

OKALOOSA COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

Okaloosa County (“County”) has and will continue to utilize social media as a means to disseminate information and increase public awareness of the County and its programs, policies, and services. The policy set out herein is intended to provide for the responsible and appropriate use of social media in furtherance of this purpose.

This policy concerning the use of “social media” as defined herein, shall apply to all agents, employees, volunteers, and contractors in communicating through social media on behalf of the County or pertaining to County business. Policies governing the creation and use of personal Social Media pages, sites, platforms, or profiles by County employees are also set out herein. This policy does not apply to personal Social Media sites of Commissioners of the County.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.

As used herein, the following terms shall have the following meanings, except where the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“County Social Media Site” shall mean any Social Media that is established, endorsed, or funded by the County by its officers, employees, agents, volunteers, or contractors, but shall not include personal Social Media sites of Commissioners of the County and other County officers, employees, agents, volunteers, or contractors.

“Page Administrator(s)” shall mean the individual designated by the applicable County department director or the County Administrator, who shall be responsible for the administration, updating, and maintenance of a specific County Social Media Site.

“Social Media” shall mean and include blogs, websites, Facebook profiles/pages, X (formerly known as Twitter) feeds, Instagram, Threads, and related platforms available for the dissemination of information and viewing by the public.

SECTION 3. SUNSHINE LAW REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMISSIONERS OR OTHER BOARD MEMBERS UTILIZING COUNTY OR PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA.

Commissioners and members of County advisory boards, committees, or other public bodies who use County Social Media Sites or personal Social Media sites must exercise caution to comply with Chapter 286, Florida Statutes. Pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 286, Florida Statutes, Commissioners and members of County advisory boards, committees, or other public bodies must not engage in an exchange or discussion of matters with other members of the same board, committee, or public body via Social Media on matters that will foreseeably come before that board, committee, or other public body.

SECTION 4. CREATION OF COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES.

A. Only County employees, agents, volunteers, or contractors who have been authorized in writing by their respective County department directors or the County Administrator may create a County Social Media Site or otherwise communicate via Social Media on behalf of the County. No Social Media Site may be created on behalf of the County without first the review and approval of the County's Public Information Office (PIO) and County's Information Technology (IT) Department. The review by the PIO's office and IT Department shall be to eliminate redundancies across departments, as well as to confirm that such a site is permissible under the new laws of the State regulating social media sites.

B. Except as provided herein, no County agent, employee, volunteer, or contractor may create, manage, administer, or communicate through Social Media on behalf of the County or any of its departments.

SECTION 5. DESIGNATION OF PAGE ADMINISTRATOR(S).

A. Each County Social Media Site shall have at least one individual Page Administrator, who shall be responsible for the administration, updating, and maintenance of the designated County Social Media Site.

B. Each Page Administrator shall be required to undergo training. Such training shall be administered by the County Attorney's Office or other qualified person in conjunction with the Okaloosa County PIO's office and IT Department.

SECTION 6. USE OF COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES.

A. An authorized employee shall post the following on all County Social Media Sites:

1. The County Department's name.
2. Approved/official County logo or approved official secondary logos.
3. A County e-mail address or County telephone number for contact purposes.
4. Official department information, resources, calendars, events, and news.

B. County Social Media Sites may not be used by employees for the following:

1. To communicate political advertisements or electioneering communications concerning an issue, referendum, or other matters that may be subject to the vote of the electors. Provided, factual information concerning an issue, referendum, or other matter subject to the vote of the electors may be posted on a County Social Media Site if approved in advance by the County Administrator.

2. To communicate personal opinions unless approved in writing by the County Administrator.

3. To communicate irrelevant, impertinent, or slanderous information.

4. To communicate disparaging information pertaining to a fellow employee, an officer of the County, a County Department, a County Programs, Okaloosa County and/or the Board of County Commissioners or information that could be considered harassing, threatening, or defamatory.

5. To communicate, host, or transmit, regardless of the source, any of the following content: pornography; graphic or obscene content; content that promotes illegal activity; violations of copyrights and trademarks; content or remarks that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination against anyone on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, gender identity or sexual orientation; content that constitutes an imminent threat; threats of any kind, particularly toward any other user of the County and its members; the advocating of criminal acts or other illegal behavior; material that has the potential to compromise the public safety or the safety of the County's personnel; remarks that may be considered libel, made toward any person or organization; links to other third party sites, or external solicitations, advertisements, or other content that is commercial in nature; or information that is clearly inaccurate, unverified, and purposefully designed to mislead others.

C. Employee, agent, volunteer, or contractor personal e-mail addresses shall not be used when setting up County Social Media Sites. If necessary, the County's IT Department will create a unique e-mail address for Social Media use. A Social Media site user ID and password may only be given to an employee, agent, volunteer, or contractor who has been authorized to use that department's social media page. The County Administrator and the IT Department shall be provided with up-to-date log-in credentials and passwords for all County Social Media Sites.

D. Use of County Social Media Sites must not interfere with an employee's performance of his/her responsibilities or compromise the functionality of the department or County network.

E. At the discretion of the Page Administrator, County Social Media Sites may be structured to allow for two-way communication between the County and the Public. Where two-way communication is permitted, members of the general public may be allowed to post comments and other content which relates to the general purpose and subject matter of the site. In the event a Page Administrator elects to allow for two-way communication, the following terms of use shall be posted on the County Social Media Site:

Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners has created this page as a limited public forum for the purpose of providing the public with information and communication it believes is important or newsworthy, and in certain cases necessary related to the programs and services provided by Okaloosa County, Florida.

Please be aware that when engaging with Okaloosa County through social media, you agree to adhere to the following terms of use:

- Florida has broad public records laws. All postings on this page, including personal information, may be public records under Florida public records laws and all information is being preserved by the County.
- Please keep all comments and discussions on topic and related to the purpose of the page.
- The following are **expressly prohibited** as part of the County's content policy for the Social Media page:
 - pornography; graphic or obscene content; content that promotes illegal activity;
 - violations of copyrights and trademarks;
 - content or remarks that promote, foster, or perpetuate, discrimination against anyone on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, gender identity or sexual orientation;
 - content that constitutes an imminent threat;
 - threats of any kind, particularly toward any other user of the County and its members.
 - the advocating of criminal acts or other illegal behavior;
 - material that has the potential to compromise the public safety or the safety of the County's personnel;
 - remarks that may be considered libel, made toward any person or organization;
 - links to other third party sites, or solicitations, advertisements, or other content that is commercial in nature;
 - anything that is clearly off the intended topic of discussion;
 - information that is clearly inaccurate, unverified, and purposefully designed to mislead others; and
 - campaigning of any type, political or otherwise.
- Comments or posts violating the page's contents policy, as listed above will be removed. It is not the intent of the Okaloosa County to provide a venue or forum for the expression and/or posting of unlimited comments, videos, or links simply for the convenience of the public. Further, the County reserves the right to block access to our social media

pages to any user who consistently violates these guidelines without prior warning or notice.

SECTION 7. RETENTION OF RECORDS.

In accordance with Chapters 119 and 257, Florida Statutes, all communications made through Social Media regarding County business by County officers, agents, and employees, volunteers, or contractors and comments by the public on County Social Media Sites are public records and must be stored according to the retention schedule established by the Department of State. The Page Administrator must work with the IT Department to ensure proper archival.

SECTION 8. ABUSE OF COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES.

Inappropriate use or abuse of County Social Media Sites may subject employees, agents, volunteers, or contractors to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

SECTION 9. PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA SITES.

The County takes no position on employees' decision to participate in the use of social media networks. In general, employees who participate in social media are free to publish personal information without censorship by the County. However, employees must avoid posting information that could harm the County using the guidelines in this policy and listed below. County officers, employees, agents, volunteers, and contractors may create and utilize personal, non-County Social Media sites subject to the following:

- A. Each person is solely responsible for the content published on their personal Social Media site.
- B. Use of personal Social Media sites must be restricted and scheduled so as not to infringe upon an employee, agent, volunteer, or contractor's County duties and work productivity.
- C. Use of personal Social Media sites by employees on County equipment for personal use with no County purpose is prohibited.
- D. Employees are prohibited from disclosing confidential information on any social media network.
- E. Employees are prohibited from making statements about the County, their co-workers, partners, or agents that could be considered as harassing, threatening, or defamatory.
- F. Employees are prohibited from sharing any communication that engages in personal or sexual harassment, unfounded accusations, or remarks that could contribute to a hostile work environment (racial, sexual, religious, etc.) as well as any behavior not in agreement with the County's other policies and objectives.

G. Personal Social Media sites/pages shall not be represented as official County Social Media sites/pages or as representations of the views of the County or the County Board.

H. County's name, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and logos may not be posted on a personal Social Media site/page. However, an employee may list the County as their employer and/or use their County title for identification purposes. County employees that choose to identify themselves as such must affirmatively state in a conspicuous place and manner that the views expressed online do not represent the views of the County or the County Board. This is not intended to prohibit reflections of the County employee's work life, which may capture a County logo while wearing a County-issued uniform or standing near a County vehicle or building.

I. Communications on personal Social Media sites regarding County business or the duties and responsibilities of an elected official, employee, agent, volunteer, or contractor may be considered a public record under the definitions in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes. It is the sole responsibility of the officers, agents, employees, volunteers, and contractors who utilize personal Social Media sites to capture and save any communications received on the social media sites which relate to official County business and provide such communications to the public records custodian for the County so that such communications may be retained according to the retention schedule established by the Department of State.