

Fall River County Policy for Public Information

Purpose:

The intended purpose behind establishing county social media sites is: first, to disseminate information from the county, about the county, to its citizens; and second to engage in dialogue with citizens, visitors and potential visitors.

Definitions:

1. **Social Media:** Social media is content created by individuals using accessible technology through the Internet. Examples of social media include but are not limited to: Facebook, blogs, Instagram, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, Etc.
2. **County Moderator:** An authorized County official or employee who creates and is responsible for posted articles, messages and information on social media sites. The County Moderator reviews, authorizes and allows content submitted by public commentators to be posted to a County social media site (see section below).
3. **PIO:** The Public Information Officer is an employee appointed by the County Commissioner to be the main communication coordinator or spokesperson for the county.
4. **Post:** Content created and disseminated directly by Fall River County employees or officials. (includes videos & audio recordings)
5. **Sharing:** Disseminating content created by another entity, in most cases that was received via the same social media platform.
6. **Comment:** A response to a post or shared post on a social media site.

Section 1

Use of Social Media on Official County Business

1. **Regulation:** All Official County Social Media Platforms will:
 - a. Be approved by the county PIO and (if applicable) the Department Supervisor
 - b. Allow the county PIO administrative status on the account
2. **Applicable law and policies:** All County social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies, including, to the extent applicable and feasible, those relating to the disclosure and retention of public records.
3. **County reserved rights:** The County reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

4. **Content Restrictions:**

a. **Posts:**

- i. Fall River County will limit its post to the following topics:
 1. Official Meetings
 - a. Announcements, agendas, recordings, and minutes
 2. Public Service Announcements
 - a. Deadlines for county or state programs such as tax assistance programs, voter registration, or assessment appeals.
 - b. Information regarding general operation and procedures for county offices for the purpose of creating better understanding with the public (Examples: understanding tax & appeal cycles, how to form a road district, understanding where tax dollars go)
 - c. Safety reminders whether of general or seasonal nature
 - d. Emergency Management information such as evacuations, road closures, specific hazards or an on-going event that is causing public concern.
 - e. Changes in hours of operation, office closures, office locations or other logistic items.
 3. Training for employees (generally privately posted using county social media sites)
 4. Informational, educational, or safety events sponsored directly by a county office or a local tax entity
 5. Changes in personnel; introducing new employees, announcing retirements, announcing changes in positions, etc
 6. Advertising employment openings for county offices.
- ii. The following posts are NOT allowed:
 1. any type of election campaign or endorsement of a candidate
 - a. an exception will be made for posting factual information regarding county initiated ballot measures
 2. any type of fundraising event,
 3. any type of commercial business endorsement
- iii. County Employees must follow all copyright laws, public records laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and any other laws that might apply to the County or their functional area.
- iv. County Employees must not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without their approval.
- v. If it is necessary to correct a post, either for a spelling, grammatical, or informational mistake a note should be included in the post as to the edit.
- vi. It is the job of county employees to share facts not opinions.

- b. **Sharing:** Fall River County will limit its sharing of posts from other entities using the same content guidelines as those for Posts. In addition it will only share posts from trusted and known sources such as other local government and state entities.
- c. **Comments:** Comments by the public will be monitored by the county PIO and County Moderators.
 - i. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on county social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the PIO or County Moderator.
 - 1. Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
 - 2. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the county;
 - 3. Comments that cannot be verified as factual;
 - 4. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
 - 5. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, sex, national origin, mental disability or physical disability;
 - 6. Defamatory or personal attacks;
 - 7. Threats to any person or organization;
 - a. Moderator will report said threats immediately to law enforcement
 - 8. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
 - a. an exception will be made for discussion of county initiated ballot issues as long as said comments follow the other rules of courtesy listed here
 - 9. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
 - 10. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
 - 11. Encouragement of illegal activity;
 - 12. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - 13. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

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- ii. A comment posted by a member of the public on any county 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, Fall River County, nor do such comments necessarily reflect county opinions or policies.
- iii. The county reserves the right to deny access to county social media sites for any individual, who violates the county's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
 - 1. The county PIO should be notified by County Moderators of any person whose comment is removed or who is blocked from commenting on a county social media site. This notification should be via email and included the reason for the removal and a copy of the comment.
 - 2. The moderation process must be objective and impartial and avoid any perception that posts are being censored for political reasons.
 - 3. The moderation process must be sensitive to the diversity of the public and avoid any perception that it is being applied in a discriminatory manner.
- d. **Sensitive Information:** Employees shall ensure that information shared via social media is public information. They must protect their privacy, the privacy of citizens and the information the County holds. Follow all privacy protection laws, i.e., HIPPA, and protect sensitive and confidential County information
- 5. **Advertising:** If advertising is utilized on a county social media site the county will, where possible, prevent the showing of political ads and non-family safe ads.

Section 2

Public Recordings: In order to make government more accessible and more informative to its citizens and allow for a more participative process, Fall River County has established the following policy for the recording of public meetings.

1. **Types of meetings to be recorded:**
 - a. Board of Commissioners
 - b. Any other meetings the commissioners determine to be recorded
2. **Rules:** The following rules will be adhered to by the public and officials for all recorded meetings.
 - a. Robert's Rules will be followed during meetings.
 - b. Each person addressing the board must introduce themselves.
 - c. Any person requesting to address the commission on a meeting agenda item may be given one minute or less to do so at the discretion of the chairperson. All other comments they have will be addressed during public comment.
 - d. The board requires that any individual that has an issue with any department, first address that issue with the pertinent department supervisor. If issue is unresolved, then it may be brought to the commission. Comments addressing individual employees will not be allowed.
3. **Posting:** Meeting videos will be linked from the County website at fallriver.sdcounties.org and will be available online for 24/7 viewing on the following channel: Fall River County Commission SD at www.youtube.com and will be available 24 hours after the conclusion of the meeting.
 - a. Fall River County takes no responsibility for any 'downtime' or 'outages' for www.youtube.com or the county website which are beyond the county's control
4. **Broadcast:** The meeting may be broadcasted on a local government cable station.

5. Edits:

- a. Fall River County reserves the right to edit the public copy of an officially recorded meeting in the following way:
 - i. To 'bleep' or mute profanity, obscenity, or indecent speech, in compliance with FCC regulations
 - ii. To visually obstruct or 'blur' any visual that may be considered indecent or obscene, in compliance with FCC regulations
 - iii. To 'bleep' or mute any information which is protected by law, i.e. HIPPA, that may be accidentally or inadvertently spoken of during a public meeting.
- b. An unedited copy of the meeting will always be preserved by the courthouse for review in the event that the 'edit' is questioned by a member of the public. However, the original recording will not be obtainable by the public.
- c. Any edit done to a video will be noted with the reason for the edit. This note will appear in the video or comments.

6. Obtaining Copies:

- a. Anyone wishing to obtain an edited DVD of a recording must make a request in writing to the County Auditor's Office and provide payment of \$10.00 per DVD. The revenue received shall be deposited in the County General Fund.
- b. The request for a DVD should be made with 24 hour advance notice.
- c. Recordings/DVD's shall be retained for 7 years by the County Auditor's Office.

7. Official Record

- a. Recording/DVD's are made for broadcast purposes only. The official record of proceedings shall be the minutes as approved by the governing body.
- b. The recordings are provided as a public service and do not constitute an official record. No warranty or guarantee of any kind is provided.

Section 3

Employee Access to County Social Media Accounts

1. **Access:** Only the County PIO and County Moderators will be given access to post and share via county social media accounts.
2. **Understanding Policy:** All County Moderators and the PIO will read this county Social Media Policy and sign the attached form stating that they have read and understand these policies prior to being given access to the county social media accounts.
3. **Choosing County Moderators:** Department Supervisors may decide which of their employees (or themselves) they would like to appoint as County Moderator for their department or they may choose not to appoint any employee and instead rely on the county PIO.
4. **Moderator Employment Termination:** It is the job of the immediate supervisor to inform the PIO immediately if a County Moderator under their supervision has their employment terminated or if they resign so that the appropriate accounts and accesses can be removed.
5. **Policy Violation:** County Moderators who violate the county social media policy will be reported to their Department Head or Supervisor for appropriate disciplinary action. The PIO may choose to suspend their access to county accounts until their Supervisor is able to determine disciplinary action or resolve the issue.
6. **Access List:** The County PIO will maintain a list of the county's social media accounts and the County Moderators who have access to those accounts.