

	TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH STORMONT
	Title: Social Media
	Policy Category: Human Resources - Conduct
	Effective Date: May 11, 2022
	Revision:

Policy Statement

The Township of South Stormont (**“the Township”**) strives to maintain a positive image in our community and has adopted this policy to ensure that employees are aware of their responsibility to maintain a positive image, as representatives of our organization.

This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our employees, nor to restrict or impede their rights to freedom of speech and expression. The intent of this policy is to communicate corporate expectations to employees, many of whom indirectly represent the Township outside of regular business hours through the use of social media. The Township expects that all employees conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate and professional while expressing themselves using any form of social media.

Scope

This policy applies to both on-duty and off-duty conduct of all Township of South Stormont employees while using any form of social media or blog. This includes but is not limited to full-time, part-time, volunteer firefighters, students, volunteers, interns, elected officials and members of boards and committees.

Objectives

- To communicate the Township’s expectations in the use of social media outside of regular business hours.

Policy

Employees of the Township who maintain personal social media pages or accounts are required to comply with the following guidelines as they relate to their association with the Township.

Due to the public nature of commentary involving social media, employees should assume that there is potential for virtually worldwide access to statements made

using social media. Regardless of the size of one's social network or their individual privacy settings, it is assumed that statements made on social media lie within the public domain.

As such, employees will be held accountable for what they write or post on social media or other Internet pages regarding the Township of South Stormont. This includes both on-duty and off-duty conduct on social media and other Internet pages.

Inflammatory comments, including unprofessional; defamatory; or disparaging remarks made about the Township or its employees, management, elected officials, customers, competitors, partners, or vendors may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of your employment.

Employees are therefore expected to follow the guidelines herein when making posts or comments using social media, whether publicly or privately; regardless of whether they are on-duty or off-duty.

1. Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally both on-duty and off-duty. Where it is evident from an employee's social media profile or postings that the Township of South Stormont is their employer, the materials associated with their social media profile may reflect on the Township. Unprofessional comments, photographs, links, etc. must be avoided if such association is made to their social networks, regardless of one's privacy settings.

It is expected that employees who permit their social media profiles or postings to demonstrate an association by employment or otherwise with the Township will conduct themselves in a professional manner. If unwilling to do so, employees should refrain from listing the Township of South Stormont as their employer on their social media profiles.

2. Regardless of whether a social media profile has a demonstrated association with the Township, posts involving the following will not be tolerated and will subject the individual to discipline:
 - a. Proprietary and confidential Township information;
 - b. Discriminatory statements or sexual innuendos regarding co-workers, management, elected officials, customers, competitors, partners, or vendors;

- c. Defamatory statements regarding the Township, its employees, management, elected officials, customers, competitors, partners, or vendors;
 - d. Any discrimination due to any of the following characteristics:
 - Age
 - Ancestry, colour, race
 - Citizenship
 - Ethnic origin
 - Place of origin
 - Creed
 - Disability
 - Family status
 - Marital status (including single status)
 - Gender identity, gender expression
 - Record of offences
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
 - e. disseminating any private organizational information therein, or any negative comments regarding the Township human resources matters.
3. Township employees are prohibited from communicating on behalf of the Township, releasing confidential information, releasing news, or communicating as a representative of the Township without prior authorization to act as a designated Township of South Stormont representative.
 4. Use of personal social media may not conflict with any existing policies of the Township of South Stormont. This includes (but is not limited to) the Employee Code of Conduct, Confidential Information Policy, Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy, and Internet/Email Acceptable Use Policies.
 5. The Township of South Stormont's communication delegates are responsible for engaging with residents and the community on social media pages. Unless required to do so by reason of their position with the Township of South Stormont, employees are encouraged to refrain from responding to comments that a reasonable person reading those remarks would interpret as detrimental or harmful to the Township of South Stormont.
 6. Employees should abide by these guidelines whether they mention the Township of South Stormont by name or not. Even if the name is not mentioned in a post, it is possible a link can be made back to the corporation, which can negatively impact the Township's reputation. Where a link can be

made between a negative or inflammatory post and the Township, even if not named directly, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

Definitions

Social Media: forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content. This includes but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, Reddit, Instagram, and Pinterest.

Blog: a Web site that contains online personal reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer.

The scope of this policy is all encompassing, and it will expand naturally as social media evolves. As such, it will not require revision to include forms of electronic communication that may not be listed, developed, or used at the time of its inception.

Monitoring and Compliance

Any employee who fails to follow the guidelines set out in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of their employment. Accountability will be governed and enforced through the use of progressive discipline.

Authority and Related Policies

Code of Conduct and Internet Acceptable Use

Contact

For more information on this policy, contact: Chief Administrative Officer

SCHEDULE "A"
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Employee Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understand the Township of South Stormont's Social Media Policy.

I agree to comply with the guidelines of the Social Media Policy.

I understand that if I violate the rules of this policy, I may face legal, punitive or corrective action.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____