

# Policies



**Subject** Social Media Policy  
**Section** Communications; Human Resources  
**Approved by** Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer  
**Approved on** March 15, 2024

---

**Policy Purpose:** Social media is a valuable tool, among others, to communicate directly with people Metro serves in greater Portland. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter allow Metro employees and elected officials to foster engagement and exchange news and information.

This policy defines acceptable behavior on social media and on the web for all Metro employees, and the roles and responsibilities for those authorized to create social content and oversee social media activities on behalf of Metro.

This policy also cites policies and practices that guide staff to comply with state and federal laws, and other applicable Metro policies. Applicable policies include, but are not limited to, the political activity by public employees, discrimination and harassment-free workplace, employee conduct at Metro, and employee ethics.

Employees authorized to post content on Metro’s social media channels should read and apply this social media policy in conjunction with Metro's social media guidebook.

---

## Definitions

**Content:** Refers to any posts, writings, material, documents, photographs, graphics, videos, links or other information that is created, posted, distributed or transmitted via social media.

**Engagement:** Metro’s social media followers engage with Metro’s social media content when they interact with it in a variety of ways. Their engagement includes likes, comments, direct messages, link clicks, mentions, saves and shares. Metro also engages with its social media followers when its employees, specifically those tasked with social media responsibilities, like comments, reply to

questions in comments and direct messages, mention or tag, or both, other relevant social media profiles, and issue callouts or crowdsource.

**Social media:** Refers to digital platforms and tools used to 1) engage with people who call greater Portland home and other stakeholders, 2) share timely information, 3) gather public feedback and 4) share Metro's story.

**Social media management tools:** Refers to third-party solutions, such as Later and Sprout Social, to help manage social media accounts, often in a dashboard format.

## **Guidelines**

### Approved social media and management tools

1. Approved social media and social media management tools appropriate for Metro's official use include but are not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Sprout Social.
2. The social media landscape is ever changing. Social media companies frequently add new features and change algorithms that determine which posts are relevant for which audiences. Over time, the list of platforms appropriate for official Metro engagement may change due to these shifts or to a platform's popularity and use, or both. We may also adopt new social media platforms to meet our desired target audiences where they are.

### Personal use of social media

As public employees, Metro employees' free speech rights in the workplace are different than those of the general public. They are subject to a balancing act between the right of a public employer to operate efficiently and employees' free speech rights. Metro's policies incorporate limitations on free speech intended to maintain efficient government operations, such as the law's limitations on harassment in the workplace and political activity.

1. Metro employees using social media for personal use outside of work should exercise caution so as not to give the false impression that they are speaking on behalf of Metro. This is to avoid confusion and unintentionally misleading the public.
  - a. Employees must avoid using Metro-generated content, including Metro's logo, venue logos, or other Metro branding, in a way that may lead a reader to believe they are viewing Metro's official website.
  - b. Employees who are known by the public to be Metro employees are encouraged to include a disclaimer on their personal social media accounts stating that the opinions and posts contained there are personal and are not endorsed by Metro.

2. Metro employees using social media should have no expectation of privacy for any data drafted and posted during work time or while using Metro equipment.
3. Metro employees using social media for personal use outside of work may be subject to discipline for posts on personal blogs, profiles, and other social media accounts that are related to Metro and adversely impact the Metro work environment.

Examples of social media conduct for which an employee may be disciplined include disclosing confidential information or threatening, harassing, or violating the privacy of others at Metro.

For the purposes of this provision, confidential information includes the following:

- a. Other employees' identifiable personal information, such as medical information, social security numbers, home addresses and telephone numbers, unless permission is specifically granted by the employee;
- b. Information about confidential personnel matters, such as disciplinary information or information about job applicant performance during the selection and hiring process, unless permission is specifically granted by the employee or job applicant;
- c. Information about interview or test questions used in the selection process that may provide an unfair advantage during the hiring process;
- d. Information about security measures in place to protect employees, the public, and Metro assets;
- e. Information that is subject to attorney-client privilege;
- f. Any other information that is required to be kept confidential by law or Metro policy.

For the purposes of this provision, threatening, harassing, or violating the privacy of others at Metro includes the following:

- a. Threats of violence of any kind to co-workers or to the workplace;
  - b. Defamatory, offensive or demeaning comments about employees;
  - c. Information that would invade the privacy of employees.
4. This policy is not intended to restrict employees from legally protected speech, such as engaging in concerted labor activity or speaking as a private individual on matters of public concern. Employees will not be disciplined for such conduct. Determinations under this provision will be made in accordance with applicable law.

## Official use of social media

Authorized employees who post content on Metro's social media channels as part of their jobs must:

1. Familiarize themselves and comply with all Terms of Use of the social media companies. Each employee must retain a copy of the company's Terms of Use and be alert to any modification to those terms. Departments may establish their own procedures for monitoring changes to social media companies' Terms of Use.
2. Not discriminate against protected speech based on content or viewpoint except as provided in the social media Terms of Use and Metro's policy on its comment moderation policy and practices.
3. Refrain from posting content on Metro's social media channels that include the following:
  - a. Confidential information;
  - b. Nonpublic or otherwise sensitive information;
  - c. Defamatory, offensive or demeaning material;
  - d. Inaccurate or misleading information;
  - e. Information that would invade the privacy of others;
  - f. Information or opinions related to legal matters, litigation or parties involved in legal or litigation matters;
  - g. Statements promoting or opposing election petitions, candidates, political committees or ballot measures in violation of restrictions on political campaigning by public employees;
  - h. Personnel matters regarding yourself or others;
  - i. Illegal or banned substances and narcotics;
  - j. Pornography or other offensive or illegal materials; or
  - k. Uncivil, tactless, incendiary or combative statements.
4. Publish accurate and clear information to social media accounts by checking facts, grammar and spelling, citing sources, avoiding copyright infringement and presenting balanced views.
5. Quickly make corrections or clarifications as needed. Employees must clearly indicate corrections and clarifications and include the time and reason for the correction or clarification.
6. Protect and respect the privacy of clients, partners, and other employees; get permission to feature them on social media; and get a signed release or email approval to feature anyone outside of Metro.
7. Comply with federal, state and local laws including all public records, copyright, retention, fair use, privacy and financial disclosure laws.

## Moderation Policy

Metro acknowledges and respects the right to free speech. Employees authorized to manage Metro's social media channels must center transparency in the organization's comment moderation practices. That means those authorized to oversee social media activities on behalf of Metro may not delete or hide comments or block users on Metro's social media platforms, subject to the limitations set forth below.

Metro has a legitimate interest in maintaining a reasonable level of decorum and order on its social media channels. Therefore, certain types of comments will not be allowed. These include the following comments that contain:

- Threats of imminent violence or call to act illegally.
- Defamation. A statement of opinion is not defamation. Defamation is generally defined as a false assertion of fact that damages a person's reputation.
- Personal identifiable information not meant to be public, such as someone's home address, phone number or social security number.
- Pornography.
- Copyright violations. Content that infringes on copyrights, trademarks or the intellectual property of others. This does not cover links.
- Malware.

Before deleting any comment, Metro will take the following actions: (1) determine that the comment is not protected speech; (2) save a copy of the comment; (3) notify the poster that their comment violates Metro policy; (4) provide the poster with a copy of Metro's policy, a copy of their comment and a brief explanation for why their comment was deleted.

Metro does not endorse or sponsor any comment made on any of Metro's social media posts by parties other than Metro. Such comments do not reflect the opinions and position of the Metro regional government or its officers and employees.

Metro does not intend to create a public forum or a limited public forum on any of its social media sites. Therefore, Metro reserves the right to disable comments for certain posts for which it is not seeking engagement.

Metro will post on its social media channels its external comments policy and other disclaimers, wherever possible.

Employees authorized to oversee social media activities on behalf of Metro must consult with their direct supervisors or the social media coordinator before deleting any comments. The supervisors or coordinator should elevate any concerns to the communications director, other communications managers and Office of Metro Attorney, if necessary.

## **Responsibilities**

Employees authorized to post social content on Metro's social media channels must follow the guidance, standards and best practices in Metro's social media guidebook.

### Information Services

Provides:

- Technical and electronic resources for managing and protecting Metro's social media passwords.
- Expertise in security and privacy.
- Expertise in records retention.

*Please see Metro's social media guidebook to review the most up-to-date social media roles and responsibilities by other Metro employees outside of IS.*

### Public records and records retention

Employees authorized to create and post content on Metro's social channels must maintain and preserve records in compliance with Oregon public records law, ORS 192.001 et seq. The public records law applies whether the site is hosted by Metro or a third party, such as a social media website.

Employees authorized to create and post content on Metro's social media channels must treat all social content - each post, photo, comment, and list of individuals following Metro's social media profiles - as public records. All of Metro's social media content may be subject to public records requests.

## **References**

- Record Retention Policy: Executive Order No. 91 Oregon public records laws, ORS 192.001 et seq.
- Oregon restrictions on political campaigning by public employees, ORS 260.432.