

# CITY OF ROCHELLE

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**CATEGORY:** HUMAN RESOURCES

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**TITLE:** SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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**EFF. DATE:** 5/17

**REVISION DATE:**

**SUPERCEDES:** none

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

### PURPOSE

The City of Rochelle recognizes the value of social media for reinforcing brand recognition, engaging constituents, employees and elected officials in conversation, and for delivering information to the public. The City intends to leverage the power and reach of social media to communicate and deliver messages directly to citizens and to encourage citizen involvement, interaction and feedback.

Because the City supports open dialogue and the exchange of ideas, this policy has been created to provide guidelines for staff involved in the use of social media. To best manage online relationships and conversations, only those officially designated by the City of Rochelle have the authorization to speak on behalf of the City.

Given the immediate nature of these tools, the City will take a controlled, strategic approach to the use of social media to ensure information is current and appropriate and that responses to constituent requests and questions are accurate and timely. Employees and elected officials involved in social media management are responsible to know and uphold the policy.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The Marketing & Public Relations (“PR”) Manager is responsible for acting as the City’s central public information center; for coordinating the release of information to the public through all available avenues; for selecting, testing, and implementing the use of communications tools, including social media; for monitoring and responding to public comments, questions, and requests; for integration of social media into various City websites; and for creating and posting video to social media outlets.

Department Directors may assign staff additional duties as content editors for social media and website pages upon approval of the Marketing & PR Manager, to manage appropriate departmental social media and website content. However, no employee shall modify the content of any City website or social media content without the direction of the Marketing and PR Manager or the City Manager.

The City Attorney, upon request, is responsible for reviewing the legal terms and conditions required for creating a social media account and for determining what information is confidential, privileged or otherwise exempt from public disclosure.

All City of Rochelle social media should adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies. Freedom of Information Act laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.

### PROCEDURES

#### 1. Selection of Social Media Assets

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- a. The asset must be accessible to anyone above the age of 18 and available free of charge to users. No site that limits access to services based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical ability shall be used by the City.
- b. Accounts set up for the purpose of communicating with residents on behalf of the City must be created by the City and identified with the name “City of Rochelle” and use the City or Department logo.
- c. Authorized City representatives who set up account profiles shall use a City email account (“@rochelleil.us”), City or department name, and a City office phone number. All profiles on City websites or in City social media accounts should provide a link to the appropriate website and include the direct phone number.

## 2. Content Development

- a. All content shall only be provided for public viewing on any City website or social media site after said content is approved by the Marketing & PR Manager and/or the City Manager.
- b. To ensure efficient use of resources, content developed for social media uses shall be located on and linked to the City’s official website ([www.cityofrochelle.net](http://www.cityofrochelle.net)) whenever possible.
- c. All content, including photos and videos, must be owned by the City or have the appropriate release or authorization from the copyright holder before use by any City employee.
- d. Content related to crisis or emergency communications must conform to the policies and procedures contained within the relevant plans.

## 3. Design and Branding

- a. All profiles and pages should be clearly identified as official City of Rochelle assets, using the City or department logo as the identifying image.
- b. Design colors should be consistent with the official colors in use by the City.

## 4. Management and Monitoring

- a. The Marketing & PR Manager will make use of available and appropriate online monitoring tools to ensure conformance with this policy, quality, and consistency.

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- b. A minimum of two users are assigned to each page to ensure continuity during absences.
  
- c. Staff should monitor the list of users who voluntarily “follow” or “friend” our social media assets to ensure that spam, obscene material, and material not within the authorized scope of a limited public forum or strictly commercial messages are not posted. Users fitting those categories should, where possible, be given a warning that continued introduction of such messages will result in their access being blocked; followed by blockage where the warning is ignored.
  
- d. Staff should develop and post the purpose of the communications channel somewhere on the site where it is located, clearly identifying the types of comments that are appropriate for that channel, and providing warning that comments or posts not fitting the policies will be deleted.

## **5. Use of Social Media by Employees and Elected Officials**

- a. As a representative of the City or one of its departments, each employees and elected officials engaged in social media should take responsibility for what they write, identify themselves as the author, and exercise good judgment and common sense.
  
- b. It is appropriate and desirable for City employees and elected officials to engage in professional networking and training opportunities through social media.
  
- c. When posting or responding to posts as a City representative from their personal accounts, employees and elected officials should always include their name and, when appropriate, title and identify themselves as a City employees and elected officials. When posting from an official City of Rochelle account, they should identify themselves when appropriate or if asked.
  
- d. When an employees and elected officials participates, after authorization has been given by the Marketing and PR Manager and/or the City Manager, in a blog, wiki, online social network, or any other form of social media as a representative of the City, certain standards of conduct apply:
  - 1. The employees and elected officials should always show respect. Avoid ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or any conduct that would not be acceptable in the City’s workplace. Show consideration for others’ privacy.
  
  - 2. Employees and elected officials s should avoid engaging in arguments, be the first to correct his or her own mistakes, and indicate if he or she has altered previous posts.

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3. All content and posts should be designed to add value. Employees and elected officials should strive to provide worthwhile information and perspective.
- e. The City promotes transparency and honesty in communications and therefore, employees and elected officials shall not post anonymously or use pseudonyms or misleading screen names when representing the City.

## 6. Guidelines for Private Use of Social Media

- a. Confidential, proprietary and non-released City information should not be included in employee's private social media activity.
- b. If an employee has a personal profile on a social media site or has a personal weblog, they should not work on them during their scheduled work time, excluding authorized breaks.
- c. Monitoring personal social media, including microblogging, SMS, text messaging, or instant messaging accounts should not interfere with an employee's work for the City.

## 7. Comments & Replies

- a. To encourage engagement and increase transparency, it is the City of Rochelle's intent to leverage social media as a method of two-way communications. To that end, when the appropriate resources are available, comment and forum features will be activated to allow users to make comments, ask questions, or request services.
- b. Comments and forums should be reviewed daily.
- c. Staff will assess the content of each post or comment to determine if it requires a response from the City.
- d. Posts or comments requiring a response will be answered with a status of the response as soon as practical. Whenever possible, responses should be made immediately.
- e. Posts or comments requiring a service request will be submitted to appropriate staff for action.

## 8. Comment Moderation

- a. In a designated public social media forum created by the City, the City shall delete or reject posts from users that contain content that is obscene, threatening, harassing, maliciously defamatory, copyrighted or commercial. City employees and elected officials should

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immediately remove any comment which violates any local, state, or federal law regarding discrimination, harassment, or violence.

b. In a limited public social media forum created by the City, in addition to any other limitations imposed on the specific site by the City, the following posts or comments shall be removed or deleted:

- a. Obscene, vulgar, threatening, harassing, or maliciously defamatory comments.
- b. Comments not related to the specified subject or, although portions relate to the specified subject, include substantial unrelated material;
- c. If applicable, comments from persons or groups not within the permitted commentator group or other limitations of the limited forum;
- d. Comments promoting or opposing any person campaigning for election to a political office or promoting or opposing any ballot proposition (not applicable to the employees' and elected officials' personal social media site);
- e. Comments promoting or advertising a business or commercial transaction or containing copyrighted material;
- f. Overtly self-promoting comments;
- g. Information that may tend to compromise safety or security; and
- h. Information that contains personal information such as address, birthdate, medical information or social security number.

**Repeated violations will result in blocking the offending individual from the particular social media site.**

c. Comments shall not be deleted or removed based upon the views expressed. Comments will not be edited. Applicable limitations should be posted on the social media site. Hyperlinks may be prohibited in their entirety, or they may be deleted or removed where the linked site includes material falling within the above listed prohibitions.

d. Unless the City specifically states on a social media system that communications on that specific system shall be considered as official communications with the City for a specific purpose, communications made through a social media system will in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment by or to the City or by or to any official or employee of the City for any purpose. For example, a post or comment that asks that the City provide public records will not be considered a public records request until being sent through the proper channels. Likewise, a social media post or comment related to a business license application or building permit will not be considered by the City. Comments specific to a City license, application, permit, project, etc., should be submitted directly to the appropriate City official, department or division, as indicated at [www.cityofrochelle.net](http://www.cityofrochelle.net).

## 9. Linking Policy and Disclaimer of Endorsement

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- a. The City shall review and reserves the right to reject any hyperlink to a site not maintained by the City.
- b. If any hyperlink to a non-City site is posted by the City or permitted in a comment, the City social media site should note that any link to a site which is not the City's site, is provided solely for our constituent's information and convenience, and may include views not necessarily those of the City. Further, that the City does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of information contained on a linked website and is not responsible for transmissions users receive from linked websites.
- c. The City will post and/or share the following:
  1. Community events hosted by organizations and businesses;
  2. Business participating in community event;
  3. New business information; and
  4. Local interest stories.
- d. The City will not post and/or share
  1. Post promoting a specific business, other than those stated above.

## 10. Records Retention

- a. Content developers will keep electronic copies of all messages created for and distributed on social media by the City's archiving subscription service. Messages posted to the City's social media accounts are archived automatically. Records shall be retained in conformance with the Records Retention Schedules.
- b. When possible, content developers should avoid creating new material on social media sites. Instead, use existing material from existing websites or previously published documents to ensure that other forms of the information are retained.
- c. Deleted comments are automatically archived utilizing the City's archiving subscription.