

CITY OF SUMMERSIDE
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES
UPDATED AUGUST, 2024



Policy Statement

The City of Summerside supports and promotes the use of social media as a tool to deliver effective and accessible communication about municipal news, programs and services to the community. Social media tools offer many benefits, including:

- Sharing information on programs, services, and news to a wide audience.
- Promote/market the municipality online to local, regional, national and international audiences.
- Disseminate time-sensitive information as quickly as possible; and
- Increase civic engagement by providing an additional tool for the public to communicate with the municipality.

Purpose

These guidelines serves to:

- Provide direction to those managing and administering corporate social media sites
- Protect the municipality's reputation.
- Provide employees and elected officials with clear usage guidelines.
- Provide protocol around monitoring, administration, acceptable use and privacy.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all employees of the City of Summerside and elected officials who make public statements on municipal social media sites and networks that discuss, share or comment on the City of Summerside. These guidelines also apply to members of the public who use, comment or post on City social media sites and social media sites and social networks.



Definitions

“Appointees” includes: individuals appointed to all City Committees or Boards (“Appointees”) by Council.

“Corporation” means The Corporation of the City of Summerside.

“Corporate Use” means management approved activity on any social media platform or account that is operated and maintained by the City.

“Council” or “Councillor” means the elected municipal council of the City of Summerside.

“Employee” means any person that is employed by the Corporation of the City of Summerside. This includes all classifications of employees (e.g., Permanent Full Time, Permanent Part Time, Seasonal, Temporary Casual, Student, Contract) “IT” means the Information Technology Department at the City of Summerside.

“Municipality” means the Corporation of the City of Summerside. “Personal Use” means an individual’s use of social media accounts on any social media platform at any time.

“Social Media” includes any forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, ideas, personal messages and other content. These include web-based sites that include blogging, micro blogging, photo sharing, video sharing, webcasting and networking.

“Social Media Account Staff” means the employee(s) of the City who have been designated to establish and administer social media channels, establish social media strategies and reporting, and serve as social media moderator.

“City” means the Corporation of the City of Summerside.



Social Media Management Responsibility

Municipal employees who participate in social media communication as social media moderators on behalf of the municipality must do so in accordance with the following employee expectations and responsibilities:

1. Use of an employee's municipal email address, communicating in an official capacity, or discussing municipal business on corporate social media sites will constitute conducting municipal business.
2. Use of Facebook Messenger and other social media platform messaging will be used to conduct City business.
3. Social media moderators shall at all times conduct themselves in a positive, professional, honest, ethical, and fair manner in accordance with these guidelines and related policies.
4. Social media moderators are expected, at all times, to conduct themselves in the best interest of the City.
5. Corporate responses to online postings, blogs, and discussion forums about municipal-related business will be coordinated by the Communication's Manager, with input from the appropriate staff member or department.

Any content that is deemed inappropriate or does not adhere to the social media guidelines must be immediately brought to the attention of the Communication's Manager or their delegate.

General Guidelines - Content Management Principles

Social media account administrators assigned from various departments using social media on behalf of the City will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, including:

- Post accurate, credible, and consistent information and links that are consistent with the Municipality's information, messages, brand identity, and policies.
- Post consistent content structure requirements in all social media posts as outlined by the Communications Team.
- Follow all content posting and branding guidelines set out by the Communications Manager.



- Strive for transparency and openness, including when deemed necessary, identifying their name and position within the City.
- Publicly correct any information in a reasonable time frame that has been communicated and found to be in error, using the same platform it was produced.
- Post content in a manner that is discreet, does not disclose confidential information or release personal or corporate information, without prior consent.
- Must not engage in offensive language, respond in a confrontational manner, or post content that is not professional or that contravenes Municipal policies.
- Must not use corporate accounts to express personal opinions or further personal or political agendas.
- Ensure proper protocols and permissions are obtained for posting any copyrighted material (including documents, websites, logos, images).
- Ensure security of social media accounts is maintained, including password and login information.
- A hyperlink to the City of Summerside Social Media Guidelines will be posted on the respective social media account/page where possible.

Content Standards - Post and Comment Guidelines

Comments made by the general public on City of Summerside social media sites will be monitored by municipal staff. The City of Summerside reserves the right to remove inappropriate posts and comments from its social media platforms. Comments will be removed if any of the following occur:

- Comments should relate to the posted topic; off-topic posts or comments may be deleted.
- Comments must not contain any personal information about another individual.
- Comments that disclose confidential information or compromise the impartiality or integrity of staff or Council.
- Defamatory statements, allegations, inferences, impertinent, disrespectful or improper matter will be deleted.
- Users may only post their own, original content. Reproduced or borrowed content that appears to violate trademark or copyright laws will be deleted.



- Threatening, offensive or harassing language is not permitted.
- Comments that constitute discrimination or harassment are not permitted. This may include, but is not limited to content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, nationality, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
- Comments that promote illegal or dangerous activities are not permitted.
- Comments that contain information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems are not permitted.
- Comments that present demeaning or derogatory portrayals of individuals or groups or contain any message that is likely to cause deep or widespread offense are not permitted.
- Comments promoting or endorsing any business for commercial gain are not permitted. Social media moderators will not engage in debate or arguments on social media channels, but will provide factual information, provide departmental contact and, if deemed necessary, the appropriate contact for municipal council will be provided.
- Comments not related to the topic and/or issue being commented upon will be removed.
- Account spamming, trolling or over posting is not permitted.

Posting on the City of Summerside social media accounts is an opportunity for residents to share thoughts and opinions on City programs and services. Expressing damaging type comments will not be tolerated.

The City reserves the right to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant or unproductive content (i.e. posts and comments) from social media accounts. The City of Summerside reserves the right to disable commenting on social media posts. If the user continues to post inappropriate, irrelevant, inaccurate or unproductive content, the City may ban/block the user from the site at the discretion of staff.



Live Streaming Community Standards and Guidelines (Commenting)

The City of Summerside reserves the right to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant or unproductive content (i.e. posts and comments) from our live streaming accounts such as YouTube and Facebook Live.

Commenters are individually responsible for the content of his or her comments. While the City of Summerside wishes for these sessions to be an open and honest forum, the City also requires comments to be courteous, to stay on topic, and not cause intimidation or offense; therefore, the City reserves the right to delete posts that may contain any of the following:

- Violent, obscene, profane, hateful, or racist posts, links, or images.
- Comments that threaten or defame any person or organization.
- Comments that are unrelated to the topic of the page or posts (for general comments or communications concerning a department, project, or service request).
- Solicitations, advertisements, or endorsements of any financial, commercial, or not-for-profit organizations.
- Comments promoting or opposing any person campaigning for election to a political office.
- Comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity or posting of material that violates copyrights or trademarks of others.
- Repetitive posts copied and pasted or duplicated by single or multiple users.

If a comment violates the above guidelines, or in any other way is deemed as inappropriate at the discretion of the moderator(s), the submission will be removed in its entirety from the site.

In addition, if repeated posts of the above nature are made by any individual, we retain the right to block that user from further activity on our official City of Summerside pages. The City of Summerside reserves the right to disable the comment section during live streaming.

NOTE: Third party social media sites such as YouTube are private businesses with their own terms of service and privacy policies. The City of Summerside does not accept any responsibility for the operation of third-party social media sites and is unable to guarantee the privacy of individuals who access content provided to such sites by the municipality.



Elected Officials (Members of Council)

Members of Council are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts, while respecting the Conduct of Members of Council, as outlined in the City of Summerside Council Code of Conduct Bylaw CS-3.

Members of Council are encouraged to follow the official municipal sites and to share content. Council and committee/board members must ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright and data protection laws are adhered to, and must not make comments that are considered defamatory or libelous.

Council and committee/board members may not use municipal logos, slogans or intellectual property on their own accounts without prior written authorization of the CAO or designate.

The City of Summerside will not intercede on behalf of Members of Council for items members post on their own social media accounts. In the case where a member shares erroneous information about municipal decisions, services, etc., the CAO or their designate will bring their matter to the attention of the member directly, with the expectation the member will correct the error as soon as possible. Elected officials should avoid commenting on social media about ongoing police investigations, legal issues, and contract negotiations. This helps prevent the spread of misinformation, maintains the integrity of these processes, and ensures that sensitive information is not prematurely disclosed. By exercising restraint, officials can preserve public trust and allow the appropriate authorities to manage these matters without undue influence or interference. In addition, elected officials should refrain from posting internal emails from staff on their personal social media pages (until that information has been released to the public). The Codes of Conduct are applicable to Members at all times. Accordingly, even if a Member does not use social media in an intentionally professional capacity for their duties as a Member, they are still regarded as public representatives in any interactions they may have and may be held accountable for their conduct pursuant to their respective Code. This is heightened when Members of Council and Local Boards self-identify with their public titles in using social media and when Members in general use social media to communicate with constituents.

The Code of Conduct requires members to be respectful of the role of staff to provide professional and politically neutral advice. Members should not use social media to engage in criticism of municipal staff. The public nature of social media can increase the risk of harming the professional and ethical reputation of municipal staff. City of Summerside social media pages will not be used for political purposes of elected officials.



Personal Use of Social Media - Employees of the City of Summerside

While the City of Summerside recognizes the popularity of social media, certain guidelines must be observed to protect the municipality, its ratepayers and staff. All City employees must ensure the following:

1. You may not use municipal logos, slogans or intellectual property without prior written authorization from the Marketing, Communications & Public Relations Division. Employees with permission to use municipal logos, slogans, or intellectual property shall cease to do so if they are no longer employed with the City of Summerside.
2. Your participation in any social networking site must not impact your role at the municipality and must in no way harm the municipality's reputation.
3. The use of social media devices including personal cameras, cell phones, audio recording devices, etc. shall not be permitted to be used by municipal staff at emergency scenes. Confidential sensitive information that is intended to be kept private shall not be posted to any social media channel and or website. The Communications division will work with the Chiefs of Emergency Services (SPS & SFD) to coordinate proper posting of materials from an emergency incident.
4. City employees should avoid commenting on social media about ongoing police investigations. This helps protect the integrity of the investigations, prevents the spread of misinformation, and ensures that sensitive information remains confidential.

Violation of Guidelines

All City of Summerside employees, elected officials and other delegates who engage in social media, whether for work or for personal use, must ensure they do not divulge private and/or confidential information related to the City of Summerside, its clients, its affiliates, and/or its employees.

City of Summerside employees may be disciplined for conduct which violates these guidelines, including, but not limited to, comments, or postings on social media, including non-work time use of social media, that:

- Adversely affect the employee's job performance.
- Affects the job performance of others with the City of Summerside.
- Negatively impacts the reputation of the City of Summerside.
- Affects the City of Summerside's legitimate business interests.
- Are inappropriate in nature (which may include those that are malicious, defamatory, libelous, slanderous, threatening, or discriminatory) or might constitute harassment.
- Are threats of violence, inappropriate, or unlawful.



External Promotion - Criteria for Promoting Community Events or Residential Requests

The City may choose to share information about community events on the City's social media. The City reserves the right to refuse or remove any event-related information at any time, without notice.

Those events must meet the relevancy and approval of the Communications Team as well as it must meet the minimum (over 50%) of the following criteria:

- Events/activities must be open to the general public.
- The City of Summerside is a direct partner or sponsor of the event/activity and recognized as such with their brand displayed directly on the content wishing to be shared.
- Organized by a government partner of the City (Government of PEI, Government of Canada, etc).
- Organized by a group that is affiliated with the City.
- Organized by a charitable organization that has a registered charitable number OR service club.
- Located in a facility that is owned and/or operated by the City.
- Recognition of local individual / group achievements in sport and culture - These will be considered on a case by case basis. Requests made for individual community member recognition must be from a national or international sport or cultural organization. Requests for individual recognition should include the individual's name, a description of the achievement, and any supporting documentation.

Event organizers are encouraged to advise the City about upcoming public events / activities at least three (3) weeks before the event date so that proper review and planning from Communications staff can take place. The details and draft content are to be provided by the individual or organization making the request. The City of Summerside reserves the right to alter content to fit the City's templates or refuse a submission without explanation.

Organizations wishing to have their information considered for sharing by the municipality are encouraged to tag the municipality in their posts. Note, not all posts that the City of Summerside is tagged in will be shared or liked by the municipality. The Communications division will determine its relevance, appropriateness and timing of the content on a post per post basis.

The main city accounts do not share messages that could show political, partisan or business favoritism.



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