



# TOWN POLICY

**POLICY NUMBER:** 1209

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**REFERENCE:**  
Council 235.09.14

**ADOPTED BY:**  
Town Council  
17 Sept 14

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**PREPARED BY:** Administration

**DATE:** September 17, 2014

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**TITLE:** Social Media Policy

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**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Communicating with the citizens of Strathmore is a key function of the organization, involving officials and employees at all levels. It is important that the Town of Strathmore provide the public with timely, clear and accurate information about the Town's priorities, policies, programs and services.

The Town of Strathmore recognizes the use of social media as an effective communication tool for the purpose of sharing information and encouraging dialogue with its citizens. Social media shall be a tool for relaying the initiatives, strategies and goals of the Town, publishing news stories and events in a timely fashion, and promoting the Town of Strathmore as an exceptional place to live, work and play.

By engaging the public through the proactive and responsible use of social media, the Town signals its willingness as an organization to listen, to be open, and to invest in reciprocal relationships with those who care about, and choose to live and do business in Strathmore

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY IS TO:**

- (a) Ensure that communications across the Town of Strathmore are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the information needs of the organization and community.
- (b) Establish guidelines for the Town of Strathmore's usage and work with social media.

## 1.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 1.1 **“Chief Administrative Officer”** means the person appointed by Council to carry out the powers, duties and functions of the position of Chief Administrative Officer, or the person appointed to act as his designate.
- 1.2 **“Deputy Chief Administrative Officer”** means the person appointed by the Chief Administrative Officer to act as his designate.
- 1.3 **“Director”** means the administrator accountable for their department who may or may not directly supervise employees.
- 1.4 **“Employee”** means a person who is employed by the Town of Strathmore. This includes a permanent, part time, or casual employee.
- 1.5 **“Social Media Administrator”** means an employee(s) assigned by the Chief Administrative Officer or designate to maintain the social media channels for the Town as part of their duties.
- 1.6 **“Official Correspondence”** means communications written, faxed or emailed to the Town of Strathmore that includes the resident’s contact information.
- 1.7 **“Social Media Channels”** means the e-technologies and online sites used by the Town to share opinions and information, promote discussion and build relationships, including but not limited to:
- Microblogging: Twitter
  - Blogging: all branded and non-branded platforms
  - Video Sharing: You Tube
  - Photosharing: Flickr, Photobucket, Instagram
  - Document Sharing: Google Docs, Slideshare, Dropbox
  - Bookmarking: Dig, Reddit
  - Social Networking: LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter
  - Forums
  - Wikipedia
  - Geo-mapping: Googlemaps, Bingmaps
- 1.8 **“Regular Business Hours”** means 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, exclusive of statutory holidays.
- 1.9 **“Social Media User”** means the people who post comments or questions on the Social Media Channels populated by the Town.
- 1.10 **“Town”** means the Town of Strathmore as incorporated under the *Municipal Government Act* R.S.A. 2000, C. M-26 as amended.

## **2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 2.1 Town of Strathmore Council is responsible to:
  - (a) Approve by resolution this policy and any amendments.
  - (b) Approve resources in the annual budget process for successful implementation of this policy.
  
- 2.2 The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible to:
  - (a) Approve procedure
  - (b) Administer the policy and procedures; and
  - (c) Advise Departments in the correct application of the policy and procedure.
  
- 2.3 The Directors are responsible to:
  - (a) Ensure that all Department employees are familiar with the policy;
  - (b) Administer the policy within the Department;
  - (c) Recommend changes in policy and procedures.
  
- 2.4 The Social Media Administrator(s) are responsible to:
  - (a) Ensure the use of social media complies with all approved policies and procedures for the Town.
  
- 2.5 All Employees are responsible to:
  - (a) Ensure that their use of social media complies with all approved policies and procedures.

## **3.0 PROCEDURES**

- 3.1 Social Media channels will be populated and monitored by the Social Media Administrator(s).
  
- 3.2 Social Media channels shall be used for business communication and for the purpose of fulfilling job duties in accordance with Town of Strathmore goals and objectives and not for personal use.
  
- 3.3 Social Media channels will be monitored and populated on a daily basis during regular business hours. Messages posted will be simple, engaging and link the reader to further information posted on the Town's website when possible.
  
- 3.4 The Town of Strathmore cannot commit to replying to every comment; however, the Social Media Administrator will respond to questions as quickly as possible during regular business hours.

- 3.5 The Social Media Administrator shall not comment on opinions offered by residents but reserves the right to respond to comments that are not factual.
- 3.6 The Social Media Administrator shall not comment on decisions of Council, but rather will direct social media users to use official correspondence methods.
- 3.7 Each Social Media channel will include an introductory statement confirming it is maintained by the Town and have appropriate contact information.
- 3.8 Each Social Media channel will include an introductory statement confirming the purpose and scope of the site as well as posing guidelines (where appropriate).
- 3.9 The Town of Strathmore Website shall remain the primary web presence. Social media sites will be used in conjunction with the Town's website.
- 3.10 Posts and comments to and from the Town in connection with the transaction of public business, is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and may be disclosed to third parties.
- 3.11 The Social Media Administrator will be responsible for maintaining a list of all social networking application domain names in use, the names of all employee administrators and these accounts, as well as the associated user identifications and passwords currently active.

#### **4.0 USER POSTING GUIDELINES**

- 4.1 Direct messages and posts will not be considered official correspondence.
- 4.2 Direct messages and posts will not be considered official records of public opinion and will not be recorded as such. In some cases, comments may be forwarded to administration for information purposes.
- 4.3 The Town will not tolerate comments that are offensive to an individual or organization, rude in tone, or abusive as determined by the Town.
- 4.4 Content, comments or links containing any of the following will not be allowed on the Town's social media channels and the Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
  - (a) Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented on or to the social media site in general;
  - (b) Slanderous or defamatory remarks, obscene language or sexual content;
  - (c) Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;

- (d) Promotion of commercial services or products other than significant sponsors, affiliations or business partnerships;
  - (e) Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns;
  - (f) Promotion of illegal activities;
  - (g) Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
  - (h) Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
  - (i) Content written in a language other than the official languages of Canada;  
or
  - (j) Any other content that the Social Media Administrator deems unsuitable for the social media site.
- 4.5 Should a comment or post contravene any of the guidelines listed above, the Social Media Administrator shall make a copy of the comment for the record and delete the post. The offending user may be blocked from the Town's social media channels at the discretion of the Social Media Administrator.
- 4.6 All content created by employees using Town Social media channels must be professional, accurate, and consistent with the Town's policies and meet the Town's visual standards.
- 4.7 Employees representing the Town via social media are expected to conduct themselves at all times as representative of the Town in accordance with the Code of Ethics Policy.
- 4.8 Ethical Social Media conduct includes;
- (a) Customer protection and respect are paramount;
  - (b) Employees will use every effort to keep their interactions factual and accurate;
  - (c) Employees will strive for transparency and openness in interactions;
  - (d) Employees will provide links to credible sources of information to support their interactions, when possible;
  - (e) Employees will publicly correct any information that has later found to be in error;
  - (f) Employees will protect privacy and permissions;
  - (g) Employees will respect rules of the Social Media site.

## **5.0 SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

- 5.1 This Social Media Policy may be overridden by the Municipal Emergency Plan, Emergency Operations Procedures, and Public Information Officer/Communications in emergency or issue related situations. Best practices in communications and public engagement will always apply.

## **6.0 END OF POLICY**