

POLICY 303 SOCIAL MEDIA

- 1. Purpose.** To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Eau Claire County Departments may consider participating in social media formats to reach a broader audience. Eau Claire County encourages the use of social media outlets to further the goals of the County and the missions of its Departments where appropriate.
- 2. Scope.**

 - 2.1** This policy and procedure applies to all departments and employees or contractors of Eau Claire County contributing to blogs, Wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media both on and off County websites.
- 3. Definitions.**

 - 3.1** Social Media. Refers to content created by individuals with the use of various technologies for the purpose of information sharing through the Internet. Examples of social media are Blogs, Discussion Forums, Social Networking websites, Photo-sharing websites, Video-sharing websites, Wikis, and more.
 - 3.2** Blog (short for web log). A type of website with regular diary style entries commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. Entries usually contain commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Blog readers usually have the ability to leave comments.
 - 3.3** Discussion Forum. An online discussion site where individuals can discuss topics by leaving messages and receiving responses. Many topics on forums can include questions, comparisons, polls of opinion, and debates.
 - 3.4** Social Networking Websites. Focuses on the building of social networks or social relations among people. Social networking sites allow users to interact, share ideas, activities, events, and interests with people within their individual networks. Examples include Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
 - 3.5** RSS. Short for Really Simple Syndication. Allows subscribers to receive content from blogs and other social media sites and have it delivered through a feed.
 - 3.6** Podcasts. Audio or video content that can be downloaded automatically through a subscription to a website so you can view or listen offline.

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- 3.7 Wiki. A website that allows the easy creation and editing of a number of interlinked web pages. They are often used to create collaborative websites, to power community websites, for personal note taking, and in corporate intranets.
- 4. Employee Responsibility.
 - 4.1 Eau Claire County employees are responsible for appropriate use of social media in accordance with this policy.
 - 4.2 Employees utilizing social media platforms will thoroughly review and abide by the Social Media policy in addition to signing Appendix 303 A (Social Media Acknowledgement Form).
 - 4.3 Employees are expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards when conducting County business.
 - 4.4 All use of social media must be able to withstand public scrutiny without embarrassment to Eau Claire County, its customers or its employees.
 - 4.5 Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
 - 4.6 Upon change of job responsibilities or separation of employment, employees must surrender all login information and passwords.
- 5. Management Responsibility.
 - 5.1 Eau Claire County managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring the appropriate use of social media through training, supervising, coaching and when necessary, taking disciplinary action.
 - 5.2 Department heads and supervisors will read and thoroughly review the Social Media Policy in addition to signing Appendix 303 A (Social Media Acknowledgement Form) with those employees they approve to utilize social media platforms.
- 6. Policy Regarding Representation of County Using Social Media.
 - 6.1 All Eau Claire County social media platforms must be approved by the County Administrator and the requesting Department Head. All content must be published using approved County social media platforms and tools. Any content that might act as the “voice” or position of the County must be approved by the Department Director.

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- 6.2 Whenever possible, links to more information should direct viewers back to Eau Claire County's official website for more information, forms, documents, or online services.
- 6.3 Social media sites are to be used to further the goals of Eau Claire County departments and provide a service to citizens. Appropriate time spent on updating social media sites should be discussed between the employee and supervisor, and should not interfere with completion of other job duties.
- 6.4 Protect the privacy of yourself and others in the County. Do not disclose any personally identifiable information such as social security numbers, phone numbers, addresses, or email addresses. You must also protect the privacy of any sensitive and confidential information the County holds.
- 6.5 Maintain privacy of yourself and others. Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media platform without their permission. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum.
- 6.6 If posting a picture or video of an adult, the individual must consent to the use of their image on the social media site, by signing Appendix 303 B (Social Media Permission Form/Waiver), unless the picture or video was taken at a public event.
- 6.7 Pictures or videos of minors will not be posted unless the minor is unidentifiable, or a parent or legal guardian has signed Appendix 303 B (Social Media Permission Form/Waiver), granting permission to photograph, audiotape, videotape, publish and copyright images of their minor child.
- 6.8 It is the responsibility of the department to establish, publish, and update their pages on social media websites. It is the responsibility of the department to ensure that information is accurate and up-to-date.
- 6.9 Departments using social media sites must adhere to all applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes all copyright laws, public records laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and all other laws that might apply to the County. Departments should provide attribution as necessary.
- 6.10 Employees may not post-employment recommendations or references for current or former employees of Eau Claire County on any social media site. All requests for recommendations or references should be directed to the Human

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Resources Department. Employees should use the following response to requests for recommendations and/or references:

- 6.10.1 “Thank you for your request for a recommendation. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide you with a recommendation due to county policy. Our Human Resources Department provides all references and recommendations. Best of luck in your future endeavors.”
- 6.11 Login information, including User ID’s and passwords, must be provided to the Supervisor upon request. Any information posted is considered an extension of Eau Claire County and must be relayed with the utmost level of professionalism. Information should be meaningful, accurate, and respectful.
- 6.12 All social media platforms will clearly indicate they are owned and maintained by Eau Claire County and will have Eau Claire County contact information prominently displayed.
- 6.13 Eau Claire County logos, marks, and insignia may be used on County social media platforms owned and maintained exclusively for County business and County purposes.
- 6.14 Those in charge of publishing and updating within each Department must monitor any comments made by the public. Comments containing any of the following should be removed immediately.
 - 6.14.1 Comments unrelated to the particular site or content on the site;
 - 6.14.2 Profane language or content;
 - 6.14.3 Content that is discriminatory on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regards to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;
 - 6.14.4 Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - 6.14.5 Comments containing personally identifiable medical or health information;
 - 6.14.6 Solicitations of commerce or endorsements of products and/or services;
 - 6.14.7 Conduct that is illegal;
 - 6.14.8 Content that violates legal ownership interest of any other party;

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- 6.14.9 External links constituting official endorsement or representative views on behalf of Eau Claire County;
 - 6.14.10 Content promoting political purposes, a political candidate, or party;
 - 6.14.11 Other non-topically related content outside the limited public forum established to discuss Eau Claire County issues, operations and services;
 - 6.14.12 Information that compromises the safety and security of the public.
- 6.15 Eau Claire County reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
7. Policy Regarding Personal Use of Social Media.
- 7.1 If one should identify themselves as a County employee during their use of social media on a personal level, your profile and any related content should be consistent with how you wish to present yourself to your colleagues, supervisors, and the public.
 - 7.2 Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Eau Claire County. If any information posted is related in any way to the work you do or any topics related to the County, a disclaimer must be used such as. “ The opinions expressed on this site are my own and do not reflect the opinions of Eau Claire County.”
 - 7.3 There is a limited amount of personal use that is permitted during scheduled work hours at Eau Claire County. Employees should be as conservative as possible during such personal use and time spent on social media sites should be limited to personal break times. Use of social media for personal use should in no way interfere with job duties.
 - 7.4 Personal social media platforms may be subject to legal discover including subpoenas in legal proceedings.
 - 7.5 Employees are discouraged from sending or receiving Facebook friend requests to or from their Department Head or Department Supervisors.
 - 7.6 Employees will not use their Eau Claire County email address for their login to their personal social media profiles.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Social Media Permission Form (Appendix 303 A)
- 8.2 Social Media Permission Form/Waiver (Appendix 303-B)

