

**Policy Title**

Social Media

**Control Number**

HR010

**Policy Date**

04/02/2018

**Revision Date**

New

**Purpose**

To establish the approval process for utilizing social media for County-related communications; to provide usage guidelines for employees responsible for social media content; and to establish appropriate practices for employee personal social media use as related to representation of the County

**Scope**

All Scotland County Employees, Board Members, Elected Officials, Volunteers, Interns and Consultants

**General Policy Statements**

Social Media refers to communication tools and resources similar to, but not all-inclusive, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.

The County's primary means of internet communication is through our Scotland County Website. In addition, the County has established the Scotland County Facebook page, the Scotland County Twitter page, and the Scotland County Mass Notification System as resources that may be engaged for communication. Individual Departments may request specific social media tools as part of their strategic communications to targeted populations.

Social media should be used in ways to maximize transparency while maintaining the security of County networks and information.

Appropriate use will be legal, ethical, and professional for the furtherance of the County's mission and goals. It should reflect community values, uphold the County's reputation, and maintain public confidence.

Scotland County reserves the right to terminate any social media site at any time without notice. The County Manager has the authority to change, modify, or amend all or parts of this policy at any time, with notification to the Board of Commissioners.

**Approval Requirements/Guidelines**

The County Manager will serve as final approver for all social media resources, even those specific to a department or agency. No form of social media that is designed to "disappear" within a defined timeframe will be allowed, (i.e. Snapchat).

Departments will make a request for this approval prior to the go-live date of a new social media resource. This request should include the following elements:

- Clearly define intention of the resources; how does it fit the strategic plan
- Targeted audience
- Type of content to be communicated via the resource



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- Account responsibilities: who will manage the resource, who will post content, who will monitor the page to ensure inappropriate communications or links have not been added

Departments should maintain a record of social media resources including the media site, account ID, password, registered email address, date established, person creating account and staff with authorized access. There must be a business necessity for employees to have access to social media on County computers or devices.

The department initiating the social media tool is responsible for updating information, monitoring content, and responding to site users, except for public information requests.

Department use of social media may be audited to ensure policy compliance.

#### **County Social Media: Appropriate Use**

Content should be by “push method” from the County. Social media will not be used in a manner that allows the public to post comments through a social media platform, as this may inadvertently create a public forum. Social media may invite or solicit public feedback through a non-public manner. Non-Public feedback may be through County contacts (phone or email), website form, or an anonymous survey.

All usage of social media shall follow any applicable local, state and federal laws.

Staff using social media on behalf of the County must exercise discretion before posting content. All information must be pertinent, useful, job-related, professional and appropriate to County Government. In addition, such information must be within the employee’s authority to share and distribute.

Employees must ensure that County proprietary information, confidential information, HIPPA protected information, and personal information about staff, clients, vendors, or the governing body, as well as copyrighted or trademarked materials, are not posted.

Posted content should be factual and accurate. If an administrator posts information outside his/her area of expertise, the administrator should make that clear in the content.

Content and/or displayed contact information should be limited to employee name, County position and utilize County emails and County phone numbers for contact. Employees should never use pseudonyms or personal contact information.

Social Media administrators or others with access must not download or add applications to the County accounts that would be considered non-business tools, such as Farmville, Donate to a Cause, etc.



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Employees must never mix personal and professional social media accounts. Emails and passwords for social media sites must be distinctly separate from any personal account information.

County network login information should never be used for social media accounts.

Usernames and passwords may not be shared. Never allow external parties (vendors, consultants, etc) to post to County sponsored social media outlets on behalf of the County.

Employees with social media access, who terminate employment with the County, must be immediately removed from those respective sites.

Employees representing the County or a specific County Agency shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative of the County and in accordance with all County policies.

Employees will not use any County-sponsored social media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions or for personal gain; to engage in private business activities; to share personal information, or to express personal opinions.

County social media administrators are not allowed to post to their personal accounts during work hours. Never use the County account to interact with personal contacts.

Employees responsible for County social media must not perform such work beyond normal work hours unless given prior authorization by their manager or Department Head.

### **Content Guidelines**

Content refers to verbiage (words, articles, posts) photographs or graphics, and hyperlinks.

Whenever possible, content posted to social media sites should also be available on the County's website or contain links directly to the County's website.

All social media sites must contain hyperlinks directing users back to the Scotland County website and or Agency webpage for in-depth information, forms, documents, and online services.

Postings to County social media sites shall not contain any of the following:

- County related information that is confidential and non-public
- Comments that are not topically related to a specific posting
- Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or election process
- Religious information

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- Attempts to fundraise
- Content that would reasonably be considered pornographic, obscene and defamatory in nature
- Content that promotes or advocates violence or illegal activities
- Profane or vulgar language
- Content that promotes or perpetuates discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, regard to public assistance status, as well as any other category protected by federal, state or local laws
- Sexual content or links to such sites
- Solicitations of commerce or promotion of private business enterprises
- Information that compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Content that appears to violate the legal ownership interest of any other party
- Content that violates the site's terms of service

Content guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink on all social media sites. Any content removed must be retained, including the time, date and identify to the poster, if available.

Content may only be deleted if it violates the guidelines of this policy. Content may not be removed or censored just because the comments are critical of personnel, departments/services, or any other aspect of government, or because you personally disagree.

**Photo or Image Usage**


Any photographs or videos using identifiable images of local residents, especially those under age 21, are required to have a signed release form. Where registration is required for events, an image release clause may be included on the registration form.

**Platform Restrictions**Facebook

Facebook accounts should be set up as a business/organization account. The page should be set up to utilize the "likers", not "friends" as typically used in a personal account. Make sure privacy settings are stringent so that you do not allow postings by "likers". Please note that "likers" can post in response to your postings. These comments must be maintained as a public record.

Twitter

Followers can respond to you and you are NOT able to delete their postings. Replies may not appear on your Twitter page, but the public can search and find such replies.

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YouTube

When uploading videos, you may choose the option “not” to allow public comments on the video. Image releases required on any videos with identifiable persons.

Other Media Outlets

Before selecting a social media outlet, research the options to ensure public comments are not allowable. No form of social media that is designed to “disappear” within a defined timeframe will be allowed.

**County Representation: Personal Social Media Guidelines**


Employees have the right to personal social media accounts. These accounts should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information.

Employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not performing their job duties as County employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their personal use of social media as they are for any other public conduct.

Employees may use social media on their own personal time and personal computer resources as long as such use does not produce adverse consequences, such as described below. Employees should not publish any personal information about themselves, another employee, the organization, a citizen, or a customer in any public medium that:

- Has the potential effect of involving the employee, their coworkers, or the County in any kind of dispute or conflict with other employees or third parties.
- Negatively impacts their ability to perform their jobs, or violates and board policy, administrative procedures, local, state, or federal law.
- Interferes with the work of any employee.
- Creates a harassing, demeaning, or hostile working environment for any employee, or anyone associated with or doing business with the County.
- Disrupts the smooth and orderly flow of work, or the delivery of services to the County’s citizens.
- Harms the goodwill and reputation of the County among its citizens or in the community at large.
- Erodes the public’s confidence in the County organization, or
- Tends to place in doubt the reliability, trustworthiness, or sound judgment of the person who is the originator or subject of the information.

Employees shall refrain from personal social media use during business hours. Such used should be reserved for breaks, lunch or other designated time when the employee is not operating within paid work hours.

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Employees may not use County computers or devices to access their personal social media accounts.

Employees are expected to refrain from comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates, or election processes that could damage the integrity of County operations.

Photographs or other depictions of County buildings, vehicles, uniforms, emblems, or the County seal shall not be used on employee on personal social media.

Employees may be legally responsible for content they post and held personally liable for defaming others and/or revealing confidential information.

If an employee's personal social media presence shows an apparent connection to Scotland County, he or she is to make clear that the views expressed on the media platform do not represent the views of the County.

County email accounts or passwords should never be used in conjunction with personal social media sites.

Employees should never link to their personal sites from a County-approved social media site.

Employees should never use their personal social media accounts to interact with County or County-related business contacts.


Employees should have no expectation of privacy on while using social media. Postings can be viewed by anyone. The County reserves the right to lawfully and respectfully monitor social media for compliance with County policies.

### **Mass Notification System**

Scotland County has implemented an emergency mass notification system. This system may be used to contact employees, as well as citizens, in the case of an emergency. The system utilizes telephone (landline and mobile), text messaging, and/or email to provide information.

The Mass Notification System will be used at the County's discretion for emergencies and important information. Though not all-inclusive, the follow are examples of situations which may activate this process.

- Emergency Management Information
- Security Alerts
- Hazardous chemical spill or release
- Evacuations

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- Hazardous Weather Information
- General information pertinent to the Community

This system will not be used for advertisements, personal or political messages.

### Freedom of Expression

The County recognizes that all employees have a constitutional right to freedom of speech. However, County employees are liable and accountable for all works and forms of expression exhibited during the performance of official County duties.

County employees are expected to recognize the difference between freedom of expression as a general citizen and freedom of expression as a public employee.

### Public Records and Retention

Content posted via social media platforms is considered public record. There is no expectation of privacy. All sites are subject to the State of North Carolina public records statues. Information on social media sites has little or no historical value; therefore, content will not be retained in most cases. However some exceptions may apply and retention will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### Training Requirements

All personnel who administer, monitor or update content must be trained. Online training is offered through the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Website ([www.records.ncdcr.gov](http://www.records.ncdcr.gov))

Training should include the following elements:


- types of information allowed and NOT allowed for sharing
- security awareness; risks of information disclosure; various attack mechanisms
- any privacy requirements or restrictions

### Disclaimers

The follow disclaimers must be made available on any social media resources.

### Public Records

This is the official [ input social media outlet name ] for Scotland County, North Carolina, [ input department ]. The purpose of this site is to provide Scotland County residents and visitors with information about the County and County activities. This page is updated as needed and may not be regularly monitored for questions or comments. Any communications posted on this page may be subject to the North Carolina Public Records law.

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We value your comments and questions, but Scotland County may not be able to address all of them through this site. Please visit [www.scotlandcounty.org](http://www.scotlandcounty.org) for contact information. You may submit comments and/or questions through [\[ input link to non-public feedback method \]](#)

### Content

Scotland County uses a variety of media forms to communicate to the public in an accurate, timely and open manner. The County has a [\[ input social media outlet name \]](#) page as one way to provide communication. The County welcomes participation and feedback from the public on this site through non-public methods.

The County reserves the right to delete unacceptable submissions that violate the “Content Guidelines” below. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- County related information that is confidential and non-public
- Comments that are not topically related to a specific posting
- Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or election process
- Religious information
- Attempts to fundraise
- Content that would reasonably be considered pornographic, obscene and defamatory in nature
- Content that promotes or advocates violence or illegal activities
- Profane or vulgar language
- Content that promotes or perpetuates discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, regard to public assistance status, as well as any other category protected by federal, state or local laws
- Sexual content or links to such sites
- Solicitations of commerce or promotion of private business enterprises
- Information that compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Content that appears to violate the legal ownership interest of any other party
- Content that violates the site’s terms of service

### Disciplinary Action

Any violations of this policy and/or other inappropriate use of County sponsored social media platforms may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If an employee’s use of personal social media creates any adverse consequences as described in this policy, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.