



Medina Township, Ohio

**SOCIAL MEDIA
POLICY**

Resolution # 01092020-005

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I. Purpose & Mission of Medina Township’s Social Media Presence.

Medina Township (MT) primarily utilizes social media to inform residents about pertinent meetings, scheduled events, and meeting changes. We also use it to share information about Medina area events, messages from neighboring agencies, local emergency information, and severe weather updates, when possible. The overall tone and spirit of our social media accounts are to reach and inform our residents in a positive way, to help our residents feel a sense of connection to their local government, and to maintain an overall sense of community within the township.

II. Description of current social media activities.

MT currently maintains five (5) official social media accounts:

A. Facebook (MT-FB)

MT has a FB page, named Medina Township. The Trustees have designated employees to have “Admin” access for monitoring the FB page. Admins on the FB page are required to interact with the public in a respectful and friendly manner, and are asked to refer the public to the “About” section of the page when the public questions our FB page policies. Policies are to be reviewed by “Admins” regularly and updated as needed. In the case of employee separation, the employee who possesses the logins for MT-FB page must relinquish their access and control of the MT-FB page to the appropriate supervisors, who will then confer with the trustees to appoint a new administrator.

B. YouTube (MT-YT)

MT has a YouTube Channel, named Medina Township. This account was created by an administrative assistant, and is connected to a township email. The employee shall serve as the administrator responsible for administrative functions pertaining to the MT-YT channel. The Trustees have designated secondary administrative employees who will serve in the administrative function in the event the employee is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities. In the case of employee separation, the employee who possesses the logins for MT-YT page must relinquish their access and control of the MT-YT page to the appropriate supervisors, who will then confer with the trustees to appoint a new administrator.

YouTube will primarily be used as a platform to directly “Live-Stream” MT’s regular meetings. The intent is to make MT meetings accessible to those who cannot attend meetings in person.

MT-YT Live Streaming and/or video recording will be a continuous recording of each meeting’s proceedings, including the “blank” time that occurs when Trustees enter an executive session, recess, or break of any kind. The only instance where interruptions may occur would be

during technical difficulties. Employees and residents are advised that their voices and the image of their physical presence may be recorded, broadcast, stored, and archived on the YouTube platform, and any other online platform to which the meetings are shared publicly.

The MT-YT channel videos/live stream content is considered to be a secondary record, and is NOT intended to replace the traditional methods of recording meeting proceedings. The traditional methods include an open public setting, official note-taking, and an officially accepted recording device. These traditional procedures are currently in place at Medina Township Hall, and will continue to be considered the primary record.

C. MTPD Facebook (MTPD-FB): The Medina Township Police Department has a Facebook account named Medina Township Police Dept. This account and its content are overseen by the Sergeants and the Chief of Police. The Sergeants and Chief of Police may designate secondary employees to assist with running the page. MTPD-FB shall abide by all **general** social media guidelines put forth in the balance of this policy, unless otherwise noted.

D. MTPD Next Door (MTPD-ND): The Medina Township Police Department has a Next Door account. This account and its content are overseen by the Sergeants and the Chief of Police. The Sergeants and Chief of Police may designate secondary employees to assist with running the page. MTPD-ND shall abide by all **general** social media guidelines put forth in the balance of this policy, unless otherwise noted.

E. MTPD Twitter (MTPD-TW): The Medina Township Police Department has a Twitter account. This account and its contents are overseen by a Sergeant. Its only current purpose is to copy the content that is posted to the Nextdoor account, to make it even more easily accessible by the public using this additional platform. MTPD-TW shall abide by all **general** social media guidelines put forth in the balance of this policy, unless otherwise noted.

III. Employee Access.

Authorized employees may be given access to the existing social media accounts as administrators or “Admins” as authorized by the Trustees according to this policy. Under no circumstance should any township employee or office share the login information of township accounts to non-MT employees, unless given written permission by all three (3) current trustees. New and additional social media accounts MAY NOT be created to represent Medina Township without prior written discussion and approval from the Board of Trustees. Subsequent social media

accounts and their individual regulations will be added to this policy during the approval and creation process. Certain accounts require different types of logins or access, and those can be handled on a case-by-case basis. All employees are required to relinquish their control of MT social media accounts upon separation from the township. All passwords for employee work-related accounts should be stored in secure way, but easily accessible to the employee if a supervisor/Trustee needs to access an account that only has one login.

IV. Employee Social Media Activity.

MT employees shall abide by the following when using social media:

- A. MT employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media but are cautioned to watch that their speech does not impair working relationships in the Township for which confidentiality is important; does not impede the performance of duties or MT operations; does not impair discipline and harmony among co-workers; or does not negatively affect public perception of MT. Such actions could lead to disciplinary action.
- B. As public employees, MT employees are cautioned that speech **on social media**, both on- or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties or that relates to the employee's professional duties and responsibilities, is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline, up to and including termination, if deemed detrimental to MT. MT employees should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their work in a position of public trust and MT generally.
- C. MT employees shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information, including photos, documents, etc., to which they have access as a result of their employment without prior authorization.
- D. MT employees are not to engage in social media *at all* while on-duty during working time unless specifically authorized to do so as a part of their job responsibilities.
- E. In light of the foregoing, MT employees are cautioned not to do the following on social media:
 - a. Make any representation that the employee officially represents MT, unless he/she is assigned to do so;
 - b. Make any disclosure of confidential information;
 - c. Engage in any other activity detrimental to MT or its respective operations, goals, and purpose.

Please keep in mind that these prohibitions apply regardless of whether the social media activity is done with the author's identifying personal information, under a pseudonym, or anonymously. Likewise, intentional or reckless actions by MT employees resulting in third party social media activity that would have been violative of these guidelines if the author were a MT employee are similarly subject to this policy.

- F. When using social media, MT employees should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain, even in the event that the author attempts to delete content after the fact. Therefore, MT employees should be mindful of, and are subject to discipline based upon, the standards imposed by applicable codes of conduct when engaging in any social media which could be construed as reflecting poorly on MT employees or MT.

In particular, MT employees should be aware of the standards created by applicable codes of conduct with regard to the following:

- a. Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, gender, any religion, or any protected class of individuals; and
- b. Speech involving themselves or other MT employees reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.

- G. MT employees may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements that could be construed as representing the official views or positions of MT; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of the MT without approval from the Trustees. When it falls under their expertise, it is appropriate for Police and Fire Chiefs to make official statements to the media.

H. MT employees should be further aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for:

- a. Publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation);
- b. Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;

- c. Using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or
 - d. Publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
- I. Infractions or abuse of township social media accounts or this policy are subject to the township discipline policy as stated in the MT Employee Handbook.
- J. MT employees should be aware that privacy settings and terms of usage at social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected or private. MT employees should not use MT-provided e-mail addresses to register with any site or online service unless specifically authorized to do so.
- K. MT employees should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by MT at any time without prior notice.
- L. MT employees should also have no expectation of privacy as to social media activity conducted on MT electronic devices, including, without limitation, MT-provided smart phones, any MT-provided computers, or any MT-affiliated website.

MT & MTPD-FB Facebook Social Media Policy

Guidelines For The Public User

Welcome to the Medina Township (MT) and/or the Medina Township Police Department (MTPD-FB) Facebook Page! Please click LIKE to follow us and stay up-to-date on what's happening in and around our beautiful community!

Our social media policies are ever-developing. Below are the current guidelines for use of this page, which are always subject to change:

- 1) Medina Township and/or MTPD employees monitor this page, when possible, during DAYTIME hours on WEEKDAYS only, unless an emergency exists or we find it necessary to interact after hours. Monitoring is done intermittently and is not continuous during every moment of the day. If a problem arises on this page, one of our admins will correct it as soon as possible during regular business hours.
- 2) Please contact our staff and/or trustees directly if you have an inquiry or concern. This page is NOT intended to be a direct contact method between our officials/employees and our residents. In other words, if you have a question or concern, call or email us! All department contact information is located on our websites: Town Hall: www.medinatownship.com or Police Department: mtpd.medinatownship.com.
- 3) Keep in mind that all comments and interactions that occur on, or in connection with, the MT and/or MTPD Facebook pages are considered to be public record, including deleted/hidden comments and interactions. Most web-based social media records can be obtained by simply visiting the page to view the record. Please note that it would be physically impossible for Medina Township to separately archive every single interaction that occurs on Facebook or the internet. In case of the need for extensive records, deleted comments, or more complicated social media records requests, the entity requesting the records must contact the social media platform itself in accordance with that specific platform's user agreement and records request policies. Contact Facebook directly for any in-depth Facebook records requests. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, frequently change their methods of archiving, storing, or deleting content, and Medina Township and/or MTPD has no power over the changes administered by Facebook directly.
- 4) Inappropriate conduct on our page will be not tolerated, and is subject to the reporting process as outlined in the Facebook user agreement, and further action if needed. The admins on this page, including current trustees and staff, have the authority to determine if any conduct is inappropriate for our audience, and reserves the right to hide or delete content that is deemed

inappropriate for this page. This policy applies to both employees AND Facebook users who interact on the Medina Township Facebook page. Inappropriate conduct and/or content includes, but is not limited to:

- Unauthorized displaying of confidential or private information
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted information
- Vulgar Content
- Sexual Content
- Violent Content
- Encouragement of illegal acts
- Threats of immediate bodily harm
- Promotion of commercial products/services
- Targeted, disparaging content aimed at any ethnic, racial, or religious group
- Political campaigning or campaign views
- Spam/Irrelevant content/clearly off-topic content
- Confidential Information (e.g. Social Security numbers)

MT and/or MTPD has the sole right to determine what constitutes “inappropriate conduct and/or content” and will exercise that right in a uniform, unbiased manner.

Please Note: The contents of the Facebook comment section on this page do not reflect the official opinions, positions, or views of Medina Township government or its officials in any way.

Let's work together to interact in a kind, respectful way and enjoy our township! We appreciate our residents and we're always here to help.

Respectfully, -Medina Township and/or MTPD-FB Admins-

MT YouTube Social Media Policy

Guidelines For The Public User

Welcome to the Medina Township YouTube Channel! Please click “subscribe” to follow us on YouTube. We intend to regularly post the link to our channel via the Medina Township Facebook page, as well as on our website, to make our residents aware of the ability to view our regular and special meetings via YouTube LiveStream. We believe that our live stream will be a positive addition to our previous social media accounts.

Our social media policies are ever-developing. We ask for your patience as we begin the process of building content for our channel. Below are the current guidelines for use of this YouTube channel, which are subject to change:

1. Medina Township employees monitor this channel, when possible, during DAYTIME hours on WEEKDAYS only, unless an emergency exists or we find it necessary to interact with our followers after hours. Monitoring is done intermittently and is not continuous during every moment of the day. If a problem arises on the page, one of our admins will correct it as soon as possible, during business hours.
2. Please contact our staff and/or trustees directly if you have an inquiry or concern. This channel is NOT intended to be a direct contact method between Township officials and employees and our residents. In other words, if you have a question or concern, call or email us! All department contact information is located on our website: www.medinatownship.com
3. Keep in mind that all comments and interactions that occur on, or in connection with, the Medina Township YouTube channel are considered to be public record, including deleted/hidden comments and interactions. Most web-based social media records can be obtained by simply visiting this channel to view the record. One of the best features of YouTube is that it makes it possible to archive past live-stream sessions and other videos that have been posted by the township to the channel. Please note that it would be physically impossible for Medina Township to separately archive every single interaction that occurs on YouTube or the internet. In case of the need for extensive records, deleted comments, or more complicated social media records requests, the entity requesting the records must contact the social media platform itself in accordance with that specific platform's user agreement and records request policies. Contact YouTube directly for any in-depth YouTube records requests. Social media platforms, such as YouTube, frequently change their methods of archiving, storing, or deleting content, and Medina Township has no power over the changes administered by YouTube directly.

4. Inappropriate conduct on our channel will be not tolerated, and is subject to the reporting process as outlined in the YouTube user agreement, and further action if needed. The admins on this channel have the authority to determine if any conduct is inappropriate for our audience, and reserves the right to hide or delete content that is deemed inappropriate for this page. This policy applies to both employees AND YouTube users who interact on the Medina Township YouTube channel. Inappropriate conduct and/or content includes, but is not limited to:

- Unauthorized displaying of confidential or private information
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted information
- Vulgar Content
- Sexual Content
- Violent Content
- Encouragement of illegal acts
- Threats of immediate bodily harm
- Promotion of commercial products/services
- Targeted, disparaging content aimed at any ethnic, racial, or religious group
- Political campaigning or campaign views
- Spam/Irrelevant content/clearly off-topic content
- Confidential information (e.g. Social Security numbers)

Medina Township has the sole right to determine what constitutes “inappropriate conduct and/or content” and will exercise that right in a uniform, unbiased manner.

5. Our Live Streaming and/or video recording will be a continuous recording of each meeting’s proceedings, including the “blank” time that occurs when Trustees enter an executive session, recess, or break of any kind. The only instance where interruptions may occur would be during technical difficulties. Employees, residents, and the public are advised that their voices and the image of their physical presence is subject to being recorded. These recordings are subject to being stored and archived on the YouTube platform, and any other online platform to which they are shared publicly.

6. **Please Note:** The contents of the YouTube comment section on this page do not reflect the official opinions, positions, or views of Medina Township government or its officials in any way.

Important Note: The Medina Township YouTube channel videos/live stream content is considered to be a secondary record, and is NOT intended to replace the traditional methods of recording meeting proceedings. The traditional methods include an open public setting, official note-taking, and an officially accepted recording device. These traditional procedures are currently in place at Medina Township Hall, and will continue to be considered the

primary record. Our residents and the public are still encouraged to request and refer to our primary records, while also being able to access web-based records, as found on YouTube and Facebook.

Let's work together to interact in a kind, respectful way and enjoy our township! We appreciate our residents and we're always here to help.

Respectfully, -Medina Township YouTube Admins-