

# **CITY OF WILDOMAR**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The City of Wildomar (“City”) recognizes that social media plays an increasingly important role in society and communication. This policy is to establish guidelines on the use of social media sites by the City as an additional means of conveying City-related information to the public and maximizing the promotion of City-managed programs and services. This policy also is designed to establish lawful and proper parameters for employees’ personal use of social media while employed with the City.

While social media presents many benefits, such as community engagement through an interactive platform, it also presents certain risks of liability to the City. This policy is intended to mitigate associated risks from use of social media technology where possible. This policy is in addition to and complements the City’s policies regarding the use of technology, computers, social media, email and the internet.

The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of information posted on its social media pages and deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the City. This policy applies wholly to the City and all City employees and all participation on social media must be in accordance with the provisions set forth herein.

### **II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. “Social media sites” refers to interactive platforms and technologies which allow entities or individuals to post or publish content through and on the internet. Social media uses many technologies and platforms, including social networking, blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, and more.
- B. “City social media page” means a page on a social media site 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. No social media platforms are to be utilized without express authorization from the City Manager.
- C. “City social media team” refers to those City employees specifically authorized by the City to create content or to post or comment on a City social media page on behalf of the City. The City social media team is comprised of the City Manager’s Office, Community Services and Information Technology Office and other individuals designated by the City Manager or Department Head. Only members of the City social media team may post or comment on behalf of the City. Members of the City social media team must be provided this policy and sign the acknowledgement attached to this policy prior to the creation of any content.

- D. “Employee” means any person employed by the City of Wildomar, including full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, and probationary employees. For purposes of this policy, “employee” does not include any volunteers or appointed or elected official of the City of Wildomar.
- E. “Post” or “Comment” means information, articles, pictures, videos, hyperlinks or any other form of content or communication posted on any City social media page.

### **III. GENERAL POLICY**

This policy applies to all authorized employees who utilize social media websites on behalf of the City for the following purposes:

- A. To establish guidelines for posting of information on social media websites.
- B. To establish guidelines for user policies of social media websites.
- C. To provide a uniform policy that will be implemented by all departments that utilize social media as an informational tool.

All City employees shall comply with this policy in all respects. This policy is subject to revision at any time. In the event of a revision to this policy, the City will attempt to provide prior notice of any such change. However, this policy may be changed without prior notice when deemed necessary to fully protect the City’s interests and/or the public’s interests. If it is necessary to change this policy without providing prior notice to employees, the City shall notify the employees of the change at the earliest possible time. All City employees shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt of this policy indicating that he or she has read and understands all of its provisions and agrees to be bound by the same. Before posting anything on social media website, the employee must check the most current policy to ensure compliance.

### **IV. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Ownership and Adherence to Other City Policies**

1. All social media website communications composed, sent, or received on City equipment are the property of the City.
2. The use of City computers, City-issued smartphones, City-issued tablets, or any other City-issued electronic device to post information on a social media website is subject to all applicable policies of the City.
3. Content posted on a City social media page may be subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, posted communication, communication submitted for posting, and removed content, may be a public record subject to public disclosure.

**B. Creation of City Social Media Pages**

1. The City Manager’s Office may establish official City social media pages. The City Manager’s Office will maintain a written list of all approved City social media pages and websites.
2. The City’s official website at [www.cityofwildomar.org](http://www.cityofwildomar.org) is the City’s primary source and means of internet communication. To the extent possible, a link to the City’s official website should be included on any City social media page. Wherever possible, City social media pages should link back to the official City website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City. Information posted by the City on social media pages will supplement and not replace required notices and standard methods of communication.
3. Each established department within the City may create departmental City social media pages and/or City social media pages for a specific City-related purpose or City event with approval of the City Manager.
  - a. Creation of any such City social media pages must be proposed, in writing, by the department head to the City Manager. The City Manager may, in his/her sole discretion, approve, deny, or modify the creation of such social media websites. A department may not create a City social media website without the prior written authorization of the City Manager. Consideration shall be given to the overall nature and theme of the website, and its suitability for use for City purposes.
  - b. Each department is responsible for the creation, administration, and deactivation of their City social media website account or page. Any user identifications, logins, and passwords must be shared with the City Manager’s office.
  - c. Any City social media website that is created for a specific purpose or event should be deleted or taken down once it is no longer necessary and/or timely, and the department must provide written confirmation of same to City Manager’s office.
  - d. The City Manager’s Office shall have ultimate authority over all City participation on social media websites and may order the removal of all or part of a department’s social media page if the City Manager, in his/her sole discretion, determines that the content or social media website is not in the best interests of the City.
4. For the purpose of this policy, all City social media pages must have been approved and created in accordance with this policy.

**C. Administration and Maintenance of Authorized City Social Media Pages**

1. Only City social media team members are permitted to maintain, administer, and/or post on an authorized City social media page on behalf of the City of Wildomar.
  - a. In approving an authorized City social media page, the City Manager, or his/her designee, shall designate at least one authorized employee as being responsible for the regular monitoring and maintenance of that particular City social media page.
  - b. The City social media team shall only address issues within the scope of their specific authorization.
  - c. The City social media team must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with all City policies.
2. Social medial websites often have their own polices, terms of use, conditions of use, and/or legal restrictions. These terms could have significant legal and financial implications for the City. Therefore, prior to signing and/or agreeing to adhere to any polices, terms of use, conditions of use, and/or legal restrictions for a social media website, the City social media team member must obtain the City Manager's written approval. In addition, prior to posting any content on an authorized City social medial website, City social media team members must review, become familiar with, and comply with the website's policies and terms and conditions.
3. Any and all information posted by City social media team members on City social media pages created on behalf of the City must:
  - a. Directly pertain to the City of Wildomar;
  - b. Contain factual information that is freely available to the public and that is not made confidential by any policy of the City, or by local, state, or federal law; and
  - c. Present the City in a positive light.
4. City social media team members are prohibited from posting the following content on any authorized City social media page or website:
  - a. A photograph, video, or image of any person who can be readily identified by the naked eye in the photograph, video, or image without first obtaining the depicted person's (or their legal representative's) consent.
  - b. Many social media sites allow the City to "like" or "follow" other site users or to share content posted by other site users. Express permission to like or follow any entity, organization, or individual must be obtained from the City Manager or his/her designee.

Sharing or re-posting content is permissible if relevant to City business, programs, services, or events and the City has full permission or rights to do so, unless it includes content that is prohibited in this policy.

- c. Language that is sexually explicit, or that is lewd or obscene, racial, promotes religious beliefs, political, or illegal, or that expresses a personal opinion, except as provided under guideline Section III. D below.
  - d. Actual or perceived threats to public health, safety or property unless the authorized employee has authorization from the City Manager to post such content.
  - e. Actual or potential legal claims, lawsuits or other legal issues, unless approved in advance in writing by the City Attorney.
  - f. Personnel or medical matters.
  - g. Testing materials or matters related to the evaluation of employment applicants (this does not prohibit the City from advertising vacancies on a social media website);
  - h. Budget planning and priorities, unless approved in advance in writing by the City Manager.
  - i. Criminal investigations and content regarding crime scenes.
  - j. Solicitation, engaging in or endorsing any commercial, products or activities. This provision is intended not to limit the City's ability to support business in Wildomar generally, but to refrain from supporting a particular commercial enterprise.
  - k. Comments in support of or in opposition to elected and appointed City officials, political candidates, political campaigns, ballot measures, and matters that may reasonably be agenized for consideration by the City Council and/or any City commission, agency, or board.
  - l. Comments regarding the position of any City Council member or member of any City commission, agency, or board regarding a City-related issue or comments regarding, or speculating about, a potential decision by the City Council or any City commission, agency, or board.
5. Following City Manager approval of an authorized City social media website, City social media team members must adhere to the following rules:

- a. City social media pages should make clear that they are maintained by the City and state that they follow the City's use of social media policy and the host site's terms of use. City social media pages are considered City property and are not for personal use or benefit.
- b. City social media sites shall bear the name of the City. If feasible, City social media sites shall also bear the City's official logo or informal logo as designated by the City's graphics standards. If a department wishes to use any other image as the profile picture or background image, the department must obtain the City Manager's prior written approval.
- c. Wherever applicable, City social media sites shall be classified and registered with the service provider as "Official" and/or Government Entity sites. The social media team shall take advantage of all options provided by the service provider for Government Entity sites that provide additional protections for the City.
- d. Authorized City social media pages or websites shall utilize account names or user names that are clearly identifiable as City social media pages.
- e. City account profiles must contain a valid City of Wildomar email address.
- f. If possible, City social media team members shall disable any feature of an authorized City social media page or website that allows members of the public to post content or comment on City postings to the authorized City social media page or website. The City Manager may grant an exception to this upon the request of the department head. Any City social media page or website that permits members of the public to post content or comment on authorized City postings on a social media page or website is subject to the provisions set forth in Section III.D, below.
- g. City social media team members may not use or include personal email addresses or any other personal information in the user profiles and/or posted content for authorized City social media pages or websites. Instead, City social media team members may use their name, title, and a city email address.
- h. City social media team members shall enable, set, or configure all accessibility features available on authorized City social media pages or websites to ensure that the content of such websites is accessible to as many people as possible.

- i. If an approved social network website requires account administrative approval to join, everyone who requests access must obtain the City Manager's prior written approval. The City Manager may delegate this approval authority to a department head or other designee.
  - j. In order to maintain the security of the City's internal IT network, City social media team members shall use different passwords for authorized City social media pages or websites than are used for logging into the City's internal network.
  - k. City social media team members shall follow the City's IT department password guidelines when selecting passwords for City social media pages or websites.
  - l. City social media team members may not share an authorized City social media page or website account password with anyone who is not an authorized employee as to that particular authorized City social media page or website.
6. City social media team members may only work on authorized City social media pages or websites during City business hours and on City-owned computers, unless (a) otherwise directed and authorized by the City Manager or his/her designee or (b) after-hours and/or off-site work is necessary to avoid and/or remedy a violation of this policy and that, in the City social media team member's best judgment, waiting for approval by the City Manager or his/her designee would cause harm to the City's interest and/or the public's interests. In the event that a City social media team member performs after-hours and/or off-site work on an authorized City social media page or website, the City social media team member must report such work in writing to his/her department head and the City Manager at the earliest possible time following such work.
7. Except as expressly provided in this policy, employees accessing any authorized City social media page or website shall comply with all applicable policies of the City of Wildomar, including Web Linking policy adopted May 14, 2014 and the City Personnel Rules.

**D. Comments and Posts by the Public**

1. While the City's primary goal is to disable posts and comments by non-City social media team members, it is not always possible on some social media pages or websites to disable the feature that allows or permits comments or responsive posts by members of the public. In such an event, the following regulations apply:
  - a. The City social media team member for each authorized City social media page or website that allows public posts must create and

provide a “terms of use” that is readily accessible and applicable to anyone wishing to post a response. Any such “terms of use” policy must be approved in advance in writing by the City Manager and City Attorney or their respective designees.

- b. To the extent that members of the public are permitted to post content on an authorized City social media page or website, City social media team members may, but are not required to, respond to a post by a member of the public. By permitting use of this feature, **the City does not intend to create, nor has it established, a general public forum**, and all comments and posts must comply with this policy.
- c. Authorized City social media pages or websites must provide a mechanism for City social media team members to remove posts or prevent posting of messages that clearly violate this response policy. If no such mechanism exists, then the authorized City social media page or website may only be utilized if the website provides the capability of disabling posts from other parties.
- d. City social media team members must review the webpage and all associated content not less than once each work day. If the assigned City social media team member will be absent for more than one work day for any reason, the department head or his/her designee is responsible for performing the review.

- 2. Every social media website that allows comments or posts from the public must include the following disclaimer:

*Comments posted on this page will be monitored and inappropriate content will be removed as soon as possible. Moreover, the City does not intend to create, nor has it created, a general public forum, and all comments and posts must comply with the City of Wildomar’s Social Media Policy. Pursuant to the City’s policy, the City reserves the right to remove inappropriate content, including, but not limited to:*

- a. *Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic language or content;*
- b. *Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religious creed, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, age, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, military or veteran status, marital status, or any other basis protected by state or federal law.*
- c. *Sexual content or links to sexual content;*



- d. *Solicitation of commerce and other pure commercial speech, including, but not limited to any advertising or business services or products for sale;*
- e. *Threats to any person or organization or conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;*
- f. *Comments not topically related to City posts, business information, announcements, events, or comments not related to the original topic or post, including random or unintelligible postings or comments;*
- g. *Comments in support of or in opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;*
- h. *Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems or City employees or the City's technology resources;*
- i. *Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, including, but not limited to copyrights or trademarks;*
- j. *Content containing personal or sensitive information, including, but not limited to home addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers, dates of birth, or driver's license numbers; and*
- k. *Content that violates any federal, state, or local laws.*

*The above list is not exhaustive and the City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City of Wildomar is not obligated to take such actions, and disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials posted by a member of the public.*

*Please be aware that, under certain circumstances, content appearing on this page may be subject to California's public records laws and subject to disclosure by the agency if requested. This may include information about you that you make available through your privacy settings on this site on your own pages.*

*A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Wildomar social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and the publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of Wildomar, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Wildomar.*

*By posting a comment, users agree to indemnify the City of Wildomar, its officers and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages,*

*and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred by any of them which arise out of or are related to content posted by users. If a user does not agree to these terms, the individual should not use the City of Wildomar's social media pages or websites as a violation of these terms may lead to legal liability.*

3. If it is not possible to provide the preceding disclaimer on a City social media page or website, this fact must be brought to the City Manager's attention prior to establishing a City social media page or website. In that situation, special approval from the City Manager will be necessary in order to proceed with that particular City social media page or website.
4. The inclusion of links in any post must comply with the City's official website external link policy, unless authorized by the department head or City Manager.

#### **E. Policy for Personal Use of Social Media**

1. While employees may voluntarily choose to engage with the City on its social media pages, the City does not encourage or require any employee to follow or "like" City social media sites.
2. The City does not condone the personal use by City employees of social media sites, including personal or non-City social media pages or sites, during the workday or during working time by any means, including by using City-owned equipment. **City employees have no right or expectation of privacy when using City-issued devices or systems. The City reserves the right to monitor, search, or disclose employee use of City resources.**
3. Employees are reminded and cautioned that nothing posted on the internet is private. Content can easily be shared, forwarded, and distributed to broader audiences without your knowledge or permission.
4. Information posted on any social media site may be used as evidence in disciplinary, administrative, or legal proceedings.
5. The personal use of social media by a City employee in a manner that violates any City policy or procedure will not be tolerated, and may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees are expected to comply with the same ethical and performance standards online as in the workplace.
6. Employees may not use their official City email addresses to create or maintain any personal social media page(s).
7. An employee's use of social media in a manner that violates the City's policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, the City's workplace

harassment, discrimination, and retaliation policies, will not be tolerated, and may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

8. Employees may not post any content on the internet or social media that constitutes or contains City confidential, proprietary, privileged, private, personnel, or other non-public information.
9. City employees are prohibited from using the City logo or informal logo, representing the City, or representing that they speak on behalf of the City. Employees must also make clear in any online activity that the views and opinions they express about work-related matters are their own, have not been reviewed by the City, and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the City.
10. This policy is not intended to prohibit conduct permitted by any state or federal law.

**F. California Public Records Act**

1. All content posted on a social media website may be subject to the California Public Records Act, California's civil discovery statutes, and other applicable laws requiring the disclosure of public records. All content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with these laws, including any photographs or images. In addition, all content subject to the City's records retention policy must be maintained consistent with that policy. Any content on authorized social media websites shall be maintained in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and must be easily accessible using the approved City platform and tools. Any content submitted for posting that is deemed unsuitable because it is not topically related or is inappropriate under this policy must also be retained pursuant to the applicable record retention schedule. In addition, City staff must adhere to the following rules:
  - a. The City Manager's office will maintain a list of all authorized City social media pages or websites and all account information for such websites, including login passwords, to allow for the immediate alteration or removal of content that is inappropriate or inconsistent with City policy. All such information must be shared with the City Manager's office and updated when changed.
  - b. City social media team members shall maintain a record of City social media page or website account information, including user name, registered email address, date established, and authorizing representative and the site's terms of use.
  - c. All documents shall be easily accessible, including photographs or images if the website is subject to a California Public Records Act request or similar request for disclosure.

- d. City staff shall direct any public records requests to the City Clerk's Office.

**V. FAILURE TO ADHERE TO POLICY**

An employee's failure to adhere to the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, up to and including termination.

**City of Wildomar**  
**Employee Acknowledgement of Social Media Policy**

This statement acknowledges that I have received and read a copy of the City of Wildomar **Social Media Policy**. I acknowledge, and fully understand, the terms of this policy and agree to abide by them. I understand that any violation of this policy could lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or criminal or civil prosecution.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media Webpage:

Date:

- I am an employee who has been authorized to post on the above listed department's social media webpage.
- I am not an employee who has been authorized to post on the above listed department's social media webpage.

Department Head's Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_