

TOWN OF HAPPY VALLEY -GOOSE BAY

Title: Social Media Usage Policy	Internal/External:
Department: Administration	Policy Number: A0028
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Authority: 14th Council	Page: 1 of 7

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY

Background

The Town of Happy Valley - Goose Bay uses social media as a tool for strategic communications and for engaging with the public. The Town also acknowledges that Councillors and employees independently post, comment, or otherwise participate in personal social media that may potentially involve or impact the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay.

Objective/Application

The purpose of this policy is to guide employees who are authorized to use social media on behalf of the Town and to inform the public of Town social media practices. This policy also provides direction to all Councillors and employees on their personal use of social media where Town interests may be involved.

Policy Statement

The Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay utilizes social media as a means to relay its initiatives, strategies, and goals, publish notices, and promote the Town as a favorable place to live, work, and play. The Town acknowledges the use of social media to share time-sensitive information, increase public awareness, and promote news, projects, events, and employment opportunities. It also responds to inquiries regarding services, encourages public participation, feedback, and the sharing of ideas, and fosters community and stakeholder relationships.

Councillors and Employees may choose to support Town social media activities by sharing posts; however, they must ensure personal accounts are not linked to their official email address and that the Town logo or brand is not used.

Content published by any Councillor or employee must not undermine the employment relationship, the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay, its council, or its employees. If identifying as an employee while posting to social media, it must be explicitly clear that the content does not represent the Town in any official capacity.

All employees have a responsibility to avoid posting content that is insulting, derogatory, or offensive toward coworkers or other people, even if a specific individual is not identified. Employees may be held personally liable for any defamatory or discriminatory content posted or observed. A disclaimer does not, by itself, exempt employees from this responsibility.

Definitions

“Authorized Content Provider” is an employee designated by the administrative head to contribute to the Town of Happy Valley - Goose Bay's presence on social media sites.

“Content” refers to any text, images, video, audio, or links published online.

“Councillor” means Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or Councillor

“Department” refers to all core current and future departments within the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay.

“Employee” refers to persons employed by the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay, contractors, volunteers, or others acting on behalf of the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay.

“Inappropriate use” comprises, but is not limited to: transmitting any materials in violation of local, provincial or national laws; using vulgar, profane or inappropriate language; transmitting or posting threatening, abusive, discriminatory, or obscene material; duplicating, storing or transmitting lewd materials; suggesting or supporting illegal activity; posting material that is likely to compromise the safety or security of the public or systems; and engaging in any disrespectful or harassing behavior as defined in the [Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay Harassment Prevention Plan Anti-Discrimination Policy – A0041](#).

- Comments that mislead as to your identity or the origin of the posted content, or falsely claim to represent a person, organization, or entity;
- Comments that are in violation of any law, rule, or regulation or any third-party right or that promote any illegal activity or conduct that would contravene any law, rule, or regulation or third-party right;
- Comments that are abusive, hateful, racist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, malicious, aggressive, threatening, violent, sexist, harassing, vulgar, obscene, offensive, tortious, profane, or discriminatory in any way or comments that incites mental or physical harm of any kind against any individual or class of individuals, contrary to a prohibited ground of the [Human Rights Act](#).
- Sexually explicit or violent imagery or links;
- Business solicitation, or “spamming”;
- Off-topic or irrelevant comments;
- False or misleading information;
- Profanity of any kind; and
- Information that violates an individual's or group's privacy.

“Posting” means to publish or transmit content on an online platform or social media website.

“Post/Posted” refers to published information online, whether through a public post or a private message.

“Social Media” means any Town of Happy Valley -Goose Bay publicly accessible application, third-party hosted social media sites, tools, or software used for sharing online information and publication, including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Threads, Bluesky, Instagram, Twitter(X), YouTube, Snapchat, podcasts, vlogs and blogs.

“Town” refers to the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay.

“Town Social Media Sites” are platforms that are sanctioned to be operated by the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay.

Responsibilities:

The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring employees are advised of the Social Media Usage Policy;
- Ensuring requirements of the policy have been met;
- Designating authorized content providers;
- Ensuring Information Management (IM), Information Technology (IT), and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) implications are considered in the development of social media channels; and,
- Consulting with the primary site administrator on the development and implementation of social media channels.

Primary Site Administrator:

- The Community Development Manager is designated as the primary site administrator to ensure the use of social media channels complies with all approved policies and procedures for the Town.

Secondary Site Administrators:

- The Executive Assistant and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) are designated as the secondary site administrators of the Town’s social media channels. The secondary site administrators shall only operate Town social media channels when the primary site administrator is unavailable and/or absent.

Guidelines and Procedures

1. Corporate Use of Social Media

- Town social media accounts are considered a strategic communications tool and are used to enhance, not replace, other communication methods. The Town website is central to its online social presence.
- Town social media channels are administered by the General Administration Department. The designated staff work with all departments to review social media content requests, responses, and ideas. The CAO and the designated staff may edit posts and exercise discretion to ensure that content is suitable and that it aligns with communications best practices, overall organizational standards, and culture.

- All content posted on Town social media platforms is used to enhance information and communication about Town events, announcements, and services. The Town is a neutral body and shares third-party content that is intended for the Town residents.
- Information posted or shared on the Town's social media channels shall maintain consistency, professionalism, and guidelines of all Town communications materials and approaches.
- Unless specified, all social media platforms are monitored during regular business hours only. For urgent or emergent matters, posts may occur outside of regular hours.
- The Town makes every effort to respond to legitimate inquiries and questions from the public promptly when received through appropriate channels (in person, through emails, and phone calls). Note that the Town does not respond directly to social media comments, posts, questions, and inquiries.

2. Councillors, Employee and Private Use of Social Media

- In all circumstances, Town Councillors and employees should exercise common sense and good judgment when using social media, even as private citizens. Councillors and Employees must not post comments, images, or videos that may damage the reputation or otherwise negatively impact, disrespect, or harass the Town, its officials, or employees. The Town does not condone content or comments by employees in any forum, made at any time, that undermine the employment relationship.
- Personal use of social media as a private citizen must not interfere with work duties or result in a conflict of interest.
- By virtue of their position, Councillors and employees should consider whether personal thoughts published online may be misunderstood to be the opinions of the Town.
- All Town policies regarding privacy and confidentiality of corporate information are to be followed. Strict adherence to the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015](#), is required of all Councillors and employees. Relevant policy or legislation includes the [Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay Harassment Prevention Plan and Anti-Discrimination Policy - A0041](#).
- Employees are reminded that once something is posted on social media, control over that content and the narrative may be lost. Comments may be saved in different formats, not limited to screenshots, and retransmitted or accessed through search engines even after they have been deleted from various platforms. Even in cases where privacy settings are enabled, there is a possibility that content can be made visible to a wider audience.

3. Compliance and Administration

- Social media channels for the Town are administered by the Chief Administrative Officer, through the Community Development Manager or designate. The Department of General Administration retains discretion to authorize new or deactivate Town social media accounts in accordance with communication needs, benefits, and risks.
- The Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay monitors compliance with this policy and addresses any reported concerns. This may include investigations into compliance, and, if appropriate, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for employees and removal from office for Councillors.

SOCIAL MEDIA TERMS OF USE (For the Public)

Thank you for connecting with the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay on social media. We hope that the content we share on various social media platforms is informative and helps you better understand the services provided by the Provincial Government.

What can you expect?

Content is typically shared during regular business hours across the Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay social media accounts. While there may be opportunities to engage in dialogue with followers, our administration staff will not always reply to or acknowledge comments or inquiries made through social media. If you have questions or concerns around a specific issue, we would encourage you to contact the appropriate department. You can also use **Access E11**.

For media inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the Town by email pr@townhvgb.com or by phone at 709-896-3321.

Things to Note:

- The Town does not allow or condone posts, comments, or messages made by the public on a Town page that foster discrimination, are inappropriate in nature, support illegal activity, or defame Town employees. Where possible, any such posts are removed from the Town's social media pages and any individual who repeatedly uses derogatory or offensive contents are blocked or ignored.
- Comments that do not follow our Terms of Use may be removed, and users who ignore these policies may be banned.
- Besides our Terms of Use, each social media platform also has its Terms of Service. You should carefully review the terms and conditions that apply to you before obtaining the particular service.
- The views of those who comment on the Town of Happy Valley - Goose Bay social media sites do not necessarily represent the views of the Town.
- Comments and links to third-party websites that may be posted on the Town's social media sites are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Town.
- We will do our best to make posts and other digital media as accessible as possible by following the guidelines outlined in the [Accessibility Act](#). However, we may be restricted from time to time depending on the limitations of the social media platform or the form of digital media being used.
- We will not respond to a direct message through social media.

Commenting

While we encourage public dialogue, we ask that comments and replies on municipal social media accounts be relevant and respectful. We reserve the right to moderate and delete comments that we feel are inappropriate, and to ban or block users to prevent future violations of our Terms of Use. If you choose to post content, please keep in mind that you must not post:

- Comments that mislead as to your identity or the origin of the posted content, or falsely claim to represent a person, organization, or entity;
- Comments that are in violation of any law, rule, or regulation or any third-party right or that promote any illegal activity or conduct that would contravene any law, rule, or regulation or third-party right;
- Comments that are abusive, hateful, racist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, malicious, aggressive, threatening, violent, sexist, harassing, vulgar, obscene, offensive, tortious, profane, or discriminatory in any way or comment that incites mental or physical harm of any kind against any individual or class of individuals, contrary to a prohibited ground of the [Human Rights Act](#).
- Sexually explicit or violent imagery or links;
- Business solicitation, or “spamming”;
- Off-topic or irrelevant comments;
- False or misleading information;
- Profanity of any kind; and
- Information that violates an individual’s or group’s privacy.

Best practice would be to refrain from posting your or others’ personal information on social media sites. For tips on how to protect yourself and your privacy using social media, visit the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada’s [website](#).

Disclaimer and Limitation of Liability

Use of our social media sites and their content is at your own risk. They and all of their content are provided “as is”. You must not rely on any content published on or linked from our social media sites without first making your inquiries to verify it is accurate, current, and complete. We cannot guarantee that all information is current or accurate. We do not make, and expressly disclaim, any representations, warranties, covenants and conditions, express or implied, arising out of operation of law, course of performance, course of dealing, usage of trade or otherwise, including any express or implied warranties and conditions of: marketability, marketable quality; fitness for a particular purpose; non-infringement; safety; quality; freedom from defects or that defects will be corrected; uninterrupted, virus-free or error-free use of our social media sites; or accuracy, currency, reliability, completeness or appropriateness relating to the content of them.

The Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay and its employees will not be liable for any loss or damages of any nature, either direct or indirect, arising from use of the information provided or connected with our social media sites, or information provided at any other site that can be accessed from our social media sites.

The Town of Happy Valley – Goose Bay reserves the right to supplement, remove, or modify these Terms of Use at any time and from time to time without notice. Please check this website regularly for any changes. If you continue to access our social media sites following a change to these Terms of Use, you will be deemed to have accepted the changes.

Review of Policy

This policy is subject to annual review.

APPROVAL

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this policy is sealed under the Common Seal of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.



Mayor, Bert Pomeroy



CAO, Nadine MacAulay

