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**STOREY COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**NUMBER: 017**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/20/18**  
**REVISED:**  
**AUTHORITY: BOC**  
**COUNTY MANAGER: \_\_PAW**

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA**

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**I. Policy**

This policy provides uniform guidelines by which information regarding Storey County activities, issues, initiatives, warnings, and general information will be disseminated using social media. This includes assessing and managing comments and replies, managing social media as a public record, and to provide guidance on the use of linking to Storey County’s public website. This policy also establishes guidelines for the use of social media for county employees. This policy applies to all county staff and officials including employees, supervisors, appointed and elected officials, administrators, and computer and network technicians (hereinafter “department heads”).

**II. Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to one’s own or someone else’s web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Storey County, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in Storey County policies and three basic beliefs apply to the employees’ activities online. Ultimately, the employee is solely responsible for what s/he posts online. Before creating online content, the employee must consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved, and keep in mind that any of the posted conduct that adversely affects job performance, the performance of fellow associates, or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of Storey County or county legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**III. Use of Social Media by Storey County and its Departments and Offices**

- A. All Storey County social media sites posted by department heads, or their designees, will be subject to approval by the County Manager.
  - 1. The following are Storey County’s official social media platforms:
    - a. Facebook

- b. Twitter
- c. Youtube
- 2. Storey County will use social media sites as a method to disseminate public information and as a promotional tool to increase the county's ability to broadcast its message to the widest possible audience.
- 3. Contents posted by county social media will also be available on the county website.
- 4. Wherever possible, contents posted to the county's social media should contain links directing users back to the county's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business in the county.
- 5. Storey County supports open dialogue and the exchange of ideas; however, the county's social media is and will be treated as a non-public forum for First Amendment purposes.
- 6. Given the immediate nature of social media, Storey County will take a controlled, strategic, respectful, and thoughtful approach to the use of social media to ensure information is current and appropriate and responsible to posts, constituents, requests, and questions that are accurate and timely.
- B. Department heads in accordance with this policy will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media the department creates. The County Manager or his/her designee is responsible for the dissemination of emergency management social media messages and warnings. Content related to crisis or emergency communications must conform to the policies and procedures contained within the relevant emergency operations plans. Public safety messages, warnings, and emergency alerts will be published on county owned and operated pages in order to ensure that contents are recorded.
- C. All county social media will comply with all appropriate county policies and procedures.
- D. All county social media will remain public in nature.
- E. The District Attorney's office, upon request, is responsible for reviewing the legal terms and conditions required for creating social media accounts and for determining what information is confidential, privileged, or otherwise exempt from public access and disclosure.

#### **IV. Employee Social Media Requirements**

- A. Storey County social media sites are subject to Nevada state public records laws.
  - 1. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Storey County business, including a list of subscribers and posted communications, is a public record.
  - 2. The department head maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media and must direct the public request to the relevant department public records person pursuant to the county's policies and procedures.
  - 3. Contents related to county business will be maintained in an accessible format and so that it can be produced in response to a request.

4. Wherever possible, such sites will indicated that any article and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
- B. Nevada state records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. Direct messages sent to social media accounts will be treated as general correspondence and kept in accordance with the retention schedule provide by the Nevada State Library and Archives (see <http://nsla.nevadaculture.org/>).
- C. All use of Storey County social media will comply with applicable state, federal, and local laws.

**V. Social Media on Behalf of Storey County**

A. Selection of Social Media Accounts:

1. The account must be accessible to anyone above the age of 18 and available free of charge to users. No site that limits access to service based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical ability may be used by Storey County.
2. Accounts set up for the purpose of communicating with the public on behalf of the county must be approved and created by the County Manager or his/her designee, designated public information officer, department head, and identified as a department of Storey County, Nevada, and use either the logo of Storey County, Storey County Fire Protection District, Storey County elected office (i.e., Assessor, Clerk/Treasurer, Recorder, Sheriff, Justice Court).

**VI. Content/Use by Others**

A. Information posted or pages created on behalf of Storey County must:

1. Directly pertain to Storey County, its departments or services;
2. Contain public information, which is not considered confidential under county, state, or federal laws or policies;
3. Not contain any personal information;
4. Images, photographs, sound, audio, and video of a public place, person in a public place, or public event participants may be published or posted as long as the media are associated with county news, public event, service, activity, program, or other affair of legitimate public interest or concern without the expressed permission of the person being imaged, photographed, audio recorded, or video recorded.
5. The administrator of the social media site must not post or publish the image or photograph on county social media if:
  - a. The photograph or recording would be highly offensive to a reasonable person; or
  - b. If the photograph or recording would intrude on a reasonable person's expectation of privacy (i.e., patient room, restroom, locker room, any other place traditionally associated with a legitimate expectation of privacy; or
  - c. If the photograph or recording is published solely for commercial or political purposes; or
  - d. If the photograph or recording depicts the person in a false light.

6. County social media posts may not be commercial or political in nature.
- B. Users and visitors of social media sites must be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between Storey County departments and members of the public. Storey County social media articles, posts, and comments containing any of the following are not allowed:
1. Comments not typically related to the administrator's posting;
  2. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
  3. Profane language or obscene content;
  4. Comments or information which promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;
  5. Sexual content or links to sexual content or other "adult" material;
  6. Conduct or encouragement of activities which are illegal or may appear to be illegal;
  7. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public, public facilities, Storey County systems, or county employees;
  8. Copyrighted material, trade secrets, proprietary information, or any other highly sensitive confidential information, or information which violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
  9. Solicitation of others for commercial ventures, religious, social, or political causes;
  10. Comments or information which is or could be controlled or prohibited by Storey County in a non-public forum;
  11. Comments or information which would otherwise violate state, federal, local laws, or violates county policies.
- C. Storey County reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.
- D. Storey County reserves the right to temporarily or permanently suspend access to social media at any time.

## **VII. Duties of the Designated Administrators**

- A. The County Manager or his/her designee, and the department head will appoint designated administrators, as set forth in this policy for their department's social media.
- B. The designated administrators must:
1. Post information on the social media site;
  2. Oversee and manage social media including authorization and approval of posts;
  3. Evaluate and accept or deny requests for usage (followers, friends, etc.);
  4. Authorize editors to use social media and confirm each employee's receipt, understanding, and duties pursuant to this policy;
  5. Maintain a list of social media, domains, activities, logins, and passwords;
  6. Change passwords if necessary in order to maintain control;

7. Consult with the county's Public Information Officer(s) and ensure that social media is archived;
  8. Login information, including user name and passwords, must be maintained in writing in a secure location in the department and submitted to the County Manager, as appropriate, regarding questions, posts, responses, and removal of information upon request;
  9. Coordinate with the County Manager and the Public Information Officer(s), as appropriate, regarding questions, posts, responses, and removal of information.
- C. The administrator will at all times ensure that all statements are official and made on behalf of Storey County. Discretion should be used before posting and commenting.
  - D. The administrator will at all times use his/her best judgement in deciding whether or not to respond to a post. The administrator will avoid engaging any person posting in an argumentative or offensive manner.
  - E. Posts or comments requiring a response should be answered within 16 work hours (2 work days). Whenever possible, responses should be made on the same day. If additional information is needed for a full response, a full response should occur within 5 work days.
  - F. The administrator must check the social media site for new activity and violations of this policy at least one time each week.
  - G. The administrator will immediately hide, or delete after archiving the material in accordance with Nevada records retention requirements, any comment which violates any local, state, or federal law regarding discrimination, harassment, or violence and posts from users that contain content that is obscene, threatening, harassing, maliciously defamatory, copyrighted, or commercial. The administrator must not respond to these materials on the social media site.
  - H. Third-party advertising will be removed or disabled from the county social media site. If this is not possible, a statement should be added to the effect that the county did not authorize nor does it endorse any advertising on the site.
  - I. Comments made to the site will not be edited or modified, but they may be removed in accordance with section (G) above.
  - J. Hyperlinks may be prohibited in their entirety, or they may be deleted or removed where the linked site includes materials which would otherwise violate this policy.
  - K. The county will not re-post entireties (e.g., "re-tweet") coming from persons who have filed as candidates for public office for the duration of their election campaign. The county will not re-post entries of those with objectionable profile pictures and otherwise whose activities reflect poorly on the county. The county encourages re-posting of content about county activities, services, and programs and content that aligns with the county's mission and goals (e.g., non-profits, other government agencies, etc.).

### **VIII. Terms of Service**

- A. The administrator must familiarize him/herself with the terms of service of each social media platform.
- B. Each social media site has its own unique terms of service that regulate how users interact using that particular form of media.

## **I. Use of Social Media by Employees**

The employee is expected to carefully read these guidelines as well as Policy 202 Anti-Harassment, Policy 204 Employee Bullying, Policy 209 Prohibition of Workplace Violence, and Policy 212 Code of Ethical Standards, and all policies pertaining to the use of county information technology resources, and to ensure that all postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The employee is advised to conform to the following on social media:

### **A. Be respectful.**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, members, businesses, residents, vendors and people who work on behalf of Storey County. Remain mindful that you are likely to successfully resolve work-related complaints and issues by speaking directly with co-workers or by utilizing the services of the Human Resources office, or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, members, associates or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or company policy.

### **B. Be honest and accurate**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Storey County and its associates.

### **C. Post only appropriate and respectful content**

10. Maintain the confidentiality of Storey County and its associates, customers, members, businesses, residents, vendors and people who work on behalf of Storey County which is sensitive and to remain confidential. Confidential information may include information regarding trade secrets, technology, processes, contact information, emergency procedures, security, and other such information about private businesses in the county; personnel and medical information of county employees and associates; emergency management and security processes of the county;

and other information that could result in the harm of the employer or its associates or breach of security and safety of the employer.

11. Respect financial disclosure laws. It is illegal to communicate or give a “tip” on inside information to others so that they may buy or sell stocks or securities. In Storey County as a public employer, this could apply to knowledge obtained in the line of duty about a private company doing business in the county.
12. Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a website, social media page, or other posted webpage of Storey County or its offices (e.g., Storey County Fire District, Storey County Sheriff’s Office, Storey County DA’s Office, or other affiliates) without identifying yourself as a Storey County employee.
13. Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for Storey County or its affiliates. If Storey County is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an associate and make it clear that your views do not represent those of Storey County or its affiliates.
14. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with Storey County or its affiliates, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of Storey County or its affiliates. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Storey County or its affiliates.”

#### **D. Using social media at work**

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment and/or network provided by the county, unless it is work-related as authorized by the department head, Administrative Officer and/or Personnel Director, and the County Manager, or consistent with county policies. Do not use Storey County email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

#### **E. Retaliation is prohibited**

Storey County prohibits taking negative action against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any associate who retaliates against another associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **II. Communicating with the media**

Refer to Policy 031 Media Relations for any communication with the media.

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:** This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Information Technology Director.