



Social Media Policy for Official City of Hyattsville Social Media Accounts

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Social Media Policy is to set guidelines for the establishment, management and termination, by authorized City employees, of official City of Hyattsville social media accounts.

This policy provides guidance for the City staff that manages, monitors and moderates City social media accounts. Guidance for utilizing the Official City of Hyattsville Police Department Social Media Accounts is available in HCPD General Order, "Department Use of Social Media". This policy also guides other City employees in proposing content for the City's social media platforms by designating points of contact and identifying procedures to be followed.

SOCIAL MEDIA AUTHORIZED USERS AND POINT OF CONTACT

The City of Hyattsville is the owner of all official City social media accounts. The City's Communications Department is the lead department for the establishment, management and termination of all City social media accounts, excluding the City of Hyattsville Police Department social media accounts, which are managed by the City's Police Department.

The City's Communications Manager/Public Information Officer is the designated manager of all City social media accounts, reporting to the Director of Communications and Legislative Services. Additional members of the Communications Department are also authorized to post on City social media accounts as administrators.

The City of Hyattsville Police Department's Media Relations Manager/Public Information Officer is the designated manager of all City of Hyattsville Police Department social media accounts. More information about posting on City Police Department social media accounts is available in HCPD General Order, "Department Use of Social Media".

Additional individuals must be authorized by the Communications Manager, the Director of Communications and Legislative Services, and the individual's respective Director to post on City social media accounts.

Contacts:

- Director of Communications and Legislative Services: Laura Reams, lreams@hyattsville.org
- City Communications Manager/Public Information Officer: Cindy Zork, czork@hyattsville.org
- City of Hyattsville Police Department Media Relations Manager/Public Information Officer: Adrienne Augustus, aaugustus@hyattsville.org

DEFINITIONS

- **Administrator** – A City Staff member who is trained and authorized to post content and provided with access to City social media accounts. An administrator must be authorized by the Director of Communications and Legislative Services, the Communications Manager and the individual's respective Director.



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- **Content** - The copy, images, videos, and links that are shared on a social media platform.
- **Social Media** - Web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by both sharing and consuming information.
- **Social Media Account or Social Media Site** - Interactive, public web platforms on which a City-created page or presence may be established. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.
- **Social Media Lead/Authorizing Department** - To maintain brand continuity and content quality, official City social media accounts are established, managed and terminated by the City of Hyattsville's Communications Department. No other department or individual may create any social media or website under the City's name and/or brand.
- **Social Media Post** - Staff-generated content that is published, or City-related content that is shared, by an administrator to a City social media account.

OFFICIAL CITY OF HYATTSVILLE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

This is an inventory of City of Hyattsville social media accounts as of October 1, 2021:

- Facebook: /CityofHyattsville
- Instagram: @CityofHyattsville
- Twitter: @HyattsvilleMD
- YouTube: /CityofHyattsville
- Vimeo: /cityofhyattsville

This is an inventory of City of Hyattsville Police Department social media accounts as of October 1, 2021. For details on utilizing these accounts, refer to HCPD General Order, "Department Use of Social Media":

- Facebook: /CityofHyattsvillePD
- Instagram: @CityofHyattsvillePD (inactive), @k9nola_hcpd
- Twitter: @HyattsvillePD

City social media account access and passwords are maintained by the City's Communications Department and may only be shared with authorized administrators as previously defined. Social media passwords should never be shared with City volunteers or members of the general public.

POSTING GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES

The City of Hyattsville, in an ongoing effort to maintain effective communication to and with residents and other audiences, uses social media as a way to deliver messages directly to users and to encourage community involvement, interaction and feedback. While social media facilitates interaction between City staff and the public, sites are not monitored 24/7 and are not an official means for members of the public to communicate with City leadership.

City social media accounts should be visually and tonally consistent with the overall City of Hyattsville brand. The home pages for these accounts will display the City's seal and other branding signals. Graphics and language will be created by City Communications staff or by contracted designers. Any graphics or language created by other City employees or community members must be approved by the City Communications Department before posting.



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The Communications Department utilizes a content calendar to plan timely information for social media posts and other communications. The content calendar is developed in partnership with City Department Directors and reflects City service updates, programs, events, holidays and other important information throughout the year. Information posted on City social media accounts is intended to supplement, and not replace, required notices and standard methods of communication.

To request a social media post be added to the City's content calendar, please follow the guidance established in the City's Staff Communications Guide. To request a social media post be added to the City of Hyattsville Police Department's social media accounts, please follow the guidance established in HCPD General Order, "Department Use of Social Media".

Staff considerations for City social media posts are as follows:

- The City's Communications Manager/Public Information Officer must approve all content before it is posted. City staff should follow the guidance in the Staff Communications Guide to request a social media post. In the absence of the Communications Manager, the Director of Communications and Legislative Services must approve the content.
- Content must be relevant to City of Hyattsville residents and support the City's values, image, and interests.
- Content must be appropriate for all audiences.
- A conversational tone may be used as appropriate.
- City-owned content is preferred. If posting on behalf of a City partner or other organization, staff should obtain any appropriate releases or permissions.
- Staff must conduct themselves as representatives of the City, and post on behalf of the City and not in their personal capacity. Do not use City social media accounts to promote personal positions or financial interests.
- In order to avoid liability for the employee and the City, do not post or make comments that:
 - Discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, weight, height or genetic information.
 - Are sexual in nature.
 - Compromise the safety or security of the City or individuals, or contain any confidential information.
 - Support or oppose a political candidate or ballot measure.
 - Express personal views or concerns.
 - Contain religious messages or advocate or promote religious beliefs.
 - Advertise or endorse businesses, individuals, or organizations unrelated to City, county, state, or federal-sponsored activities or initiatives.
 - Promote illegal activity or violate any local, state or federal laws.
 - Violate another party's privacy, copyright, trademark or other protected property.
 - Are obscene or profane; or otherwise violate another City policy.

Content posted to City social media accounts is in the public domain. As such, any applicable rules or laws pertaining to public records and retention schedules must be followed.

MONITORING AND MODERATING PUBLIC COMMENTS

During regular work hours, City Communications staff will periodically monitor the City's social media accounts for comments or other engagements from the public. Staff actions may include:



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- Responding to general questions. Any request for public records should be directed to the City Clerk for processing.
- Notifying appropriate City staff about questions or comments as needed.
- Monitoring comments and mentions for shareable content.

Staff should be cautious in re-sharing content from other social media users. Use good judgment prior to posting.

- Is there a reason to share it?
- Is it from a trustworthy source?
- Would it appear the City is endorsing a particular service, business, individual, or organization?
- Is formal permission required to share?

In general, staff should not respond directly to hostile, aggressive, or rhetorical posts. The Terms of Service below are listed on the City's social media accounts and intended to help public users understand the terms under which they interact with the posts.

City of Hyattsville Terms of Service:

The sole purpose of this page is the dissemination of information to the public. It is not an open forum for public comment. Therefore, although members of the public may be permitted by the site's design to post comments, the City of Hyattsville reserves the right to delete any comments. Posts and comments are public and subject to disclosure.

City social media sites are not monitored 24/7. For more information about City Communications visit www.hyattsville.org/stayconnected.

First Amendment Protections

Social media platforms have tools for moderating comments and individual users. However, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution prevents some degree of content regulation as public agency web pages are considered a forum for free speech. Comments should not be moderated simply because they criticize or are unpleasant towards the City or City employees. Staff should always seek legal guidance from the City's Attorney before hiding or deleting a post or banning an individual user.

The following are categories of speech that generally do not have First Amendment protection and may be moderated on City social media accounts, following approval by the City attorney.

- Direct threats against someone's life.
- Defamation, defined as a false assentation of fact that damages a person's reputation. Opinions do not count as defamation. "The Sheriff is the worst in the State!" is not defamation. "The Sheriff is a pedophile!" is.
- Copyright violation. No one can post the intellectual property of another on a City social media account.
- A suggestion to encourage illegal behavior.
- Links to malware.
- Obscenity, which generally refers to content that strongly offends the prevalent morality of the time.



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- Hate speech that incites or is likely to incite imminent lawless action. Hate speech is speech that offends or attacks people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, disease, or other traits.

SECURITY

Official City social media accounts belong to the City, with a secure log of accounts and passwords maintained by the Communications Department.


When an employee who has access to the City's social media accounts terminates their employment, social media passwords must be changed and that user must be removed as an administrator on any relevant accounts.

To minimize risk of malware or other illegal activity on City social media sites, authorized administrators will adhere to the following guidelines.


- Personal emails may not be used to create City social media accounts.
- Do not use the same passwords for social media that you use to access company computing resources.
- Do not follow links or download software on social media pages posted by individuals or organizations that you do not know.
- Report signs of phishing or other suspicious content to the City's IT support team.

VIOLATIONS

City employees with access to City social media accounts shall be provided a copy of this policy. Employees found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment, and, if applicable, may be subject to prosecution under federal or state laws.



City Administrator 1 Oct 2021
Date



City Clerk 1/21/22
Date