

**CITY OF LUDINGTON**  
SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Effective Date: 5/6/2019

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this social media use policy and guidelines (the “Policy”) is to establish a policy and guidelines for the use of social media by City officials and employees to provide information to the public. This Policy and guidelines are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the City are properly authorized and in correct form, and that the public is clearly and fully informed that a message received by the City from the public by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

The objective of the use of social media by the City or its departments is to expand and facilitate the dissemination of information in a user-friendly manner from the City to its residents, taxpayers and the general public.

This Policy shall apply to all City agencies, committees, departments, and instrumentalities, as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency or official permitted by the City to post on City social media sites.

**II. Scope**

This Policy governs all social media use by or on behalf of the City and/or its agencies, committees, departments, or instrumentalities. Any official pages or sites created and/or maintained by an individual, agency, committee, department, or instrumentality of the City require prior approval of the City Manager and shall comply with this Policy.

**III. Requirements and Procedures**

- A. The City’s official website ([www.ludington-mi.gov](http://www.ludington-mi.gov)) shall remain the City’s primary means of communication. Wherever possible, postings to social media platforms should link to information readily available on the City website.
- B. The establishment of City social media sites is subject to the approval of the City Manager. The City Manager will be granted administrative access rights to all City social media pages.
- C. Administrative access to City social media accounts will be limited to the City Manager, Department Supervisor and/or his/her designee (upon approval of City Manager).

- D. City social media sites should make clear that they are maintained by City of Ludington.
- E. This Policy will be presented on the social media site either by means of a link back to the City website or published in its entirety on the social media site.
- F. All City use of social media, including use by departments or instrumentalities of the City, are responsible for complying with applicable local, federal, and state laws, regulations, and policies including, but not limited to Michigan’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Any content maintained on a City social media site that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers to the website, posted communications, and communications submitted for posting may be considered a “public record” under FOIA and is subject to public disclosure.
- G. City social media sites will comply with usage rules and regulations required by the site provider, including privacy policies.
- H. City employees representing the City on social media outlets must identify themselves by name, and when relevant, by their position with the City. All City policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites by City employees.
- I. The City Manager shall designate two people to monitor content on all social media sites to ensure adherence to this Policy for appropriate use, message, and branding consistent with the goals of the City.
- J. ‘Friending’ or ‘liking’ between a City account and a third party is permitted.
- K. Social media sites are not to be used by the general public for making any official communication to the City, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, or giving notice required by any statute, ordinance or regulation (e.g. notice of claim). Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every City social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting such a communication.

#### **IV. Contract Guidelines**

- A. The goal of the City’s social media sites is to serve as an online information source focused on City issues, projects, news and events and is not intended as a public forum.
- B. The following guidelines apply to content posted on City social media sites:
  - 1. The content of City social media site shall pertain to City related or sponsored/supported news, issues, programs, meetings, services and events. Content can include, but is not limited to information, photographs, videos and hyperlinks.

2. The City shall have full permission or rights, including copyrights, to any content posted by the City, including photographs and videos.
  3. Postings shall only contain information that is available to the public and shall not contain confidential information as defined by any City policy or state or federal law.
  4. Other than for specific initiatives to improve the public perception of City employees and the organization, postings may NOT contain any personal information, except for the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public.
  5. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the City social media sites shall review, be familiar with, and comply with the social media site's use policies terms and conditions.
  6. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the City's social media sites shall not express his or her own personal views or concerns through such postings. All postings on any City media site shall reflect only official goals, objectives, policies and views of the City, as established or confirmed by the City Manager or the City Council
  7. City social media sites may contain content including, but not limited to, advertisements and hyperlinks over which the City has no control. The City does not endorse any content placed on City social media sites by the site's owners, vendors or partners.
  8. The City reserves the right to implement or remove any functionality of its website or social media site. This includes, but is not limited to, information, articles, pictures, videos, comments or any other form of communication that is posted on a City social media site.
- C. Commenting Guidelines. The City's presence on social media is intended to facilitate one-way communication of City information to social media users and, therefore, two-way communication and "comments" are discouraged. To the extent that a social media platform utilized by the City requires two-way communication to be utilized or such two-way communication cannot be disabled, the following guidelines shall apply to comments:
1. All comments will be monitored by City staff.
  2. The City reserves the right to delete and/or censor all comments from its website and social media sites with content that:
    - a. Contains a personal attack, insult, racial slur or any other derogatory term;
    - b. Defames a person or organization;

- c. Is off-topic and unrelated to the original post;
  - d. Uses foul language or is sexually explicit, including “masked” profanity;
  - e. Promotes hate or discrimination of any kind;
  - f. Is blatant spam, including advertising commercial services or products;
  - g. Encourages illegal activity or violates any local, state or federal law;
  - h. Contains private or personal information;
  - i. Endorses political candidates or a particular stance on an active ballot measure or specific legislation;
  - j. Is reported as abuse;
  - k. Contains random or unintelligible text;
  - l. Compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems;
  - m. Violates the legal ownership interest of any other party;
  - n. Contains images, videos or links to sites that do not conform to this Policy;
  - o. Contains viruses or computer code; or
  - p. Violates any aspect of this Policy.
3. These guidelines shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink on all City social media sites.
  4. Repeated violations of the commenting guidelines shall be cause for the author to be permanently blocked from the City social media sites.

**V. Enforcement**

- A. The City Manager shall be responsible for the oversight of the provisions contained within this Policy.
- B. The City Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for the implementation of the provisions contained within this Policy.

**VI. Revisions to Policy**

The City Council reserves the right to revise this Policy at any time without notice.