

**CITY OF SAN BERNARDINO  
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM  
Appendix C**

TO: All Departments

FROM: Charles McNeely, City Manager

SUBJECT: Social Media Policy

DATE: Jan 1, 2011

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the employees of the City of San Bernardino who use social media for communication on behalf of the city. All staff and contractors using social media on behalf of the city must to adhere to this Policy.

**GOAL**

The goal of the city's social media communication is to provide content to community members about city issues and services, leading to a more responsive government and a high level of public confidence.

**BACKGROUND**

“Social media” refers to media designed to disseminate content (information, images, audio, video) through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable Web-publishing techniques. The term includes “social network sites” that allow individuals and organizations to construct a profile and create and share content with others. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to:

- video-sharing sites, such as YouTube
- blogs
- photo-sharing sites, such as Flickr
- podcasting
- social networks, such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn
- microblogging and short messaging, such as Twitter
- wikis
- content sharing sites, such as Delicious and Digg
- online discussion groups
- aggregation platforms, such as FriendFeed and Streamy

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Use of social media for official city purposes raises legal issues that are unique to local government and generally do not affect private persons or entities. Therefore, all city use of social media shall be in accordance with this policy and all applicable local, state and federal

laws; policies of the City of San Bernardino pertaining to the use of computers, electronic communications and respectful workplace; and all other applicable City of San Bernardino policies and procedures.

#### ESTABLISHING A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Use of social media shall support the objectives of the city and present the city in a positive and professional manner. The City of San Bernardino Manager of Communications is responsible for overall management of city social media presences and the strategies for engagement in them. To ensure consistent and appropriate use, departments that wish to establish a presence in social media must request approval from the Manager of Communication. Information to be provided includes:

- Goals and objectives for the social media program
- Intended audiences
- Planned use of or strategy for the program
- Social networks or social media venues to be used
- How the social media presence supports the city's social media goal and citywide communication goals
- Resources and personnel assigned to implementation and ongoing support (posting, monitoring, archiving, etc.)
- Planned use of any registered Internet domain name
- Department heads must read and ensure compliance with all terms of use for any social media site or service prior to establishing a city presence.

#### POSTING INFORMATION

Only the city Manager of Communications and employees authorized in writing by the City Manager or designee are authorized to post content on a social media venue on behalf of the City of San Bernardino. City staff posting content may only post content that has been approved for public dissemination and is within that staff member's areas of expertise and departmental role. Staff using social media on behalf of the city must be truthful at all times about who they are and their role with the City of San Bernardino.

The tone of social media content is often informal, however staff is encouraged to adhere to the city's writing style guidelines whenever possible. Linking to related city Web site pages is strongly encouraged whenever practical and appropriate.

The city must either own the copyright to or have a valid license (written permission) to use the content, including images, videos, sound records, etc., posted to its social media sites. The Manager of Communications or his/her designee must verify the validity of all copyrights or licenses before content is posted.

#### PROHIBITED CONTENT

All content posted by city staff to social media sites shall support the city's social media goals described in this Policy. Staff is prohibited from posting content about:

- Actual or perceived threats to public health, safety or property (unless the person authorized to post content represents police or fire)
- Potentially controversial issues

- Actual or potential legal claims, lawsuits or other legal issues
- Personnel matters
- Budget planning and priorities
- Crime investigations and content about a crime scene
- Personal opinion on city issues or any other issue
- Political issues, including opinions about elected officials or candidates for elective office and issues appearing on an election ballot
- What a council member might think about an issue or speculation about a potential decision they might make
- Emergency situations (unless the person authorized to post content represents police or fire)

City-posted content may not include content that promotes religious beliefs or philosophies, that is illegal under federal, state or local laws, or that is defamatory (i.e. slander or libel) or indecent, or that promotes hate, tobacco, alcohol, profanity, obscenity or pornography.

City staff may not make disparaging remarks about the city or any city staff or officials nor post content that would tend to discredit the city, its staff or officials.

#### Comment Policy

The purpose of the City of San Bernardino's use of social media is to share content about city news and services. The city does not use social media to solicit comments from the public, nor does it intend to create a public forum for the discussion of city issues or any other topic. Therefore, all City of San Bernardino social media sites must have the comment feature disabled.

#### IMAGES

The city must either own the copyright or have a valid license to use images posted to social media sites.

#### PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

All content posted on social media sites may be subject to the California Public Records Act. Until a legal determination is made on this issue, staff shall limit content posted on social media sites to previously published documents or material that otherwise complies with city policies and procedures regarding document management and retention.