



City of Ridgefield Social Media Policy

PURPOSE

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, City of Ridgefield may use social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

This policy outlines the City's interest in maintaining a presence on social media sites, establishes guidelines for employees who are responsible for maintaining the City's presence on social media sites, and identifies the type of information that is appropriate and not appropriate for posting on social media. (The City maintains a separate policy relating to its website.)

POLICY

The goals of City of Ridgefield social media sites are to increase the public's knowledge, trust, and use of City services; promote the value and importance of City services among and between governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public; and maintain open, professional and responsive communication with members of the public and the news media.

This policy relates only to the formation and management of the City's social media accounts. It does not include guidelines for employee use of personal social media accounts during work hours, nor does it include guidelines for employees who wish to make comments about work-related subjects from personal social media accounts. For more information about those issues, please contact the City's Human Resources Department to review Employment Policy #306.

OWNERSHIP

All social media communications composed, sent, or received on City equipment are the property of the City. While the social media sites are administered by the City, the content on the sites is not entirely controlled by the City. The City will do its best to prevent usage of its social media sites by commercial interests and City does not endorse any links or advertisements on its social media sites posted by companies or individuals outside of the City.

CREATING AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The City will comply with the following guidelines for the creating and maintenance of City social media accounts:

1. Creation of any new City of Ridgefield social media account or proposed use of any new social media tools/programs must first be approved by the City Manager or designee.



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2. The City will maintain citywide accounts on various platforms that will be used to disseminate City news and information.
3. City Communication staff designated by the Deputy City Manager will be given full administrative access to all social media accounts/pages. Communication staff will have sole access for all updating, managing, and monitoring all social media postings on the City's approved social media platforms.

For each social media tool approved for use by the City the following documentation will be developed and adopted:

1. Operational and use guidelines.
2. Standards and processes for managing accounts on social media sites.
3. City branding and design standards to clearly identify the site. City branding, including the City logo, will not be authorized for social media accounts that are not operated by or on behalf of the City.
4. Standards for the administration of social media sites.

SOCIAL MEDIA, CITY BRAND AND TRADEMARKS

All City social media sites will be clearly branded so that it is easy to identify ownership. Any general City account should be named "City of Ridgefield" and include a profile picture should be the full color city logo. Sites operated by any organization or individual outside of the City of Ridgefield are not permitted to use the City logo or branding.

Sites created for special events and purposes may have separate branding standards. However, descriptions must clearly indicate the site is operated by the City of Ridgefield.

City social media sites may not use copyrighted or trademarked material without first obtaining permission and providing proper attribution.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE CITY'S WEBSITE

The City of Ridgefield's website (RidgefieldWa.us and RidgefieldRoundtable.org) will remain the City's primary and predominant Internet presence.

Social media tools shall generally be used:

1. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
2. As marketing/promotional channels which increase the City's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

Wherever possible, content posted to City of Ridgefield social media sites will also be available on the City's website.



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Wherever possible, content posted to City of Ridgefield social media sites should contain links directing users back to the City's website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Ridgefield.

Social media should be used primarily as a “mega-phone” for releasing information to the community. Residents and users will be directed to utilize more direct forms of communication when they have a question or complaint.

The Communications Specialist will be responsible for the content and upkeep of all social media sites.

USE OF THE CITY'S WEBSITE: ETHICS

All City of Ridgefield social media sites shall comply with appropriate City policies and standards, including but not limited to:

- Employment Policy #201: Core Ethics Policy
- Employment Policy #305: Use of Computers, Internet, E-Mail and other Technological Resources

City of Ridgefield social media sites shall comply with all applicable ethics and elections codes and administrative rules.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Private social media accounts of elected and appointed officials may be deemed “public” if the account contains content and/or posts related to their role as a public official. If an account is “public,” the following guidelines apply:

1. Comments/posts on the account may be subject to public disclosure.
2. The account is subject to the same rules on whether/when government can restrict free speech. Therefore, if the account includes a post that may be relevant/related to City business, responsive posts and comments may not be deleted.
3. Campaign information should be published on a separate account.
4. The Open Public Meetings Act applies to social media interactions just as it does to in-person or phone interactions. And, a meeting can occur electronically with a ‘rolling’ quorum. Therefore, a discussion of City business should not occur with whatever number constitutes a quorum for City Council or the advisory body.

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUIREMENTS



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City of Ridgefield social media accounts are subject to State of Washington public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The City will respond to any public records request for social media as required by Washington public records laws.

Social media accounts/pages shall clearly indicate that any articles or other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.

Washington state law and relevant City of Ridgefield records retention schedules apply to social media accounts and content. Unless otherwise addressed in a specific social media standards document, the City shall preserve records for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record.

TERMS OF USE AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Discussion boards and the ability to post directly on a City social media page/wall shall be disabled unless approved in writing by the City Manager or designee.

Users and visitors to the City's social media sites will be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a means of communication between the City and the community at large and that the "Terms of Use" are as follows:

1. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Ridgefield social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and the publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of Ridgefield, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Ridgefield.
2. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. However, the City of Ridgefield is not obligated to take such actions, and the City disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials that the City deems inappropriate for posting, which are not removed.
3. By posting a comment, users agree to indemnify the City of Ridgefield, its officers and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred which arise out of or are related to content posted by users.
4. If a user does not agree to these terms, the individual should not use the City of Ridgefield's social media sites as a violation of these terms may lead to legal liability.
5. The City does not guarantee the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of external links, websites or content linked to a City social media site.

All comments posted to the City's social media sites will be monitored. Posts and comments made to City social media accounts containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed and may be hidden or removed at the sole discretion of the City:

1. Links to any unrelated external website or social media site;
2. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;



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3. Content that 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;
4. Threats to any person, group or organization;
5. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
6. Solicitations of commerce;
7. Multiple copies of the same comment, or repetition of substantially similar comments
8. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
9. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems, including content that may pose a security risk to City computer information systems; or
10. Content that violates or appears to infringe upon a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The City reserves the right to hide or remove any content with or without notice to the author. The City also reserves the right to ban or block any user who violates the guidelines listed in this policy more than once.

Any content removed based on these guidelines will be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster (when available) in accordance with the City's policy on the retention of such information.

CITY RESPONSE TO ON-LINE COMMENTS

Communications staff will monitor and evaluate social media metrics on a regular basis. Engagement data and public feedback will be used to continuously improve the use of social media sites.

Communications staff will monitor social media sites and respond to messages and comments, as necessary, during regular work hours. Comments on the City's social media accounts will not be considered an official request to the City and will not constitute legal notice to the City of a public record request, premises hazard, police incident, etc. The City provides alternate communication channels for this purpose.

These guidelines will be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink (see standards for text). Any content removed based on these guidelines will be retained for the period of time required by state and/or federal law including the time, date and identity of the poster when available.

The City reserves the right to terminate City social media sites at any time without notice. The City Manager or designee may direct the deletion of a social media account that is not being utilized, or is underutilized. The City may change, modify, or otherwise amend all or part of this Policy at anytime.