the approval of the CIO or designee and the City Manager, shall designate one or more Department employees to be authorized social media user(s) for the agency. Only the Department’s authorized social media user(s) shall be authorized to post social media content on the agency’s social media account(s) and may have access to the agency’s social media account(s) that permit such posting.
  - iii. Department heads shall establish a procedure for approving, prior to posting, and shall issue agency guidelines for all social media content that is posted on the agency’s social media accounts, including the designation of one or more agency managers (who may also be agency authorized social media users) to be responsible for the approvals. All Department social media guidelines and policies must be consistent with this policy, and must be approved by the CIO and the City Manager.
  - iv. No information or link (hyperlink) to any Internet site, or other materials, or communications, may be posted, or approved for posting, on an agency social media account that is not directly related (as determined by the Department Head) to the mission, services, and business objectives of the department.
  - v. City of East Providence social media pages must clearly identify the pages as created and managed by the agency, identified as a department, office, commission, or agency of the City of East Providence.
  - vi. Department social media sites must prominently display, on the first page accessible to site visitors, links to the City’s official website: [www.eastprovidence.com](http://www.eastprovidence.com)
  - vii. The City of East Providence reserves the right to delete, remove, or take-down any post, comment, reply, etc., in violation of this policy.

b) Employees

- i. No city employee may establish any social media account in the name of or on behalf of the City or any city agency unless: (1) the Chief Information Officer (CIO) or designee, the City Manager and the employee's Department Head have all approved the account, and (2) all information to be posted on the account is approved in accordance with subsection "a)" above. This requirement applies regardless of whether the account is established, accessed, or used by means of City information systems or by means of the employee's or other's information systems, and regardless of whether the account is established, accessed, or used from City of non-city premises.
- ii. Employees cannot use social media in a manner such as:
  1. Violates the copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property rights of any person or entity, or otherwise violates their legal ownership interests;
  2. Includes ethnic slurs, profanity, insults; material that is harassing, defamatory, fraudulent or discriminatory; or other content or communications that would not be acceptable in a City workplace under City or Department policy or practice;
  3. Violates the terms of contracts governing the use of any social media content including but not limited to, software and other intellectual property licenses;
  4. Displays sexually explicit images, cartoons, jokes, or messages;
  5. Contains confidential or "for official use only" information, or information that compromises the security of City internal networks or information systems. Such "for official use only" or confidential information includes, but is not limited to, information that is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) or other federal, state, or local laws and regulations (except as permitted under such laws and regulations), as well as social security numbers and other personally identifiable information;
  6. Violates the terms of use governing the social media account;
  7. Contains information, comments, pictures, updates, or any media that notifies, alerts, or informs the public about any public safety event involving East Providence Police Department, the East Providence Fire Department or the Department of Public Works that would compromise, highlight, or bring attention to an in-process or completed public safety event. Any such notification using social media that is deemed inappropriate will be met by disciplinary actions, including termination.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions about particular uses of social media or particular social media content should be directed to the Chief Information Officer, the Human Resources Director or the City Manager.

- iii. Personal social media accounts. This policy is not intended to govern employees' establishment or use of personal social media accounts for personal purposes, outside the workplace and using non-City information systems. However, some

such personal uses of social media may reflect on the City or appear to represent City policy or to be on behalf of the City. In addition, accessing and using personal social media accounts by means of City information systems is subject to City policy. For these reasons, City employees are expected to comply with all city and agency policies, as well as the following standards, when using personal social media accounts.

1. City employees have no right to privacy with respect to their personal use of social media or personal social media accounts accessed by means of City information systems, or with respect to personal social media content so accessed. They should not expect or assume privacy or confidentiality with respect to any such personal social media use or social media content.
2. Postings and user profiles on personal social media accounts must not state or imply that the views, conclusions, statements, or other social media content are an official policy, statement, position, or communication of the City of East Providence, or represent the views of the City or any City officer or employee, unless the head of the user's department, the CIO or designee, and the City Manager have granted express permission for that user to do so.
3. If a City employee has not received such express permission, any user profile, biography, or posting on a personal social media account that identifies that person as a City employee must include a qualifying statement in substantially the following form: **"The views I express on this site are my own and do not reflect any official view or position of the City of East Providence."**

c) Interactive Communication; Notice to Site Visitors

- i. A City or Department social media site or page may be a "limited public forum" under the First Amendment if visitors to the site are able to post comments or other communications. Where permitted by the operator of the site, the comments and similar functions should be disabled on City and agency social media pages, unless the agency head, CIO or designee, and the City Manager, determine that permitting or encouraging interactive communications with site users is necessary to carry out the business objectives of the agency in creating the site.
- ii. If interactive communications (e.g. comments) are permitted, terms of use for visitors to the site must be posted prominently on the site, unless prohibited by the terms of use governing the social media account or prevented by the site. The terms must include:
  1. A clear description of the topics that the site is intended to address and that may be addressed in comments, with a statement that user postings will be removed if they are not directly related to those topics;
  2. Statements substantially similar to the following:
    1. A clear description of the topics that the site is intended to address and that may be addressed in comments, with a statement that user postings will be removed if they are not directly related to those topics;
    2. Statements substantially similar to the following:

- a. Communications posted by visitors on this site may not contain ethnic slurs or profanity; material that is harassing, defamatory, fraudulent, discriminatory or sexually explicit; or any material that infringes copyright, trademark or other intellectual property rights. Any such communications may be removed at any time without notice.
  - b. This site is not owned, controlled, or operated by the City or the agency. Visitors to the site must comply with the terms of use and privacy policies of the site operator, and are subject to the site operator's practices regarding the collection and retention of passive information (e.g. cookies) and other information from and about visitors.
  - c. Any advertisements appearing on the site are not controlled by the City or the agency and do not reflect endorsement by the City or Department.
  - d. Opinions expressed by visitors to the site do not reflect an endorsement or opinion on the part of the City or Department.
  - e. All postings by visitors to the site may be retained by the City, in its discretion and as required by applicable law or City policy.
  - f. Visitors to the site should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality with respect to any content they post to the site, and the City and agency have no responsibility for maintaining any such privacy confidentiality.
3. The content of communications posted by site users may not be edited or otherwise modified; removal is the only action that may be taken, and then only for communications that violate the terms of the statements under subsections i and ii.

#### **4.1 Information Requirements**

Department heads must submit a list of all social media accounts maintained by the Department to the CIO or designee, including, at a minimum, the following information: (1) the name, hosting site, internet address, date of inception for the account, and a statement of the purpose and scope of the agency's use of the account; (2) all user names, passwords, and other long-in credentials for the account; (3) all authorized social media users for the agency that have access to and/or responsibility for the account; and (4) the administrative contact and contact information for the account. The Department Head must promptly notify the CIO any changes in any of the foregoing, and of any new agency social media accounts or pages and any termination of accounts or pages.

Department heads shall ensure that all department-approved social media accounts and social media content are periodically reviewed for compliance with this policy. Department Heads are

responsible for all social media content created, received, transmitted, stored, deleted, destroyed, and/or printed in the name of or on behalf of the City or the Department.

#### **4.2 Records Retention**

Social media content is subjective to the Records Retention and Destruction Schedule established by the Department of Records for the agency, whether or not the social media is currently posted on the agency's site(s). Agencies are responsible for making and retaining such postings, as required by the agency's Records Retention and Destruction Schedule.

### **5. COMPLIANCE**

Each City Department Head shall be responsible for enforcing this policy with agency employees. Employees who violate this policy, or any other City or Department policy, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with the disciplinary policies of the employee's department and the City, and, for employees represented by the Fraternal Order of Police, International Association of Fire Fighters within the terms of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

If a City contractor or third party user knowingly or negligently commits or permits a material violation of this policy, the City may terminate the contract in accordance with its terms, and/or terminate the contractor's or third party user's access to City information processing facilities, information systems, and information, in addition to any legal or remedial actions the City may take to enforce and protect its interest.

### **6. GETTING MORE INFORMATION**

Questions about this policy and other information security matters should be addressed to the Chief Information Officer or the City Manager.

### **DISCLAIMER**

The City of East Providence is not responsible for what someone may post, and the City reserves the right to remove and take down any post that violates the above terms and conditions.