

THE TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

Section: Human Resources

Policy: Social Media Conduct

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1. Intent

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances strives to maintain a positive image in our community, and has adopted this policy to ensure that our staff members are aware of their responsibility to maintain a positive image, as representatives of our organization.

This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our staff members, nor to restrict or impede their rights to freedom of speech and expression.

The intent of this policy is to communicate corporate expectations to staff members, many of who indirectly represent the organization outside of regular business hours through the use of social media. The Corporation expects that all staff members conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate and professional while expressing themselves using any form of social media.

2. Scope

The scope of this policy applies to both on-duty and off-duty conduct of staff members while using any form social media or blog.

This includes all employees, management, elected officials, and members of boards and committees, hereinafter referred to as “staff”, and used interchangeably with the term “employees”.

3. Definitions

Social Media: forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content.

This includes but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, Reddit, Instagram, and Pinterest.

Blog: a Web site that contains online personal reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer.

The scope of this policy is all encompassing, and it will expand naturally as social media evolves. As such, it will not require revision to include forms of electronic communication that may not be listed, developed, or used at the time of its inception.

4. General Guidelines

Staff of the Town of Fort Frances who maintain personal social media pages or accounts are required to comply with the following guidelines as they relate to their association with the Town of Fort Frances.

Due to the public nature of commentary involving social media, staff should assume that there is potential for virtually worldwide access to statements made using social media. Regardless of the size of one's social network or their individual privacy settings, it is assumed that statements made on social media lie within the public domain.

As such, employees will be held accountable for what they write or post on social media or other Internet pages regarding the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances. This includes both on-duty and off-duty conduct on social media and other Internet pages.

Inflammatory comments, including unprofessional; defamatory; or disparaging remarks made about the organization or its employees, management, elected officials, customers, competitors, partners, or vendors may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of your employment.

Employees are therefore expected to follow the guidelines herein when making posts or comments using social media, whether publicly or privately; regardless of whether they are on-duty or off-duty.

1. Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally both on-duty and off-duty. Where a staff member associates the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances as their employer, the materials associated with their social media profile may reflect on the company. Unprofessional comments, photographs, links, etc. must be avoided if such association is made to their social networks, regardless of one's privacy settings.

It is expected that employees who choose to make this association will conduct themselves in a professional manner. If unwilling to do so, employees should refrain from listing the Town of Fort Frances as their employer on their social media profiles.

2. Posts involving the following will not be tolerated and will subject the individual to discipline:
 - a) Proprietary and confidential company information;
 - b) Discriminatory statements or sexual innuendos regarding co-workers, management, elected officials, customers, competitors, partners, or vendors;

- c) Defamatory statements regarding the company, its employees, management, elected officials, customers, competitors, partners, or vendors;
- d) Any discrimination, including but not limited to:

- Age
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Citizenship
- Ethnic origin
- Place of origin
- Creed
- Disability
- Family status
- Marital status (including single status)
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Record of offences
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

3. Town of Fort Frances employees who use social media are prohibited from disseminating any private organizational information therein, or any negative comments regarding the organization.
4. Town of Fort Frances employees are prohibited from communicating on behalf of the organization, releasing confidential information, releasing news, or communicating as a representative of the organization without prior authorization to act as a designated Town of Fort Frances representative.
5. Use of personal social media may not conflict with any existing policies of the Town of Fort Frances. This includes (but is not limited to) the Employee Conduct, Employee Confidentiality, Media Communication, and Internet/Email Acceptable Use Policies.
6. In the absence of prior authorization granted by management, employees are prohibited from using social media on Town of Fort Frances computers and networks. Employees who use social media on their own electronic devices and using networks independent of those of the Town of Fort Frances should limit its use to all official breaks (i.e. meal breaks & coffee breaks).
7. The use of social media should not have a negative impact on workplace productivity or efficiency. As Internet access on Town of Fort Frances networks is monitored, please be advised that excessive use of social media for personal reasons is a misappropriation of company time and resources, and may be subject to disciplinary action.
8. Company policies governing the use of copyrighted materials, corporate logos and other forms of branding and identity apply to electronic communications.
9. Employees are prohibited from using protected materials of the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances without prior express written permission. This includes copyrighted material, branding and corporate logos.

10. The Town of Fort Frances strictly prohibits the use of company owned computer resources for use in the illegal download or upload of copyright materials without express written permission, and authorization from the copyright holder.
11. Comments broadcasted on social media can potentially reach a very wide audience. Further, online postings may be permanent. Defamatory statements may therefore cause the Town of Fort Frances greater damage than an isolated incident. Everything posted to social media can be traced back to its source. Thus, the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances strictly prohibits employees to post or link to any materials that are defamatory, harassing or indecent during working hours.
12. The Town of Fort Frances' marketing and administrative delegates are responsible for engaging customers on social media pages. Unless required to do so by reason of their position with the Town of Fort Frances, staff members are encouraged to refrain from responding to comments that a reasonable person reading those remarks would interpret as detrimental or harmful to the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances.
13. Employees should abide by these guidelines whether they mention the Town of Fort Frances by name or not. Even if the name is not mentioned in a post, it is possible a link can be made back to the corporation, which can negatively impact the Town's reputation. Where a link can be made between a negative or inflammatory post and the Town of Fort Frances, even if not named directly, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

Any staff member who fails to follow the guidelines set out in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of their employment. Accountability will be governed and enforced through the use of progressive discipline.