



<b>Policy Number and Title:</b>	505.03 Social Media Policy
<b>Section and Chapter:</b>	Marketing and Communication – Social Media
<b>Owner &amp; Contact:</b>	Human Resources and Marketing & Communication- 940-369-8340
<b>Policy or Directive:</b>	Policy
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	6/19/2026

## **POLICY PURPOSE STATEMENT**

This policy promotes responsible and professional use of social media by City of Denton employees and outlines standards for both personal and official social media accounts. It sets expectations for conduct, ensures protection of confidential information, and upholds the City’s commitment to integrity, transparency, and community engagement.

Social media is a valuable tool for communication. Employees’ individual rights are respected and in their private capacity may choose to share their opinions, but as employees are also in a position of public trust, they must also exercise reasonable judgment, as online content may affect the reputation or operations of the City. This policy safeguards the City while supporting open, inclusive, and respectful digital interactions.

### **I. Applicability**

This policy applies to official social media accounts created or maintained on behalf of the City of Denton and to personal social media use when employees identify themselves as City employees or when such use reasonably impacts City operations, workplace conduct, or public trust. This policy does not apply to platforms created or managed by Denton City Council Members.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to employees' conduct across all social media platforms and online forums, encompassing both widely used and emerging channels, including, but not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Reddit, and YouTube, as well as other online forums and platforms.

### **III. Personal Use of Social Media**

A. If an employee chooses to disclose their affiliation with the City of Denton on their personal social media profiles, (including but not limited to adding as a ‘job’ to their profile, posting pictures in uniform or with any logo associated with the City of Denton), or within a post from their personal profile, the employee must clearly state on their profile or post that

personal posts do not reflect the City of Denton. Recommended disclaimer: *“The views expressed here are my own and do not represent the views of the City of Denton.”*

- B. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with or restrict employees’ rights to engage in legally protected speech or activities under applicable federal or state law, including rights related to workplace discussions, wages, or working conditions.
- C. Employees must not share confidential, copyrighted, or sensitive City information including personally identifiable information (PII), HIPAA-protected data, or other confidential City records.
- D. Employees should communicate respectfully towards colleagues, officials, residents, and other members of the public, and avoid conduct that could reasonably be perceived as harassment, discrimination, or violations of City policy.
- E. Employees may not use social media during work time in a manner that interferes with job duties, operations, or productivity.
- F. Employees should report accounts that may violate this policy to Human Resources.

#### **IV. Official Social Media Use**

##### **A. Establishing a Platform, Page, or Subgroup**

- 1. Social Media Liaisons must submit “Social Media Business Case and Request Form” to Marketing and Communications. Approval or denial of a social media platform is at the sole discretion of the Chief Communications Officer or designee. Adherence to the provisions outlined in the “Social Media Business Case and Request Form” is required to both establish and maintain a city-affiliated social media platform, page, or sub-group.
- 2. Only authorized City email addresses may be used to create or manage official accounts.
- 3. Marketing and Communications is responsible for approval, branding, and strategy. Ensure all content representing the City of Denton aligns with the approved branding, tone of voice, and messaging. Only use official logos and templates provided by the Marketing and Communications department.

##### **B. Content Guidelines**

- 1. All information shared must be accurate, respectful, and compliant with local, state, and federal regulations.
- 2. No confidential or classified information may be shared.
- 3. Posts must not contain sensitive data, including personally identifiable information (PII), HIPAA-protected data, or other confidential City records.
- 4. All posts made should meet the federal regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

##### **C. Acceptable Use**

- 1. City of Denton social media platforms shall be used to provide City news, services, alerts, and community programs.
- 2. Encourage public engagement and civic pride.

3. Use of social media must comply with applicable Federal, State and City ordinances, regulations and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Texas Open Records Act, First Amendment, privacy laws, and information security policies established by the City.

#### D. Comment Moderation and Engagement

1. City social media platforms are considered limited public forums and will be moderated in a viewpoint – neutral manner consistent with First Amendment protections.
2. Inappropriate content (e.g., obscenity, threats, spam, discrimination) may be moderated only in accordance with the [‘Social Media Comment Moderation’ Standard Operating Procedure](#), maintained by Marketing and Communications, which outlines viewpoint-neutral criteria to ensure compliance with First Amendment protections
3. Employees who become aware of social media activity that violates this policy should report it to their manager or the Human Resources department.
4. Employees shall not use personal accounts to represent the City of Denton or respond to public comments or questions regarding official city business. Only approved official City of Denton social media accounts shall respond to comments or questions on City platforms. This also applies to employees who manage City social media accounts. When responding on behalf of the City of Denton, you shall respond from the official account you manage, not your personal profile.
5. All service requests reported via social media should be referred to 311.

#### E. Crisis Communications and Media Requests:

1. In the event of an emergency, the Chief Communications Officer (CCO) or their designee will designate the lead social media platform.
2. Media inquiries received via social media must be routed to the CCO or their designee.
3. Unauthorized responses to media inquiries may be subject to corrective action in accordance with City policy.

#### F. Community Guidelines

1. The City encourages residents and visitors to share comments, ideas, and concerns on all of its social media platforms and subgroups. To ensure Denton residents feel safe participating in two-way communication on city channels, Marketing and Communications staff reserve the right to moderate comments or posts that violate the following guidelines:
  - a. Respect copyright and fair use laws;
  - b. No content that is threatening or obscene;
  - c. No hate speech. Examples of hate speech include incitement to imminent lawless action, , fighting words, or defamation;

- d. No content that promotes or fosters violence or perpetuates discrimination including cyberbullying and harassment;
- e. No spam or promotional content including posting the same content multiple times on a channel;
- f. No nudity or sexual content;
- g. Comments or posts should not advertise products or services, nor promote or oppose any political party, candidate for elected office, or ballot proposition.
- h. Direct and personal communication in the course of a trade or business;
- i. No misleading or deceptive information.

Legal disclaimer: “The City of Denton is not responsible for the content nor endorses any site which has a link from this page. All content, comments, and replies posted are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and all Texas Open Records laws; the City of Denton reserves the right to remove any messages or postings. This Comment Policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure that its continued use is consistent with its intended purpose as a limited forum.

2. All City of Denton social media platforms, pages, and subgroups must link to the City of Denton Community Guidelines located on the City of Denton website.
3. To the extent that design parameters of the host site allow, City and department platforms, pages, and subgroups, must conform to the Community Guidelines and the following:
  - a. Be identified as a City of Denton official site;
  - b. Contain City of Denton contact information;
  - c. Contain the City and/or department logo;
  - d. Have a link to the appropriate page of the City’s website.

## V. Cyber Expectations

- A. Safeguarding sensitive information and maintaining secure information systems is essential. As representatives of the City, employees must adhere to the guidelines set in Policy 506.02- User Authorization, Identification, and Accountability Policy 506.02.

## VI. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Human Resources Business Partners** – Responsible for guiding employees on policy interpretation and for investigating any alleged violations to ensure compliance and accountability.
- **Chief Technology Officer** – Oversees the technological aspects of the policy, ensuring that all platforms and tools comply with City information security requirements.
- **Marketing and Communications** – Responsible for overseeing the organization’s branding, content, and overall social media strategy to maintain a consistent and professional public image.

- **Social Media Liaisons** – Responsible for the day-to-day management of departmental social media pages and are responsible for upholding the organization’s standards across all digital communications. Social Media Liaisons are also responsible for moderating comments on the social media platforms they manage in accordance with this policy. Social Media Liaisons are also considered employees, as defined below.

## VII. Definitions

- **Confidential Information** – Legally protected data such as personal records, legal matters, or internal documents that are not intended to be shared publicly.
- **Employee** – Any person who is employed with the City of Denton. This includes, but is not limited to full-time, part time, and seasonal employees.
- **Moderation** – The action of Marketing and Communications and social media liaisons to monitor, respond to, address and, if needed, to delete interactive components of the City’s social media platforms that violate community guidelines (Exhibit B) to ensure a safe space for residents to engage in two-way communication with staff while still upholding First Amendment rights. A guide on how and when to respond to comments may be found in Exhibit B.
- **Official Social Media**- The use and management of official social media platforms on behalf of the city or its departments.
- **Sensitive Information** - Content that could harm public trust or operations if shared, such as internal discussions or unofficial opinions.
- **Social Media** – A set of internet tools enabling users to participate in community experiences online and to connect with people of common interests to learn, play, work, organize, and socialize; networks may be open to the public or restricted to members as determined by the user.
- **Subgroups** – A subgroup refers to any subcommunities that can be created within a social media network. For example, a Facebook Group.

**Social Networks. Examples of Social Networks that exist as of the date of this policy include, but are not limited to:**

- **Archive Social** – An archive software that automatically archives social media and web content for public records retention.
- **Facebook** – A social networking site where users can develop a personal profile, add friends, communicate with peers by private message or public postings and notify their followers of what they are currently doing via a “status update.” Additionally, users may follow entities and organizations in order to receive notifications when new information is available. Facebook should be used primarily as a two-way engagement and relationship-building tool.
- **Instagram** – An online photo-sharing application and social network platform. Instagram allows users to edit and upload photos and short videos. The Instagram Reels feature is a home for short-form video content produced by the City as a way to convey messaging in

a distilled form. Instagram should be used for highly visual content that shows the personality of the city.

- **LinkedIn** – A social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
- **Nextdoor** – Nextdoor is a social networking service for neighborhoods. Posts made to the website are available only to other Nextdoor members living in the same neighborhood. Note: The City of Denton maintains an agency page on Nextdoor, but is not granted access to view individual neighborhood pages. Nextdoor is a hyper-localized platform with focus on updates that impact our residents’ day-to-day lives.
- **X (formerly Twitter)** - A social media platform that enables users to send and read short messages known as “tweets;” such messages are then displayed on the author’s profile page and delivered to the author’s subscribers who are known as “followers.” X is where the journalists live, so it should be used for quick updates and news distribution.
- **YouTube** – A video sharing website where users upload and share unlimited numbers of videos.

**REFERENCES**

- Policy 108.10 - Harassment Prevention/Workplace Abuse
- Policy 109.01 - Corrective Action
- Policy 506.01 - Acceptable use of Technology resources and Standard Policy
- Policy 506.02 - User Authorization, Identification, and Accountability Policy
- Policy 506.12 - Covered Applications Policy
- Policy 506.13 - Information Security Policy.
- [Comment Moderation SOP](#)
- Freedom of Information Act
- Texas Public Information Act
- [Title II, Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

**REVISION HISTORY**

Revision Date	Policy Owner	Summary
07/14/2010	Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Policy Adoption</li> <li>• Policy Statement Adopted by City Council on 7/14/2010</li> </ul>
12/17/2020	Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Updates to Admin. Procedures</li> </ul>
06/19/2026	Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Policy Statement Adopted by City Council on 6/19/2026</li> <li>• Merging all separate social media policies into one</li> <li>• SOP Created for comment moderation</li> </ul>