

Town of Ponce Inlet Policy for Employee Use of Personal Social Media

2.0 Governance Policy

2.1 Policy

The Town understands that social media can be a beneficial and rewarding way for individuals to share information about themselves and interact with others and the public at large. However, Town Employees' statements on social media can result in disruption of the workplace and severe public scrutiny and backlash against the Town just as happens in a private workplace. This Employee Social Media Policy establishes guidelines for the personal use of social media by Town Employees in order to preserve Employees' First Amendment rights while also ensuring that the Town remains a healthy and productive workplace.

2.2 Definitions

For purposes of this Policy:

Employee means a Town employee and does not include any elected or appointed officials or independent contractors.

Social media content or **content** means and includes any materials, documents, photographs, graphics, or other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted on a Social Media Channel.

Posts or Postings mean information, articles, pictures, videos of any other form of communication posted on a Social Media Channel.

Social Media Account means the legal arrangement with a social media provider to authorize use of a social media tool. For example, a Facebook account authorizes use of Facebook.

Social Media Tool means an online utility that provides for mass communication, such as message boards, web sites, and blogs. Specific examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. Social media tools may provide for one-way or two-way communication.

Social Media Channel means a specific social media platform available through a Social Media Account. For example, each Facebook Page opened through the establishment of a Facebook account is a Social Media Channel.

Personal Social Media Channel means a specific social media platform available through a Social Media Account managed by an Employee which is not associated with the Town, such as an Employee's personal Facebook page.

2.3 Standards

- A. Unless communicating via Social Media Channels is part of the Employee's official duties, an Employee may not present themselves as speaking on behalf of the Town. Employees commenting on the Town or its policies or services shall make clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity rather than an official capacity, and that their views do not represent those of the Town.
- B. Employees may not post regarding personal disputes within the workplace or between coworkers.
- C. Employees may not post malicious, obscene, or threatening material, or messages that would constitute harassment or bullying of a coworker or member of the public.
- D. Employees may not post information obtained through their employment with the Town which is confidential or exempt from disclosure under Public Records laws.
- E. Employees may not register for a personal Social Media Account using a Town email address.
- F. Employees have a right to comment freely on matters of public concern, however, the Employee may not do so in a manner that inordinately (1) impairs the maintenance of discipline by supervisors, (2) impairs harmony among coworkers, (3) damages close personal relationships, (4) impedes the performance of the Employee's duties, (5) interferes with the operations of the Town, or (6) abuses the authority or public accountability the Employee's role entails. Examples of posts that might violate this provision include:
 - 1. Attacking a Town official in a racially inflammatory manner;
 - 2. Attacking specific coworkers in reference to an official Town policy;
 - 3. A supervisor posting degrading information on an Employee under their direct supervision; and
 - 4. Posting a coworker's private information in reference to a public concern without their permission.
- G. Unless communicating via Social Media Channels is part of the Employee's official duties, an Employee may only post during work hours when the post (1) does not interfere with the Employee's work performance, (2) does not interfere with any other Employee's work performance and (3) does not violate any other provision of this policy or any other Employee policy of the Town of Ponce Inlet.
- H. Violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The Town reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.