

	<p>CHAPTER 6 EMPLOYEE CONDUCT</p>	<p>SECTION 6.19 SOCIAL MEDIA</p>
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1. PURPOSE

1.1 It is the intent of the City of Pearland to establish a policy regarding the use of internet-based Social Media tools, defined as a set of current and developing technologies that offer opportunities for electronic community interaction. City of Pearland departments may use social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to reach a broader audience to promote City programs and services. While the City’s website (pearlandtx.gov) is the City’s primary internet presence, the City recognizes that, when used appropriately, social media may be useful in furthering the goals of the City and various City departments.

1.2 This document provides standards and procedures for the use of social media sites. All official City presences on social media sites is considered extensions of the City’s information networks and are governed by the responsibilities set forth in this document. Violations of this policy shall be considered misconduct and may result in discipline up to and including indefinite suspension/termination.

1.3 Additionally, the City recognizes that many City employees use social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter in their personal lives. Therefore, this policy provides guidelines for City employees when they communicate on social media sites as a private citizen/resident.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1 To maintain the integrity of the City’s presence on social media and to ensure that social media is used appropriately and within City guidelines and policies.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 City Social Media Sites – Those pages, sections or posting locations on social media Web sites established or maintained by an employee of the City authorized to do so as part of the employee’s job and that are used to communicate with the public on City business.

Social Media – Internet-based technology communications with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation, and information sharing. These venues include social media networking sites, forums, weblogs (blogs, microblogs), online chat sites, and video/photo posting sites or any other such similar format. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Periscope and YouTube.

Posting – The act of creating, uploading, editing or adding to any social media outlet. This includes text, photographs, audio, video, or any other multimedia file.

Commenting – The act of creating and posting a response to a blog post, news article, social media entry or other social networking post. Commenting can also entail the act of posting an original composition to an unrelated post or article.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Communications Department staff members are the primary users/administrators of all social media accounts, but, may if necessary, provide department level access to other staff members if social media is deemed necessary to promote City programs or services. Each user/administrator is responsible for oversight of City of Pearland social media tools and shall:

4.1.1 Ensure the City social media sites are regularly maintained and kept current.

4.1.2 Review information posted to the City’s social media sites to ensure the content is appropriate, professional, and consistent with the City’s policies and the purpose for which the site exists. Frequent review is required for sites that provide opportunity for comment or other interaction.

4.1.3 City employees whose official duties include creating or posting information to a City social media site are responsible for ensuring that such information is accurate, professionally presented, respectful, relevant, and on topic with the department’s mission and in line with the City of Pearland’s Core Beliefs. Care must be taken to ensure that grammar and spelling are correct. Mistakes must be corrected quickly.

5. OVERSIGHT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

5.1 City social media sites may contain information that represents or appears to represent the City’s position on policy issues or matters affecting City business and/or the position of City leaders. Thus, the Communications Department has general oversight of all City social media sites. Other City staff members will be provided access on an as-needed basis.

6. DESIGN AND CONTENT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

6.1 Design elements (logos, backgrounds, images) should be appropriate in subject matter and consistent with the City overall branding.

6.2 Social media sites must contain a link to the city website (pearlandtx.gov), and the City departmental webpage (if applicable). Departmental social media pages will be limited and only allowed if the department has a significant amount of regular content. Each City and departmental webpage shall contain a clear statement of the purpose and subject matter of social media sites.

6.3 All users/administrators will use proper grammar and where possible, avoid jargon. Social media tools are often more casual than most communications tools, but all City social media such as Facebook and Twitter shall represent the City appropriately and professionally.

6.4 The following statement shall be included on each departmental website following the City department or program description of the purpose of the social media site or tool:

6.4.1 [Insert name or department or program] is a department [or program] of the City of Pearland, pearlandtx.gov. This site is intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and [department/program] on the listed topics. All content of this site and all comments submitted to this page and its lists of fans/followers are public and subject to disclosure pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act. Public information requests must be directed to the City of Pearland City Secretary's office.

6.4.2 Departments may use their departmental logo on their social media tools. Where appropriate for a particular site, social media pages should include the City's logo. Page names should be descriptive of the department/division. City departments will create "fan pages" in Facebook, rather than "groups" or "individual" pages. For "type" description "government" will be used.

6.4.3 Departmental Twitter account biographies will read [City of Pearland, Department name] and contain a link to the department's web site. Where possible, departmental user names should begin with Pearland (@PearlandParks, for example).

6.4.4 All content-sharing activities, such as video-sharing, shall be in good taste, appropriate, and consistent with the City's policies.

6.5 Comments from the public are allowed on the City's social media sites and shall be monitored daily to ensure the comments meet certain criteria; the City's social media sites must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of the City rather than creating a "public forum." Administrators of all City social media accounts will not engage with repeated posters. Every effort will be made to move conversations offline to avoid the appearance of a public forum. Social media websites that allow comments must contain the following text on the social media site or must include a link to the location on the departmental web site containing the following text:

6.5.1 "Comments. The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in the City of Pearland, Texas. We encourage you to submit comments, but please note that this is not a public forum. Comments posted to this page will be monitored. The City reserves the right to delete comments that: contain false information, obscene language or sexual content, threaten or defame any person or organization, support or oppose political candidates, political organizations or ballot propositions, promote illegal activity, commercial services or products, infringe on copyrights or trademarks or are not topically related to the particular posting."

6.5.2 Information that is proprietary, subject to the attorney-client privilege or state or federal privacy laws, and information not subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act shall not be posted on any City social media site. All City staff/administrators shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this rule.

7. RECORDS RETENTION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

7.1 Records Retention. Pursuant to Section 441.158 of the Texas Government Code, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission promulgates records retention schedules for records of local governments. Each City department has a schedule and policy for retention of its records. The retention period for a record depends on the content of that record, regardless of the medium in which it is maintained. Departments maintaining a City social media site or using social media tools shall preserve records on a City server for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Further, departments will destroy, transfer, or otherwise dispose of records in accordance with records disposition schedules.

7.2 Open Records. City of Pearland social media sites are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA), found in Ch. 552, Texas Government Code. Content in City social media, including a list of subscribers and posted communications, is public record. The department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public information requests for information on social media. Content shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request. Difficulty in accessing the information does not excuse compliance with the TPIA. Users of City social media sites shall be notified that public information requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public information officer.

8. APPROPRIATE EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

8.1 City resources, work time, social media tools, and a City employee's official position shall not be used for personal profit or business interests or to participate in political activity. For example, a building inspector may not use the City's logo (or its likeness), email, or work time to promote a side business as a plumber.

8.2 Personal or business venture social media account names shall not be tied to the City. For example, CityofPearlandFireman would not be an appropriate personal account name.

8.3 If commenting on City business, employees should use a disclaimer, which establishes that their comments represent their own opinions and do not represent those of the City of Pearland.

8.4 Employees may not attribute personal statements or opinions to the City when engaging in private blogging or postings on social media sites.

8.5 Employees, City contract employees, and City volunteers shall not use their City email account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking site.

8.6 City employees, contract employees for the City, and City volunteers shall not post images, files, or text depicting City property, equipment, or personnel in any manner that would adversely affect the reputation of the City or a City department.

8.7 Use common sense when using social media sites. Remember that what you write is public, may be public for a long time, and may spread to large audiences. Refrain from posting information that you would not want your supervisor or other employees to read or that you **would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper or on television.**

9. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

8.1 Boards or commissions that wish to initiate the use of official social media sites should do so by formal action of the board or commission and must follow requirements for approval and governance outlined in this policy.

8.2 Under the Texas Open Meetings Act, individual members of a board or commission covered by such Act are prohibited from participating in postings or discussion threads on social media sites created and maintained by the board or commission of which they are a member.