

City of McAlester

Social Media Procedure

I. Purpose and Goals

To define the individual and departmental responsibilities for the use of the City's social media tools. This procedure governs the official development, implementation, and use of social media for the City of McAlester. The City has found that using social media tools is an effective way to expand reach, foster engagement, and communicate with the citizens of our community.

The goal is to streamline the social media channels through which the City communicates. Utilizing select main accounts will ensure the market is not oversaturated with City-affiliated accounts/profiles and allow the City to provide a consistent, comprehensive message.

This procedure is applicable to all departments, divisions, programs, boards, and organizations within the City of McAlester, including all employees.

II. Definitions

- A. Social Media:** For the purposes of this document, social media is defined as any publicly accessible platform for electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and/or content. Social networking sites or media includes, but is not limited to Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and others. All genres of social networking sites or media will be referred to as social media.
- B. Administrator:** Individual responsible for posting, editing, retaining, and monitoring social media site content.
- C. Public Information Officer:** The City of McAlester employee or contractor designated with responsibilities for creating and enabling communication between the City and news organizations and the general public.

III. Background and General Provisions

The City of McAlester uses social media as a strategic communications tool to promote, both organically and through paid advertisement, citywide marketing and communications efforts.

Benefits of social media include:

- Improving reach to targeted and diverse audiences
- Furthering the delivery of consistent, timely and targeted messages
- Facilitating engagement, participation, transparency, collaboration, and interactive communication.

- A. Account Creation** - Any use of a social media channel, creation of a new profile/page/group or development of a social media application for the official use of the City must first be approved by the Public Information Officer and the City

Manager. All accounts that have not been approved are prohibited and will be requested to be deleted. Any accounts that are not actively used for a period of six months or more, may be deleted per the discretion of the PIO and City Manager.

- B. **Account Maintenance** - All official social media accounts are subject to review at any time for brand consistency, content appropriateness, and compliance. The Public Information Officer must have admin rights or login information for all official City accounts and access to edit these sites as appropriate.
- C. **Account Use** - City of McAlester Employees or Officials who are not authorized to use the social media tools are not allowed to publish or comment as a representative of the City via social media. All uses of social media shall follow the same ethical standards that the City of McAlester employees and officials must otherwise follow. City council members and committee and board members should not comment or otherwise communicate on the City's social media sites. Participating in on-line discussions may constitute a meeting under the Open Meetings Act in some situations.
- D. **Unofficial Sites** - The City does not take any responsibility for pages or social media content purported to represent the City on unofficial or unapproved social media sites.
- E. **Updates** - Due to frequent technology and social media changes, this procedure may be adjusted regularly to reflect issues of concerns that arise.
- F. **Emergency Situations** - Any items in the social media procedures may be temporarily altered, changed, or dismissed as deemed appropriate by staff during emergency operation mobilization. All posts of emergency nature such as storm and tornado warnings, shelter openings, street closures, utility outages, and others should have a time stamp including the day of the week, date, and specific time clearly stated in the text of the post. This helps safeguard against misinformation at later times and dates. During emergency operation mobilization, administration of social media pages can and should be shared with other public information officials working from the emergency operations center during the duration of the emergency event.

IV. **Brand and Style Guidelines**

Employees and officials using City logos and representations in an official, approved City capacity must adhere to the procedures described herein for the development of social media and must not deviate from the guidelines outlined in the City's official logo use standards. Use of the City of McAlester name, logos, seal, or any other City image or iconography on personal social media sites to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate of any kind is prohibited. Posts on social media sites should protect the City of McAlester institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste.

V. **Official City of McAlester Social Media Accounts**

- A. **Account Administrators** - The Public Information Officer is the primary administrator for the City's main social media accounts.
 - a. Each secondary account will have designated administrators who are the main point of contact for that page and responsible for keeping content current, accurate, and timely.
 - b. Each secondary account will have a minimum of two site administrators assigned in addition to the City's Public Information Officer. The Public Information Officer must be provided with the names and emails for all

administrators for all secondary accounts. They must be notified when new administrators are added or when an admin is removed.

- c. The administrators for the secondary pages should work closely with the Public Information Officer to ensure brand consistency and message appropriateness.
- d. At least one site administrator shall post their name and contact method prominently on the site. Additionally, a link to the City's official website shall be included on all social media sites to properly identify the social media tool as an official city resource.
- e. Continuous violations of these procedures by any employee will result in the removal of the administrative roles and duties.

B. Public Records and Retention Information posted on the City's social media is subject to the Public Records Act.

- a. In order to ensure appropriate retention of public records, most content posted by City personnel on city social media sites should not be original source content (content that has not been created anywhere else and only exists on the social media site), but rather a secondary copy of information that is posted on the City website or contained in an electronic copy or hard copy.
- b. All information posted and other activity conducted on social media shall comply with applicable standards set forth in the City of McAlester Records Retention Policy.

C. Social Media Posts - All posts and responses should strive for accuracy.

- a. All administrators should get the facts straight before posting them on any social media platform.
- b. Administrators should take care that content representing the City is grammatically correct, free of spelling or typing errors, presented in an appropriate tone, and provided in a timely manner.
- c. Content cannot promote individual opinions or causes that are not directly related to City purposes. The Public Information Officer can serve as a resource for content ideas and response approval.
- d. It is the responsibility of all administrators to check the social media account for recent postings to make sure posts will not be made back-to-back. Posts should not be made within one hour of each other, with the exception of emergency notifications, weather updates, and system maintenance or outages. It is recommended that there are no more than four posts in a single day on each account.
- e. Content should be short and written in active voice. Remember to consider the audience; the style and tone of content should be direct and community-oriented. In general, the more frequent the content is updated, the more users will visit the sites to access information and participate in the social community. Out-of-date content should be removed as quickly as possible.
- f. Any content changed or posts removed must be preserved for records retention compliance. If the content exclusively existed on the social media site, a full and complete screenshot(s) are required to be shared with the Public Information Officer to preserve the information.

- g. Concerns about content within the City's social media presence should be reported to the Public Information Officer.
- h. City of McAlester employees are responsible for the content they post and the City will not indemnify employees for anything they write or post on any social media associated with the City.
- i. Violations of this procedure could result in employee disciplinary action up to and including termination.

D. Post Comments and Messages - A system should be developed to handle message and comment responses for each account.

- a. It is recommended that one administrator for each account should be responsible for reviewing and funneling messages and comments to the appropriate city department who can provide a response for the administrator to use. Response duties should be delegated during times that the designated administrator is away from their regular work assignments such as extended leave, vacations, days off, etc.
- b. It is important to provide timely responses to questions, comments, and other inquiries posted on social media sites. The desired response time is within one to three hours.
- c. It is further encouraged to set Away Messages and Auto Replies when available and appropriate. Any automatic response should consider the potential nature of messages and reference a secondary action, if appropriate, such as phone numbers to emergency responders, after-hours concern lines, emails of key personnel, etc. The Public Information Officer will assist in determining the content of automatic messages.
- d. If an employee encounters a question that cannot be answered accurately, you may refer to the appropriate department and provide specific contact information such as the name of the division and the phone number with extension.
- e. All responses to inquiries and comments should be respectful. Understand that content on social media sites could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the person posting and/or the City and its institutional voice. Any response should not alienate, harm, or provoke citizens of any class.

E. Prohibited Content

- a. The following types of content are prohibited from City of McAlester social media and shall be removed immediately by any site administrator upon discovery:
 - Violates the social media site's terms of use;
 - Promotes or advertises commercial services, entities, or products;
 - Supports or opposes political candidates or ballot propositions;
 - Is obscene, profane, or vulgar;
 - Discusses, encourages, or constitutes illegal activity;
 - Promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;

- Information that is not factual or untrue;
 - Provides information that compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems, or includes threatening, harassing, or personal attacks against any individual or entity; and/or
 - Material protected by copyright.
- b. When prohibited content is identified and removed, a message should be sent to the user, if possible, identifying the content of the post, citing the specific language in this procedure prohibiting the content, and providing the contact information of the Public Information Officer for any follow-up the user may have.
 - c. Any removed content shall first be preserved by a screenshot or other visual capture depicting the full post(s) and/or message(s) and emailed to the public information officer for documentation.
 - d. A comment policy notice shall be displayed or linked to on all social media sites that allow user-generated material to be posted, indicating the site is moderated and inappropriate content will be removed. The City's Social Media Procedure shall be linked to the notice.