



## LARAMIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

<b>TITLE</b> Social Media	<b>APPROVAL DATE</b> 12/20/16
<b>SECTION</b> Workplace Expectations	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 8/6/2019

The following Laramie County Social Media Use Policy has been adopted to establish practical, reasonable and enforceable guidelines by which Laramie County employees can conduct responsible, constructive social media engagement in official capacities.

This policy promotes a safe environment for employees to share subject matter expertise in a manner that will benefit the residents of Laramie County. This policy prepares Laramie County Government to utilize social media channels to help each other and the communities served, particularly in the event of a crisis, disaster or emergency and will protect Laramie County Government and employees from violating Municipal, State or Federal rules, regulations or laws through social media channels. This policy will provide guidelines for work, personal and general social media usage within Laramie County Government. Public records laws and guidelines relating to social media use in government are also identified. Specific authorized social media sites and usage guidelines for these particular sites are also outlined. Employer monitoring, reporting of violations and discipline for any identified violations are also included within this policy.

### **Purpose**

Laramie County recognizes that emerging online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way citizens, government entities, and businesses interact with each other. The County has determined that online discourse through social computing may facilitate the efficient delivery of County services and foster positive public perception and a sense of community. This policy is intended to provide a framework for use of social media when authorized by the County as part of an employee's job duties. This policy also provides general guidelines for the personal use of social media by all employees. The forms of social media or technology referred to in this policy include, but are not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or other similar forms of online journals, diaries or personal newsletters not affiliated with Laramie County. County-owned technology resources are the property of Laramie County, as is all data created, entered, received, stored, or transmitted via County-owned equipment. All use of social media or similar technology is subject to all County policies, including but not limited to the various Computer Systems policies, as well as any existing internet, email, and harassment policies. Violations of County policies will not be tolerated whether conducted on duty or off duty.

### **Changes to This Policy**

Laramie County may modify this Social Media Use Policy to reflect legal, technological and other developments. A current copy of this document can be found on the Laramie County Government Website at [www.laramiecounty.com](http://www.laramiecounty.com).

### **Definitions**



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The following definitions relate to terms as used within the context of this policy.

- *Social Media* - a means of interactions among people in which they may create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.
- *Blog* - discussion or informational forum published on the internet and consisting of discrete entries ("posts") typically displayed in reverse chronological order.
- *Facebook* – social media network found at [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)
- *Twitter* – social media network found at [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)
- *Spam* - unsolicited bulk messages, especially advertising, indiscriminately sent to any number of recipients
- *Social Media Site* – Any platform on which to build social networks or social relations for the sharing of information of common interest

### **Work Related Social Media Platform Guidelines**

The work related use of social media can range from passive review of social media profiles for informational or investigative purposes, to the authoring of content through a department sponsored social media account. Any such work related use must be approved by an employee's manager. The Information Technology Department and County Attorney reserve the right to remove or modify content of posts or sites that violate the policy

The following conditions also apply to such use:

- 1) Employees are not permitted to use social media, blogging, or similar technology during working hours or at any time on County computers or other County-supplied devices, unless specifically authorized to do so as part of employee's job responsibilities.
- 2) Employees authorized to publish content to a department sponsored social media site shall be designated as social media representatives and such designation shall be made by the employee's Department Manager/Elected Official with notice to the Information Technology Director. A designated employee identified by the Information Technology Director will also be named as an Admin on any Official Department Page.
- 3) Employees may only establish official sites, pages, or accounts in their official capacity as County staff on a social media site with the authorization of their Department Director. Notification of all new official Social Media sites must be provided to the County Attorney and the Information Technology Director. All County authorized social media sites are to be sponsored by a County agency or department and the content of such site will become the responsibility of that department and its management.
- 4) Permission to author content on County authorized social media sites will only be granted to those employees who are authorized to speak on behalf of the County via these electronic communications media.
- 5) Employees are expected to recognize the confidentiality of certain County information, and the privacy rights of employees and residents, and are prohibited from disclosing confidential, personal employee and non-employee information and any other proprietary



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and/or nonpublic information to which employees have access. Questions regarding whether information has been released publicly or doubts regarding the propriety of any release, shall be directed to the employee's supervisor or County Attorney before releasing the information.

- 6) When communicating electronically, employees are expected to speak respectfully about the County and County-related matters, are limited to items to which the employee is authorized to speak and identify themselves and their role with the County.
- 7) Employees are expected to follow copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws when using on-line communications. Note that the unauthorized use of copyrighted materials, unfounded or derogatory statements, or misrepresentation will not be tolerated.
- 8) Employees acting on behalf of the County may not publish content to any website or social media application that is unrelated to subjects associated with their position with the County. When writing about County matters try to add value and provide worthwhile information and perspective.
- 9) Honor the privacy rights of our current employees by seeking their permission and the permission of their Department Manager/Elected Official before writing about or displaying internal happenings that involve the employee.
- 10) No posting of pictures or videos of minors without written parental permission.
- 11) Employees should not cite or reference County contractors or suppliers without their approval. Care should be taken to not promote one contractor over another or provide preferential treatment of any kind.
- 12) Authorized social media sites are not to be used to express a political view point or endorse a political candidate.
- 13) Employees serve as an ambassador of the County at all times.

### **General Social Media Site Guidelines for Authorized Sites**

All County social media sites must be sponsored by a department. The department must include a link to this site from their departmental home page and the County's official social media directory, on the Laramie County's official website. The sponsoring department will be responsible for all management of an authorized social media site and it is the department director's responsibility to maintain compliance with this policy and all other applicable policies or laws in the management of their social media site(s). The accuracy, quality and timeliness of all content on an authorized social media site are the responsibility of the sponsoring department. Likewise, the authorization of the appropriate staff to maintain such a site is also the responsibility of the sponsoring department.

When creating a Laramie County social media site, page, etc., all departments and employees should adhere to the following Guidelines:

- 1) Appropriate use: All communications carried out on County equipment or County sponsored electronic media must adhere to the appropriate use guidelines set forth in the various Computer System policies, as amended.



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- 2) Encourage one-way communication when possible. Two-way communication is permitted only with the advisement and consent of the agency's director or elected official and only when required to further county policies or goals.
- 3) All official Laramie County social media sites will include a disclaimer similar to the following: "The information provided herein is provided as a courtesy and for informational purposes only. Please contact the listed media contact for this (site, page, etc.) to confirm the accuracy of the information found here. Content on this site is not to be construed as a legal notice."
- 4) Comment Policy: Any County authorized social media site which allows comments to be posted must display the following comment policy:

*The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in the County of Laramie including information regarding its many residents, businesses and visitors. We encourage you to submit comments, but be advised this is not an open public forum. Once posted, the County reserves the right, but assumes no obligation to delete submissions that are illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, invade privacy, or which are considered to be offensive to anyone or may infringe upon the intellectual property or copy rights of others. The County does not necessarily review all posted comment on a regular basis. Furthermore, the County reserves the right to delete any comment for any reason and will immediately delete any comments that include: spam or links to other sites; are clearly off topic; advocate illegal or illicit activity; promote particular products, services or vendors; infringe on copyrights or trademarks; or advocate for a particular political party, candidate or point of view. Comments expressed on this site do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Laramie County or its employees. Laramie County takes no responsibility nor assumes any liability for any content posted on this site. Please contact the site administrator for assistance with a comment you believe violates the above policy.*

If the particular social media technology does not provide space for the above, a link from the social media application or user profile to the Social Media Policy page on the Laramie County website is to be provided.

Departments are required to enforce this policy and verify that all posts comply with these guidelines:

- a) No spam
- b) No off topic posts
- c) Promotion of illegal activity prohibited
- d) Copyrighted or licensed material prohibited
- e) Promotion of political organization prohibited
- f) Promotion of products or services prohibited
- g) Personal attacks prohibited
- h) Personal protected information prohibited



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I) Violent, obscene or discriminatory comments prohibited

**No comments or followers shall be removed without approval from the County Attorney's Office. Any comments deleted must be kept on record by the Department along with a written explanation for its deletion.**

- 5) Administrative Structure: any County authorized social media site will require the following:
  - a. Assigned administrator: this person will be responsible to see to it that the use of the social media site adheres to this policy and all related County policies. The name of the site administrator must be filed with a request for an authorized social media site.
  - b. Backup administrator: to prevent issues related to site administration during the absence of the site administrator, all authorized sites must have a named backup administrator also to be filed as part of the request for an authorized site. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring department manager to update this information should authorized personnel change.
  - c. Approved content authors: sponsoring departments must authorize all employee content authors for their departmental social media site.
  - d. Information Technology Department and the County Attorney's office must be notified of the identity of the designated administrators and back up administrators.
- 6) Notification to Administration: The County Attorney's office is to be made aware of any and all Department sponsored social media sites, to include the following information:
  - a. Site Address
  - b. Purpose of Site
  - c. Administrator of site
  - d. Type of communication, one-way, two-way moderated, open two-way
- 7) Required elements of a County authorized social media page: technology permitting, all County sanctioned social media sites should contain the following information in a prominent place on the site:
  - a. County Department clearly identified
  - b. Comment policy
  - c. Stated purpose of page
  - d. Notification that violations of comment policy will result in blocking user
  - e. Disclaimer – See above
  - f. Official contact for page

### **Public Records**

Public Records requirements are mandated by the State of Wyoming. Each department utilizing a social media presence is responsible to ensure compliance with all applicable public records



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laws. The following guidelines are intended to assist departments in maintaining such compliance:

- 1) It is recommended that County social media authors use only existing material from existing County web pages or previously published documents.
- 2) Content exclusive to a department's social media site should be captured and saved in an archival copy.
- 3) Copies of all content removed from the site are to be retained in an archival copy.
- 4) Technology permitting, it is recommended that a backup of the entire site be captured and retained on a regular basis. If you have questions as to applicability of public records law to specific content, or a particular use case, it is recommended that you contact your Department Manager/Elected Official so that the County Attorney can be consulted prior to posting the information or utilizing social media.

### **Personal use of Social Media**

Laramie County respects the right of employees to use social media and does not discourage employees from self-publishing, self-expression and public conversation and does not discriminate against employees who use these mediums for personal interests and affiliations or other lawful purposes. Employees are expected to follow the guidelines and policies set forth to provide a clear line between you as the individual and you as the employee of Laramie County.

1. Employees cannot use employer-owned equipment, including computers, County-licensed software or other electronic equipment, facilities or County time, to conduct the personal use of social media.
2. Employees are personally responsible for their commentary on all "non-county" social media sites and can be held personally liable for commentary that is considered defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any party.
3. Content on employee's personal social media platforms may be used in disciplinary actions in the event the content violates state, federal law or county policies or is otherwise relevant to any disciplinary proceeding. The County does not monitor employees personal social media platforms.
4. Employees are encouraged to be careful in their use of social media to avoid the appearance of using that media in an official capacity.
5. Employees cannot post trademark or logo of the County, County-privileged information, including copyrighted information or photographs of other employees, residents, vendors or suppliers taken in their capacity as County employees.
6. Employees should not link from a personal social media site to the County internal or external web site without the permission of their Department Director and Information Technology Director.

### **Employer Monitoring**



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Employees have no expectation of privacy while using the County's technology resources for any purpose, including authorized social media. The County monitors all such use and may withdraw content deemed to be inappropriate, outside the scope of an employee's authority, or in violation of County policy as determined by the Department Manager/Elected Official and/or County Attorney's Office.

### **Reporting Violations**

The County requests and strongly urges employees to report any violations or possible violations of this policy to their supervisor, Human Resources or the County Attorney's Office.

### **Discipline for Violations**

The County will investigate and respond to all reports of violations of this policy. Violations will not be tolerated.

RECEIVED AND APPROVED AS  
TO FORM ONLY BY THE  
LARAMIE COUNTY ATTORNEY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.