

City of Wausau  
Policies and Procedures

Effective:

Revised:

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**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

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**Purpose**

This Social Media Policy (“Policy”) establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the City of Wausau (“City”) of social media sites as a means of conveying information to members of the public about the City’s mission, meetings, activities, and current issues. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of the information posted on its social media sites and the content that is attributed to the City and its officials.

The City of Wausau recognizes that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, blogs, and wikis. However, use of social media can pose risks to the City. To minimize these risks, to avoid loss of productivity and distraction, and to ensure that IT resources and communications systems are used appropriately, the City of Wausau expects its employees to adhere to the following guidelines and rules regarding social media use. This policy is not intended to restrict communications or actions protected or required by state or federal law.

**Compliance with Related Policies and Agreements**

All of the City of Wausau's other policies that might apply to social media use remain in full force and effect. Employees should always adhere to them when using social media. Social media should never be used in a way that violates any other City of Wausau policies or employee obligations. If your social media activity would violate any of the city of Wausau's policies in another forum, it will also violate them in an online forum. Employees who violate City of Wausau policies may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Definitions**

“Social media sites” refers to interactive online pages that allow for and encourage multiple postings or interactions and whose information is constantly altered by its readers and producers.

“City social media sites” refers to social media sites which the City establishes and maintains, and over which it has control over all postings, except for advertisements or hyperlinks by the social media site’s owners, vendors or partners. City social media sites shall supplement, and not replace, the City’s required notices and standard methods of communication. All official City presence on social media sites is an extension of the City’s existing information systems and networks.

“Social Media Content” refers to any information or materials posted to such sites by users via tools provided either by the City or the web site

“Posts” or “postings” refer to information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication posted on a City social media site.

“City-related content” will be determined based on the substance of the information or materials posted rather than the identity of the poster, the equipment used, or the site on which it is posted.

“City-supported” or “City-sponsored” social media web sites are defined as sites created and/or maintained by designated City employees and used for the purpose of posting City-related social media content.

“Social Media Coordinator” refers to the person designated with oversight of City social media sites with authority to authorize social media sites and access to them.

### **Ownership of Social Media Accounts, Data, and Information**

Any and all social media and other online accounts and profiles created or used on behalf of the City of Wausau or otherwise for the purpose of promoting or marketing the City or similar business purposes, including such accounts and profiles featuring or displaying City of Wausau’s name and trademarks ("City Social Media Accounts"), belong solely to the City of Wausau. The City of Wausau owns all City Social Media Accounts regardless of the employee who opens the account or uses, manages, or accesses it. City Social Media Account includes any and all log-in information, data, passwords, trademarks, and content related to the profile or account, including all followers, subscribers, and contacts. City Social Media Accounts do not include any social media accounts or profiles that are created or used by an employee exclusively for an employee's own personal use.

Individuals shall not create, develop, or maintain any City Social Media Accounts without the City of Wausau's express prior authorization. All approved City of Wausau Social Media Accounts shall where possible be registered, in whole or in part, using the City of Wausau's name and contact information. After registration, the log-in and password information for each the City of Wausau Social Media Account shall promptly be reported to the Social Media Coordinator and password changes must be recorded within 24 hours with the Social Media Coordinator.

If you have any questions about creating or managing a social media account on behalf of the City of Wausau, please review the City of Wausau's Social Media Policy for guidelines and restrictions related to the creation, development, and maintenance of any City Social Media Accounts and all business use of social media or contact the Social Media Coordinator.

Upon the City of Wausau's request at any time during the course of employment or immediately upon and after your separation of employment from the City of Wausau for any reason, you agree to cease accessing, using, updating, and modifying the City Social Media Accounts. The Social Media Coordinator shall change passwords within 48 hours following termination.

Upon your separation of employment from the City of Wausau for any reason, the City of Wausau will retain ownership and control of all City Social Media Accounts created or used during the course of your employment, including all related data and information. Prior to your separation of employment, you agree to provide to the City of Wausau the log-in information, including usernames and passwords, for

each City Social Media Account that you created, used, or managed. You also agree to assist the City of Wausau, both prior to and after your employment (as may be necessary), with the transition and maintenance of each City Social Media Account created or used by you during the course of your employment, including providing all information that may be necessary to ensure that the City of Wausau is able to access and control the City Social Media Accounts. Administrative accounts shall be tied to a City email account where possible.

### **General Practices**

City social media sites shall contain the following information in a prominent place on the site:

1. Clearly state that such sites are maintained by the City and that the sites comply with the City's Social Media Policy. This will contain a link to the policy which will be on the public web.
2. City Department clearly identified
3. The comment policy for the site will be listed
4. Stated purpose of the page/site
5. Notification that violations of comment policy will result in blocking the user
6. Official Contact for page

City social media sites shall link back to the City's official website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City.

The City's Social Media Policy shall be displayed to users and made available by hyperlink.

### **Authorization and Access**

City departments that choose to participate in social media must designate an individual or individuals who will act as spokespersons for the City and the department on various social media websites. To ensure consistency of message, departments should limit the number of staff personnel authorized to post to social media sites. Employees must have prior authorization to act as a spokesperson for the City before posting official comments regarding City-related business on social media sites. City departments must also ensure that any and all contractors, vendors, or agents of the City who may represent the City in postings to social media sites will comply with all policies, rules, and requirements regarding such actions.

Departments should routinely review access privileges for specific employees to determine if continued access to social media sites remains warranted. Decisions on allowing continued access should be based on the needs of the department and the employee's job responsibilities. The City of Wausau reserves the right to deny access to post information on City-sponsored social media sites to any employee or representative of the City who violates this Social Media Policy. Any reference in this document to "employee" or "City employee" shall be considered to include any contractor, vendor, or agent working for or representing the City but not in City employ.

Notwithstanding other provisions of this policy, the policy does not intend in any way to limit or restrict the ability of City employees to speak as private citizens on matters relating to City business. City employees may post comments, questions, or opinions on social media sites, including City-sponsored sites, so long as they make clear that they are acting as private citizens and that their statements in no

way represent the official position of the City. Personal pages or posts must be made on personal accounts outside work hours.

### **Official and Acceptable Use**

Once granted access by the department, employees may post to social media sites in an official capacity only information that pertains to City of Wausau business or operations. City employees, in their role as designated representatives of the City of Wausau, must never post personal information to a City-sponsored social media site. Instead, City representatives who wish to post personal information on social media sites must maintain separate personal pages on sites such as Facebook or Twitter. Personal messages and the like received on an “official” page must be referred to the owner’s personal page. Messages relating to City business sent to a personal page must be forwarded to an official City page.

The same principles and policies that govern interactions with the public generally apply also to social media. Employees representing the City of Wausau on social media sites must, at all times, conduct themselves in accordance with all state and local laws and all existing City policies. The City requires all employees who participate in social media on behalf of their departments to adhere to and follow all existing work rules and the City’s Code of Ethics.

With the exception of elected officials, City employees posting official information to social media sites generally may do so only for the department they represent. They may post information or links to information already published on existing City web pages or social media sites but may not post any new or original materials relating to the activities or operations of other City departments, governments, organizations, or individuals without prior approval from the group or person discussed. City representatives should refer any questions, comments, or discussion outside of their department’s responsibility or their personal expertise to an appropriate responder within their own or another City department.

**Elected officials**, however, hold unique positions in the operations of City government. They must respond to the needs of and answer directly to the constituents who elected them. This requires *elected officials* to become knowledgeable about all aspects of City government. It also creates expectations that they have the ability to speak on a wide range of City issues and operations, across any and all functional and departmental boundaries. For this reason, *elected officials* and their representatives are exempt from provisions of this policy restricting employees from posting information regarding other departments.

Employees representing the City of Wausau on social media sites must act responsibly in the posting of material and in their online demeanor. Employees must respond honestly to appropriate queries and should not become hostile or argumentative. They should always exercise good judgment regarding the content and potential need for confidentiality (omitting addresses, phone numbers, and other personal data) of posted information.

Employees may never use their access as City representatives to social media sites for personal gain or to promote endeavors of relatives, friends, or associates. Employees and *Elected Officials* may not post information on City-sponsored social media sites that is protected under copyright, trade secret, or is proprietary in nature without the express written permission from the lawful holder of the information, prior to posting on a City-sponsored site.

Departments must ensure that their employees constantly monitor material posted to social media sites to:

- Respond promptly to questions or replies.
- Replace stale, outdated, and/or incorrect information.
- Remove inappropriate content (as defined below.)

Many social networking sites allow the installation of extra applications, programs and skins to enhance the experience. Many of these extra applications contain Trojans, viruses and other malware. Never install any extra applications on any social networking site.

When departments are considering the merits of participating in social networking sites, they should keep in mind that having staff access risky sites may increase the likelihood of getting their PCs infected with viruses, spyware and malware. Getting infected will result in very slow performing PCs or complete crashing of the pc. It may also put other users on our network at risk of infection. Our experience with social networking sites shows infections are very common for regular visitors. While we recognize the value of reaching your clients and customers via social networking sites, we expect that the increased risks will be taken into account and that access will be restricted to only necessary users. Further, we expect that staff who frequent social networking sites and have accepted the increased risk that it brings will also accept that these machines may not have as high a priority for repair as other PCs that are not routinely accessing these websites.

If you post content to someone else's social media website using your city associated identity, the content is considered a public record. If you host a social media page/website, all content on the page is a public record. You and your department head must develop a method to record this public record information in a way that allows you to respond legally to public record requests.

### **User Responsibilities**

The City of Wausau participates in and provides information through social media sites as a public service. The City anticipates that users will use such sites as a means of conveying useful information to and engaging in productive discourse with elected officials, City employees and other representatives.

The City expects that all participants on City-sponsored social media sites, including City employees, other representatives and users will display respect and civility when posting comments or information. The City of Wausau reserves the right to remove comments and/or materials solely at its discretion if the City deems that comments and/or materials:

- Are profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic in language or content;
- Promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of gender, race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, lawful source of income, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, past or present membership in military service, or familial status;
- Unlawfully defame or attack an individual or group;
- Make direct or indirect threats against any person or organization;
- Support or oppose a political campaign;
- Advertise or solicit business for a personal or private business or endeavor;
- Promote or endorse a specific financial or commercial entity
- Defraud or defame any financial, commercial, or non-governmental agency

- Violate any federal, state, or local law or encourage any illegal activity;
- Violate any existing copyrights, trade secrets, or legal ownerships;
- Compromise the safety and/or security of city employees, officials, the public or public systems; or
- Are unrelated to the original topic.

Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained – including the time, date, identity of the poster, identity of the staff who removed it, and the reason for the removal.

### **Legal Requirements**

Public records laws of the State of Wisconsin and local ordinances may require retention of any information, materials, and/or discussion on social media sites that involve City of Wausau employees and relate to official City business. Individual City departments will be responsible for ensuring proper retention of content posted by their employees to social media sites.

For purposes of complying fully with existing laws, retention of social media content as public records would likely include any comments, queries, information, or materials submitted by end users, including under certain circumstances, personal information submitted voluntarily such as the user's name and/or address. Departments will retain these records in an accessible and usable format that preserves the integrity of the original records for the period designated by appropriate records retention schedules.

Communication among members of governmental bodies using social media may constitute a "meeting" under the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. For this reason, members of these bodies are strongly discouraged from interactions with other members on social media sites.

The rapidly-changing nature of social media sites, both in terms of the technology they use and unpredictable swings in their popularity, would almost instantly render useless any proposals for implementing specific technology for backup and retention of social media content. To assist departments in adjusting to rapid changes in social media sites and Public Records law, the City-County Information Technology Commission (CCITC) Director will provide directives to departments regarding the most cost-effective options for retaining and storing specific types of social media content. The CCITC Director will inform departments no less than annually, or more frequently, as needed.

Various social media sites adhere to their own policies regarding the privacy of site users. The City of Wausau makes no claim to protect or preserve the privacy of users who interact with employees or representatives of the City via these sites beyond those protections which the site owner provides. Further, the City of Wausau retains the right to review all information or materials written or contributed by users on City social media sites, therefore users should have no expectation of privacy when posting to City social media sites.

The content of all communications posted by City employees on City-sponsored social media sites is the sole property of the City of Wausau. Unless prohibited or otherwise provided for by the terms of service enforced by social media sites used by the City, postings made by other users may also be considered City property.

Violation of this policy by a City employee may result in discipline up to and including discharge. Users should be aware that the information made available by the City of Wausau on social media sites may not be timely, accurate or complete. Any communication from or to the City through these sites will not be considered legal or official notice for any purpose. The City of Wausau reserves the right to revise or modify this policy at any time, without prior notice.