

EMPLOYEE SERVICES

Directive - 0529



Date: 12/31/2025

Previously Revised:
12/31/2024

Established: 04/05/2016

SOCIAL MEDIA – WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE/NOT ACCEPTABLE

Scope

This directive applies to all City of Jacksonville departments, excluding JSO who has their own policies, but includes the other constitutional offices as well as City Council. It applies to all employees who participate in any form of social media, including those performing work on behalf of the City of Jacksonville such as full-time, part-time, temporary, elected and contract employees.

Definition

Social Media includes a variety of applications, usually web-based, which allow users to share content, interact with each other and develop communities around similar interests. Some examples are blogs, websites, wikis, vines, discussion threads, comment sections and social networks. Social networks include (but are not limited to) Facebook, X – formerly known as Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Google+, Ello, Tumblr, Myspace, Vimeo, Reddit, Periscope, TikTok, and numerous other similar sites.

Employees' Rights

Under the Public Employees Relations Act, employees have the right "to engage in "...concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection." This policy shall not be enforced, in a manner that abridges or interferes with that right, rights under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the Florida Constitution, or rights under any other law.

Authorized Spokespersons of the City

Employees may not represent themselves as a spokesperson for the City. If any City business, functions or activities are the focus or subject of the communication, the speaker should make it clear that the communication is his or her opinion and in no way represents the position or interests of the City, fellow employees, suppliers, contractors and other persons working on behalf of the City, or citizens. Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a City website without identifying yourself as a City employee. If the City is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee. If you do publish a blog or post content online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the City, in order to make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the City it is best to include a disclaimer, such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Jacksonville or its representatives."

Some individuals performing work on behalf of the City will, by the nature of their positions, be knowledgeable about certain aspects of the City and may be authorized to speak on

behalf of the City. The City's social media participation will be handled through the Public Affairs Office in order to maintain the integrity of the City's overall communication strategies and programs. Public Affairs will establish accounts over various platforms of social communication in an incremental manner but will limit participation in order to maintain the quality of the City's presence in the digital arena. However, as public employees, certain restrictions apply regarding social media.

Guidelines and Disciplinary Policy

1. Employees must follow this directive as well as the current Directive – 0516, TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY and refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment that the City provides, unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent with City policy.
2. Although there is no restriction on the personal use of social media outside of the office, good judgement is encouraged. Any time an employee chooses to write, post or submit something within the realm of social media it should be remembered that such items become public. Employees may not post any internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related communications of the City or its suppliers, vendors, contractors and other persons performing work on behalf of the City.
3. This policy is not intended to intrude on employees' privacy or interfere with their legal rights. However, employees may be subject to disciplinary action for social media activity referring to any City office or function, other City employees, or citizens that is:
 - obscene;
 - false or defamatory (a communication made with the intent to harm a person's reputation or made with reckless disregard for whether the statement is true or false);
 - likely to create a hostile work environment based on a person's race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or City policy;
 - coercive or threatens physical violence; or
 - likely to create a real threat of immediate disruption in the workplace.