

Town of Danvers

Policy - Social Media

Adopted on: July 25, 2018

Revised: January 22, 2019

Adopted by: Town Manager, Steve Bartha

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to enhance customer service, promote Town of Danvers (Town) services, contribute to relevant online dialog, and better engage with residents, customers and visitors, in a positive and proactive fashion rooted in best practice.

2. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

Town employees are expected to use the Internet responsibly and productively, and excessive personal Internet browsing, including social media use, is not permitted. Further, the Town reserves the right to monitor how employees use company-owned property, including computers and networking equipment, and employees should be mindful that all web browsing done on Town devices, property, and/or premises may be monitored.

Employees are prohibited from using social networks to post or display comments about fellow employees or the Town that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, or violate the Town's discrimination or harassment policies.

Employees may not use social networks to disclose confidential or proprietary information about the Town or its employees, customers or business partners.

When appropriate, employees should disclose their relationship with the Town in their online posts and refrain from speaking on behalf of the Town when not authorized. Employees should be mindful of the conflict of interest law when posting online.

Town employees should be mindful that that they are personally responsible for what they post online and that what they post online will likely remain searchable in perpetuity.

Social media use is subject to the same workplace policies employees must follow in other situations, including but not limited to the Town's policies regarding harassment, discrimination, defamation, confidentiality, non-competition and general Internet use.

3. TOWN USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

The Town has created Facebook and Twitter accounts for various departments as a customer service tool for the dissemination of unbiased, factual information to the public and community stakeholders.

Only authorized individuals may post information to the Town's social media sites; the Town Manager or a designee will maintain a list of authorized users. Employees not authorized to post information are prohibited from doing so.

The Town's social media sites will be used by the Town and its agencies for communicating information with the sole purpose of informing the public of the work, news and updates of various Town departments.

Recognizing that social media may not be the most effective platform to address customer service questions, the Town is not obligated to, respond to any comments, questions or concerns posted on its various social media sites. The Town will provide resources for the public to obtain additional information.

Content posted to official town social media accounts is subject to Massachusetts Public Records Law.

3.1 Citizen Questions or Concerns:

If any citizen has a question, concern, wants to bring attention to an issue, or would like direction, the Town encourages them to contact, via phone or email, the respective Town Department, or the Town Manager's Office, at 978-777-0001. If you have an emergency, please call 911.

Town staff is discouraged from engaging in any dialogue or private messaging over social media. Staff may clarify information or respond to basic questions. Inquires that require a detailed response should be directed to appropriate department.

The Town and its agencies are not obligated to follow or friend any organization or individual. The Town and its agencies may follow other local, state, federal, or quasi-governmental agencies for the coordination and dissemination of information of interest to the public.

No comments will be accepted through the Town's social media accounts for any public hearing; either adjudicatory public hearings or any other notified public hearing. Residents must attend public hearings and directly communicate with the deliberative body.

3.2 Monitoring:

The Town Manager's Office reserves the right to monitor content on all of its social media sites and to modify or remove any messages, postings or members that it deems, in its sole discretion, to be abusive, defamatory, in violation of copyright, trademark right or other intellectual property right of any third party or otherwise inappropriate for the service.

The Town expressly reserves right to remove any post, comment or remark that contains the following content from the social media site:

- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language
- Obscene or sexual language / images
- Profanity of any kind
- Racism or discrimination
- Potentially libelous statements
- Support or opposition for political campaigns
- Plagiarized material
- Personal and private information
- Anything that may compromise public safety and security
- Comments or hyperlinks unrelated to posted information
- Commercial promotions or spam content

The Town's social media sites may be used to communicate the following:

- Announcements about departmental or community items of interest
- Emergency notifications
- Highlighting of Town events and activities
- Historical information about the Department or the Town
- Highlight employees who have done good work for the community

4. BEST PRACTICES:

See Attachment A to this policy for best practice for effective social media implementation and use for town social media accounts.