

FOND DU LAC COUNTY POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Dated January 17, 2012

PURPOSE

Fond du Lac County departments may utilize social media platforms to further enhance communication with various stakeholder organizations in support of County goals and objectives. County officials and County sponsored organizations have the ability to publish content, facilitate discussions, and communicate information through various social media related to conducting County business. Social media can further discussions of County issues, operations and services by providing members of the public the opportunity to participate in many ways using the Internet.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate use of both Fond du Lac County social media sites and employees personal social media/social networking sites as relates to Fond du Lac County business.

POLICY

1. Use of all Fond du Lac County social media platforms shall be approved by the County Executive, IT Director, the requesting Department Director with consultation with Corporation Counsel and the Risk Manager when appropriate. All content must be published using approved County social media platform and tools. Any content that might act as the “voice” or position of Fond du Lac County must be approved by the County Executive.
2. Use of all Fond du Lac County social media platforms shall adhere to applicable state, federal, and local laws, regulations and the County Internet Policy and Procedures dated 8-2-06.
3. Open records laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws. All social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc...) and entries shall clearly indicate that any information posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure under the open records law.
4. Content deemed not suitable by Fond du Lac County because it is not topically related to the particular objective, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria in this or other policies, may be taken off the platform but shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.
5. The County reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
6. Each Fond du Lac County social media platform shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the platform. Where possible, social media platforms should link back to the official Fond du Lac County Internet site for forms, documents and other information.

7. Each Fond du Lac County social media platform account is the sole proprietorship of Fond du Lac County. Moderators are authorized to create and post content on behalf of the Fond du Lac County, but do not own the accounts. When the function of moderator ends, the employee shall surrender all rights, including administrative authority and passwords, to these accounts. The County IS department will maintain a listing of all authorized social media accounts and sites.

8. Fond du Lac County social media content and comments containing any of the following shall **not** be allowed for posting:

- a. Non-topically related content
- b. Profane language or content
- c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
- d. Sexual content or links to sexual content
- e. Solicitations of commerce
- f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- g. Content that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- h. Content that violates legal ownership interest of any other party
- i. External links constituting official endorsement or representative views on behalf of the Fond du Lac County, or
- j. Content promoting political purposes, a political candidate, or party
- k. Content promoting or endorsing any religion or religious organization
- l. Content regarding or relating to any private commercial transactions or engagement in private business activities
- m. Other non-topically related content outside the limited public forum established to discuss County issues, operations and services

9. All social media platforms shall clearly indicate they are owned and maintained by Fond du Lac County and shall have the County contact information prominently displayed.

10. All County-related communication through social media tools shall be professional in nature and conducted in accordance with the County's communications policy, practices, and expectations.

11. The Fond du Lac County logos, marks, and insignia may be used on County social media platforms owned and maintained exclusively for County business and related County purposes. Do not use the Fond du Lac County's name, logos, marks and insignia to promote any political party, candidate or for partisan political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, endorse any produce or to engage in private business activities.

FOND DU LAC COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Social media/social networking includes various forms of information sharing, and uses technology to create web content communication and conversations. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.

Employees must be attentive to the fact that inappropriate and/or unauthorized postings to official Fond du Lac County social media sites or employee personal social media/social networking sites may have a negative impact on Fond du Lac County's relationship with the general public.

An employee's failure to follow provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Only Department Heads and/or their designees are authorized to post or modify content for official Fond du Lac County social media sites. Persons authorized to do so will be responsible for compliance with Fond du Lac County's social media standards.

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA/SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Employees who have personal social media/social networking sites should ensure these sites are personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. The employee must maintain a distinction between sharing personal and official government views. In addition, employees should never use their Fond du Lac County e-mail password or e-mail account in conjunction with personal social media/social networking sites unless authorized to do so by the Department Head for official Fond du Lac County business.

When employees operate personal social media/social networking sites, they should use a disclaimer to ensure that their stated views and opinions are understood to be their own and not those of Fond du Lac County. A disclaimer is required when they:

- a. Refer to work done by the County,
- b. Comment on any County related business or issues, or
- c. Provide a link to a County website.

Bloggers, posters and tweeters must also disclose any material connection or relationship they have to what is being described in a blog, post or tweet.

Employees are prohibited from uploading, posting or sharing information in any format (text, images, video, audio, etc.) of County personnel, clients, or Harbor Heaven residents, gained in the course of employment. This includes images, video, and audio taken at any County sponsored event, inside any County facilities or involving County equipment, or any other work-related documents or e-mail exchanges on a County site or their personal site. Employees may request prior approval from their Department Head to post any of the information described above.

Employees must not post or release anything related to Fond du Lac County that is proprietary, confidential, sensitive, Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or other County intellectual property on their personal social media/social networking site. Unless otherwise authorized by management, Sheriff's Department, Social Services, Health Department and Harbor Heaven employees must not create an association with a resident or client on a social media site.

Employees of all other departments must give careful consideration to whether the employee and resident/client relationship is compromised if the employee creates an association with the resident or client on a social media site.

Employees must comply with the confidentiality and privacy requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and other legal requirements of privacy and confidentiality, including information concerning minors, Harbor Heaven residents, public assistance recipients and County employees. It is the responsibility of the employee to not post any HIPAA related information, or any other information that is private, confidential, proprietary, or inappropriate to his/her social media/social networking site.

Employees may comment on issues of general or public concern (as opposed to personal grievances) so long as the comments do not disrupt the workplace, interfere with important working relationships or efficient workflow or undermine public confidence in the employee. Instances must be judged on a case by case basis.

- Matters of public concern are those matters of interest to the community as a whole, whether for social, political or other reasons.
- Examples of state or national issues of general or public concern include election campaigns, elected officials, legislation, national security, budgets, foreign policy or any topic of broad public interest or debate.
- Examples of personal grievances include disciplinary action, work schedule, morale or complaints about supervisors or co-workers that do not involve actual wrongdoing, illegal discrimination, corruption or waste. These types of comments may subject an employee to disciplinary action.

Negative comments on internal operations of Fond du Lac County or specific conduct of supervisors or peers that impacts the public perception of Fond du Lac County operations is not protected First Amendment speech, in accordance with established case law.

Posted content has the potential to be shared broadly, including with individuals you did not intend to communicate. Therefore an employee is responsible for ensuring that any content related to a co-worker is consistent with County policy regarding how to treat co-workers. For example, do not post content that would violate the County's policy regarding discrimination and harassment.

Employee bloggers are personally responsible for their commentary on blogs and social media/social networking sites and can be held personally liable for commentary that is considered defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any offended party, not just the County. The County is not responsible for protecting employees from the consequences of any information posted even if the employee has received prior authorization to participate in social media/social networking.

If any employee is at any time uncertain as to how to apply the directives found in this policy, the employee should seek guidance from his/her Department Head prior to engaging in electronic communication activities and/or review the County Internet Policy and Procedures dated 8-2-06.