

COUNTY OF SAN BENITO, CALIFORNIA
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

CHAPTER:0500
County Social Media Participation Guidelines

Policy
Number:
2016-05-001

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PURPOSE:

The same standards, principles and guidelines that apply to County of San Benito employees in the performance of their assigned duties apply to our on-line activities. The County has an expectation that all employees will exercise personal responsibility whenever they participate in social media in his/her official capacity as a representative of the County and recognizes that the proper use of social media is another important tool available to improve communications with the public.

The following guidelines have been developed in conjunction with the County's Social Media Use Policy.

GUIDELINES:

1. Your social media involvement should add value to your agency/department
 - Value can be measured in many ways – furthering the accomplishment of your agency/departmental mission, helping to improve the public's knowledge of County services, building a sense of community, solve a problem, encourage civic engagement, and increasing operational transparency.
 - A social media application should not be used unless it serves a business purpose, comes from a trusted source and has been reviewed and approved for use.
2. Social media usage should support, not replace, the information found on County, Agency and Department websites
 - Content posted to social media sites should also be available on the County website and/or on Agency/Department websites
 - Content posted to social media sites should contain links directing users back to the primary County websites for in-depth information, forms, related documents or on-line services designed to facilitate business with the County.
3. Proper representation is a requirement
 - While you are posting information to a social media site in your role with the County of San Benito and as part of your designated job responsibilities, you should identify yourself in an appropriate manner as a County representative.
 - All posts will be made using a primary account, not any other personal account as the official spokesperson of the County.

- 4. Be thoughtful in how you present yourself on-line**
 - As informal as social media sites are meant to be, if they're on a government domain or a government identity, they are official government communications
 - Posts should use proper grammar and standard AP style whenever possible, minimizing the use of jargon and acronyms that may not be widely understood by the public.
- 5. Be cautious about not disclosing confidential or proprietary information**
 - Do not identify a partner or supplier by name or provide information that might be proprietary in nature without their knowledge and/or permission.
 - Ask permission to report on conversations that occur within your department
 - Never post information about policies or plans that have not been finalized unless you have received explicit permission
- 6. Show respect for others**
 - Respect the privacy of others and carefully consider the discussion of any topics that might be objectionable or inflammatory.
 - Do not use your departments social media presence to communicate among fellow County employees
- 7. Make sure what you say is factually correct**
 - If you are not certain of the accuracy of information, take all steps possible to check the facts before the information is published
- 8. Acknowledge your mistakes**
 - Be the first to correct your own mistakes. Timely correction of errors or inaccurate information is essential.
 - Once something is posted, it should stay posted. Only spelling errors or grammar fixes can be made without making the change evident to users. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so – do not remove or delete the incorrect content; provide the correct information and apologize for the error.
- 9. Exercise discipline**
 - Your on-line activities should not interfere with your job or your responsibility to the public and your co-workers.
- 10. Handle inquiries and negative comments promptly.**
 - Effective ways to handle negative comments include providing accurate information in the spirit of being helpful, respectfully disagreeing, and acknowledging that it is possible to hold different points of view.
 - Inappropriate Content, as defined in Social Media Policy 2016-07-

000, can be removed.

- Refer to the Response Considerations Chart provided to your Department for response options.

RELATED REFERENCES

1. County Social Media Use Policy (P2016-05-000)
2. Appropriateness of Content Policy (P2016-05-004)

SUNSET DATE

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 05/10/2023.

Version History:

Version Number	Change Request Number (if applicable)	Date	Author	Summary of Change	Effective Date
Original	NA	05/10/2016	IT	NA	Document originated