



City of Ellensburg Social Media Policy

1. **Purpose:** This policy sets guidelines for the establishment and use by the City of Ellensburg of Social Media as a means of conveying information about the City and its events and activities to the community. The City of Ellensburg's website (<http://www.ellensburgwa.gov>) will remain the City's primary and predominant internet presence. The City's online services and sites are limited public forums and are moderated by City staff.
 - a. The City of Ellensburg has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City through use of Social Media.
 - b. For purposes of this policy, the terms "Social Media" and "Social Media Sites" are understood to be content created by individuals, organizations and/or entities, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of Social Media that may be used by the City include, but are not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), Pinterest, blogs, RSS, YouTube, TikTok, Google, Next-door, and Flickr. For purposes of this policy, "comments" include written responses, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communicative content on Social Media Sites.
2. **General Policy:** The establishment and use by any City department of City Social Media sites are subject to approval by the Public Information Officer. Use of Social Media shall be administered by the City of Ellensburg Public Information Officer and any Department-designated Social Media Administrator, as described in this policy. In approving the use of the City Social Media site, the City of Ellensburg Public Information Officer, in coordination with any Department necessary, shall establish guidelines for the use of the site, including but not limited to the following information.
 - a. The purpose of the Social Media site, which may include dissemination of general information about the City or dissemination of information about a specific City Department or City activity, event, or project.
 - b. What City department will be directly responsible for monitoring of, and creation of content on, the site.
 - i. City Social Media Sites should make it clear that they are maintained by the City of Ellensburg, and that they follow this Social Media Policy.
 - ii. To the extent possible, the use of Social Media will link back to the City's website for forms, documents, surveys, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with or utilize the services mentioned in the City's post.
 - iii. The City of Ellensburg's website at <https://www.ellensburgwa.gov/> will remain the City's primary and predominant Internet presence.
 - iv. Public records requests should be made through the City of Ellensburg's website <https://www.ellensburgwa.gov/785/Records-Division> or by contacting the appropriate department at City Hall or the Ellensburg Police Department,



location dependent on your records request, during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8 AM – 5 PM.

- v. If you are experiencing or witnessing an emergency, call 911.
- vi. This policy may be revised at any time.

- 3. **Comment Policy:** As a public entity the City of Ellensburg must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
 - a. The intended purpose of establishing a Social Media presence is to disseminate time-sensitive information to residents of the City of Ellensburg, as well as for marketing and promotional purposes related to City business.
 - b. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the City's Public Information Officer or designee.
 - i. Comments not related to the business of the City (or specific Department if Department-specific Site), or not relevant to the original topic;
 - ii. Violent, profane, obscene or pornographic content and/or language;
 - iii. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, or other protected class;
 - iv. Content that threatens or defames any person or organization;
 - v. Content that includes personal attacks, harassment, insults or threatening language, or is hateful or intended to incite violence;
 - vi. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to, advertising of any non-government related event, or business or product for sale;
 - vii. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
 - viii. Encouragement of any illegal activity;
 - ix. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - x. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.
 - xi. Content posted using impersonation of someone else.
 - xii. Comments in support or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.
 - c. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Ellensburg social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by the City of Ellensburg, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Ellensburg.
 - d. All users of a City of Ellensburg social media site are subject to the site's own privacy policy. The City of Ellensburg has no control over a third-party site's privacy policy page unless otherwise stated. The City of Ellensburg has no control over content, commercial advertisements or other postings produced by the Social Media site that appear on the City of Ellensburg Social Media site as part of the site's environment.



- e. The City of Ellensburg operates and maintains its Social Media sites as a public service to provide information about City programs, services, issues, projects, events, and activities. The City of Ellensburg assumes no liability for any inaccuracies these Social Media sites may contain and does not guarantee that the Social Media sites will be uninterrupted, permanent, or error-free.
- f. The City of Ellensburg reserves the right to deny access to City of Ellensburg social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Ellensburg's Social Media Policy, and at any time and without prior notice.
- g. The City of Ellensburg reserves the right to turn off the comment or reply option on City social media posts.
- h. Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comments requesting responses from the City and for comments in violation of this policy.
- i. All comments posted to any City of Ellensburg Facebook or Instagram sites are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>, and the City of Ellensburg reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonably responsive action.
- j. Each type of Social Media maintains a "Terms of Use" agreement. All comments posted to any City Social Media site are bound by these Terms of Use and the City reserves the right to report any user violation.
- k. All comments posted to any City of Ellensburg X (formerly known as Twitter) sites are bound by X's Terms of Service, located at <https://twitter.com/en/tos>, and the City of Ellensburg reserves the right to report any violation of X's Terms of Service to X with the intent of X taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.
- l. All posts and comments are public records subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Act and Office of the Secretary of State Records Management Guidelines and Retention Schedules.
- m. Reporting/Hiding of unauthorized comments
 - i. The City requires that Department-designated Social Media Administrators immediately notify the Public Information Officer or designee if there is any posted material that may be inappropriate, that violates this Policy, or any City policy, is illegal, or that potentially infringes the copyrights or other rights of any persons, businesses, or organizations. The Public Information Officer or designee will investigate and respond to all reports of potential violations of this Policy. Social Media Administrators have the discretion to hide comments outlined in 3.b. of the above Comment Policy.
 - ii. Any content hidden based on these guidelines must be retained by the sponsoring Department, including the time, date, and identity of the poster, when available, and a record of that staff name, date, and time the content was edited or hidden. The records should be in a searchable, organized electronic



format, and retained in such a manner that it can be deleted after meeting the required retention periods.

- n. Banning/Blocking a user from a City social media page
 - i. The City reserves the right, at any time and without prior notice, to ban or block any individual who violates this Policy.
- o. Appeal of decision to ban/block
 - i. A person who has been banned or blocked has a right to submit an appeal to the City Public Information Officer. Submit a written request to the City Public Information Officer at webmaster@ellensburgwa.gov stating the reason or reasons why they wish for the ban/block to be removed. The Public Information Officer should render a written decision on the request within fifteen business days (excluding official City Holidays) and give the basis for the decision. For good cause, the Public Information Officer may extend time for rendering a decision. The decision of the Public Information Officer shall be the final administrative decision of the City.
 - ii. If the ban or block is removed and the person again violates any part of this policy, the person may be banned or blocked permanently.

4. **Updates and Maintenance:** A social media platform, like any communication resource, must be updated regularly to ensure the information provided is current, accurate, and useful. Social Media Administrators are responsible for maintaining social media sites by viewing and updating them as necessary and appropriate. As a best practice, social media site content should be updated at least once per week.

Definitions

- a. **Public Information Officer:** The City's designee for administering the City's communication tools including social media sites.
- b. **Social Media:** Online technologies, tools and practices that facilitate social interaction, dialogue, emergency notifications and business. Social media can take many different forms including text, images, audio, and video. These sites are typically third-party hosted online technologies that facilitate social interaction and dialogue via blogs, message boards, podcasts, wikis, and video logs.
- c. **Social Media Administrator:** A City employee identified by the Department Director to have administrative or posting privileges for a City social media page.
- d. **Social Media Site:** Third-party applications including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, X, Pinterest, blogs, RSS, YouTube, TikTok, Google, Nextdoor, and Flickr, etc.

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Signature: 