
TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy No.	78
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Resolution No.:	12-145

PURPOSE

Town of Bridgewater employees use the internet in the course of their work as well as during their private time. Social media provides a useful means for Town employees to communicate with each other, with community partners and with citizens.

This policy outlines the standards and principles of communicating in the online world when it relates to discussing, sharing or commenting on Town of Bridgewater business. It serves to:

1. Encourage clear, effective, appropriate and professional communication by Town of Bridgewater employees with respect to the use of social media tools.
2. Provide a framework for social media use to guide departments and employees authorized to communicate on behalf of the Town of Bridgewater.
3. Provide guidelines for employees and Councillors who may choose to discuss, share or comment on Town business on their personal social media sites or networks.

DEFINITIONS

“Personal Information” means information about an identifiable individual recorded in any format that may include: race; national or ethnic origin; color; religion; age; sex; sexual orientation; marital status; education; medical, criminal or employment history; religious or political beliefs or associations; financial transactions; identifying number or symbol; address; fingerprints; blood type; personal email address; and name where it appears with other personal information; picture; personal views.

“Social media” means the online technologies and practices that are used to share information and opinions and build relationships. It can involve a variety of formats, including text, pictures, video, audio and real-time dialogues. It includes, but it not exclusive to, such things as social networks, discussion forums, blogs, wikis and podcasts.

“Town” means the corporation of the Town of Bridgewater.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

The CAO or designate(s) will monitor content on Town social media sites to ensure appropriate use, messaging and branding that is consistent with the Town of Bridgewater Social Media Policy and other applicable policies.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all social media communication by Town of Bridgewater employees, Councillors and committees.

PROCEDURES

General

1. The Town of Bridgewater website will remain the primary online tool for Town information, and where possible, social media sites will contain links to direct users to the Town's website for complete information and access to forms and other online services.
2. All use of social media sites and services by the Town of Bridgewater will adhere to applicable provincial and federal laws, regulations and policies and the Terms of Service on each site.
3. The use of the Town of Bridgewater's name, logo, official marks and other forms of intellectual property owned by the Town, without permission, is prohibited.
4. The Town will maintain a series of corporate accounts on various social media tools. Final approval for the corporate use of new social media tools and/or new accounts on social media sites already in use by the Town will be the responsibility of the CAO or designate.
5. The values and vision expressed in Bridgewater Council's Community Plan and Town of Bridgewater professional standards will be reflected in all content.

Administration

6. The CAO or designate will maintain a list of all social media tools which are approved for official Town of Bridgewater use, including login and password information.
7. Whenever permitted by a social networking tool, the official Town of Bridgewater account will be fully accessible by a minimum of two Town employees.
8. The Town of Bridgewater presence on social media is considered an extension of the Town's communications functions and is governed by relevant Town policies and administrative procedures.
9. The CAO or designate will coordinate social media use across departments to enhance effectiveness and ensure consistency and reliability in content and delivery.
10. A designated social network content moderator will review the Town's social networking sites a minimum of two times daily.
11. Corporate responses to online postings, blogs or discussion forums about Town-related business will be coordinated by the CAO or designate.
12. Town employees using any social media are governed by all Town of Bridgewater poli-

cies and procedures and applicable provincial and federal legislation affecting protection of privacy, records capture and retention and website/internet use.

13. The Town of Bridgewater will readily disclose its identity on social media sites. Town spokespeople involved in communicating Town business will disclose their employment or association with the Town.
14. Employees representing the Town as social media content moderators must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with this policy and all other Town of Bridgewater policies.

Content

15. Updates to social media sites, pages, accounts and channels being used for Town business will be created and posted by a designated social networking moderator.
16. Where possible, all social networking sites will clearly indicate that they are maintained by the Town of Bridgewater and will have the Town of Bridgewater logo or other approved image and contact information displayed.
17. Town of Bridgewater social networking sites will include an introductory statement that clearly specifies what content is unacceptable and will be subject to removal without notification.
18. To protect personal information, the Town's social media moderators will not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders in posts, blogs or comments without their previous written approval.
19. To maintain consistency and ensure accuracy, the same or similar content and links will be posted to all Town of Bridgewater online sites and services in a timely manner wherever possible.
20. Town of Bridgewater social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:
 - a. Profane language or content;
 - b. Personal attacks on individuals or specific groups;
 - c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination;
 - d. Content or comments not topically related to a particular social media thread;
 - e. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - f. Content for the purposes of promoting a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election;
 - g. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
 - h. Content that poses an insurance/liability risk to the Town of Bridgewater; or
 - i. Content that is believed to be inappropriate in the opinion of the Town of Bridgewater's CAO or designate.

Any content removed based on these restrictions must be retained, including the time and date of posting and the identity of the poster, if available.

21. The Town of Bridgewater will not conduct activities that are illegal or contrary to the Town of Bridgewater's policies.
22. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

Employee Responsibility

Employees of the Town of Bridgewater should consider the following when discussing, sharing or commenting on Town business on personal social media sites, networks and/or personal websites:

23. Use of an employee's Town email address, communicating in an official capacity, or discussing Town business on personal or corporate social media sites and/or personal websites will constitute conducting Town business.
24. Any Town of Bridgewater employee engaged in online electronic dialogue that involves information about Town of Bridgewater business, including dialogue or information posted to personal social networking sites and/or personal websites, is also required to meet a standard that mandates:
 - a. ***Transparency of Origin.*** The Town requires that employees disclose their employment or association with the Town of Bridgewater in all communications when speaking about the Town of Bridgewater or Town of Bridgewater business.
 - b. ***Accurate Information.*** Communications on all social networking sites, should be based on current, accurate, complete and relevant data. Anecdotes and opinions should be identified as such.
 - c. ***Protection of Confidential and Proprietary Information.*** Town of Bridgewater employees must maintain the confidentiality of information, including Town financial and business information, citizen and/or customer personal information, personal information about Town Councillors, partner and/or supplier information, personal employee data, or any other information not generally available to the public.
25. Town-staff-to-town-staff communications for the purpose of conducting official Town business should not take place using any social media tool.
26. Recognizing the benefit of monitoring online stakeholder input into Town issues –and the potential need for the Town to respond to and/or correct information – Town staff can access social media sites during work hours provided that they are related to or contain posts or discussions related to Town business.
27. Town staff are not permitted to access their personal social media pages during work time unless they do so during their break or lunch hour.

Council Responsibility

Councillors for the Town of Bridgewater should consider the following when discussing, sharing or commenting on Town business on public social media websites or on personal social media sites, networks and/or personal websites:

28. The CAO or designate speaks on behalf of the Town on all social networking sites, blogs, forums or websites. Unless otherwise authorized, Councillors who choose to discuss Town business within their posts to personal social networking sites and/or personal websites must make it clear that they are speaking on their own behalf and not as a representative of the Town or Town Council.
29. Use of a Councillor's Town email address and/or discussing Town business on personal or corporate social media sites and/or personal websites, without making it clear that they are speaking on their own behalf, constitutes conducting Town business.
30. Councillors who choose to discuss Town business within their posts to personal social networking sites and/or personal websites must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with this policy and all Town of Bridgewater administrative policies and corporate values.
31. Councillors discussing Town business on any social networking websites or personal website, should ensure their discussions are based on current, accurate, complete and relevant data. Anecdotes and opinions should be identified as such.
32. Councillors must protect confidential information from accidental or deliberate disclosure, including in camera meeting topics and discussions, Town financial and business information, citizen and/or customer personal information, personal information about employees or Town Councillors, partner and/or supplier information, personal employee data, or any other information not generally available to the public.