



## **City of Yakima Social Media Policy**

### **Purpose**

City of Yakima departments, divisions, offices, etc. may utilize existing and emerging social media tools to provide information to and interact with the public. Social media is broadly defined as internet-based communications technology that provides immediacy, interactivity, and the sharing of information across multiple platforms.

The City encourages the use of social media, where appropriate, to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments, divisions, offices, etc.

The City of Yakima has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the City through social media. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media by City departments, divisions, offices, etc.

### **Policy**

1. Use of any and all social media by City of Yakima departments, divisions, offices, etc. must receive prior approval from the City’s Communications & Public Affairs Director and will be subject to review by the City Manager.
2. The City of Yakima’s website (yakimawa.gov) will remain the City’s primary and predominant internet presence.
3. The best, most appropriate City of Yakima uses of social media tools fall generally into two categories:
  - A. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
  - B. As communications/outreach tools which increase the City’s ability to provide messages to the widest possible audience.
4. Unless otherwise approved by the Communications & Public Affairs Director, content posted to official City of Yakima social media sites will first be posted on the City’s official website(s).
5. Whenever possible, content posted to official City of Yakima social media sites should contain links directing users back to the City’s official website(s) for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Yakima.
6. Designated department, division, office, etc. staff will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any official social media sites their department, division, office, etc. may create. All postings and comments made to official City social media sites will be approved by the Communications & Public Affairs Director or other assigned managerial staff.

7. Designated City staff will read and understand this policy and have a signed copy of this policy on file.

8. Social media sites currently approved for use by City departments, divisions, offices, etc. include:

A. Twitter

B. Facebook

C. YouTube

9. Any additional social media sites proposed for City use must be approved by the City's Communications & Public Affairs Director prior to activation.

10. Use of official City of Yakima social media sites shall comply with the City of Yakima Charter, the Yakima Municipal Code, and all applicable policies, rules, and regulations of the City of Yakima.

11. Official City of Yakima social media sites are subject to State of Washington public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The department, division, office, etc. maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request related to the City's use of social media. Content related to City business shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request and shall be retained for a period not less than required by the Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule (CORE). Whenever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the City's Public Disclosure Officer.

12. Washington State law and relevant City of Yakima records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. The department, division, office, etc. maintaining a site shall preserve records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period on a City server in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible.

13. Official City of Yakima social media sites shall include notification to site users/visitors that the following content will not be allowed on the site:

A. Content not topically related to a particular social media thread

B. Content in support or opposition to political campaigns of any kind

C. Profane language and/or content

D. Content and/or language that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination of any kind

E. Sexual content or links to sexual content

F. Solicitations of commerce

G. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity

H. Information that may tend to compromise the safety and/or security of the public and/or public systems

I. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party

J. Vulgar, offensive, or threatening language and/or content

K. Libelous and/or slanderous content

L. Content that is confidential or may otherwise violate privacy rights

Any content removed based on these restrictions must be retained, including the time and date of the posting and the identity of the poster (if available).

14. The City of Yakima reserves the right to restrict and/or remove any content posted to official City of Yakima social media sites that it deems to be in violation of this Social Media Policy or other applicable law, rule, or regulation.

15. City employees and/or elected officials are prohibited from disclosing any information via social media posts that may be confidential or may otherwise compromise the City.

16. Only official City social media sites may be used by City employees and/or elected officials to conduct official City business.

17. City employees and/or elected officials are discouraged from using personal equipment and/or personal accounts to post information to official City social media sites. City employees and/or elected officials are similarly discouraged from using personal equipment and/or personal accounts to post information regarding official City business on other social media sites. All social media site posts by City employees and/or elected officials regarding official City business are subject to Washington State public disclosure laws, open meetings laws, and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

18. Personal and/or private use of City equipment and/or facilities by City employees, elected officials, or others to access social media sites is prohibited.

19. This policy may be amended as necessary by approval of the City Manager.

20. This policy applies to all City of Yakima departments, divisions, offices, etc. and employees.

## Tips For Using Social Media Sites

- **Be Cautious** - If you are about to post information that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, pause and think about it. Be smart about protecting sensitive and/or confidential City information, as well as your own privacy. Remember that what is posted via social media is widely accessible, not easily retractable, subject to scrutiny, and will be around for a long time.
- **Post Only What You Know** - Make sure that what you post regarding official City business falls into your specific area of expertise. Don't post about City business that you are not involved in. There are too many opportunities for misperceptions to be created if you post on subjects that you aren't completely familiar with.
- **Avoid Personal Posts About City Business** - In the social media environment, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are easily blurred. As referenced in the City of Yakima Social Media Policy, City employees and/or elected officials are discouraged from using personal equipment and/or personal accounts to post information about City business on either official City social media sites or other social media sites. Doing so too easily opens the door to others perceiving personal posts as representing the official position of the City. Keep in mind that even if you are posting about City business using personal equipment or a personal account, what you say is subject to public disclosure laws, open meetings laws, and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
- **Be Honest and Straightforward** - All posts should be accurate and should avoid being misleading in any way. Present information in posts as simply as possible. Posts that are brief and to the point leave less room for misinterpretation. If you happen to post information that misses the mark, be quick to point it out and correct it.
- **Stick To the Facts** - Post information that is based on your knowledge, rather than your opinion. Whenever possible, reference information that is available on the City's website or is otherwise easily accessible. By sticking to the facts, you will be seen as an unbiased, trusted source of information about City business.
- **Know the Rules** - Make sure that what you post complies with the City of Yakima Social Media Policy and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations. If you have questions about using social media, check with the City's Community Relations office. Remember that whatever you post to social media sites is ultimately your responsibility.