

Iowa County, Iowa  
Policy Manual

Title: Social Media Guidelines	Reference #: HR028
Section: Human Resources	Date Effective/Revised: 7/1/2016
Department (s): All	Approved By: Board of Supervisors

## Social Media

### Definitions:

Social Media - Various forms of discussion and information-sharing, including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include: picture-sharing, wall-postings, fan pages, email, instant messaging, and music-sharing. Examples of social media applications include, but are not limited to, Google and Yahoo Groups (reference, social networking), Wikipedia (reference), MySpace (social networking), Facebook (social networking), YouTube (social networking and video sharing), Flickr (photo sharing), Twitter (social networking and micro-blogging), LinkedIn (business networking), and news media comment sharing/blogging.

Business Purposes: Use of social media as a means of communicating official information about the County, including events, department activities, emergency information, and feature stories. Business Purposes also includes use of social media for interaction with a professional association, information source necessary to the job duties of an employee, and interaction with other members of a professional association.

Personal Use - On-duty and off-duty use of personal social media sites by a County employee for any purpose that is not a business purpose. This includes access on personal or County provided computers and smart phones.

### Purpose and Scope:

The purpose of this policy is to establish County regulations defining the use of various technologies known collectively as “social media”. Social media accounts shall be used for the purpose of informing the public about County business, services, and events. All official County presence on social media accounts are considered an extension of the County’s information networks.

This policy covers all social media messages generated on or handled by electronic communication systems owned by the County. This policy is also applicable to all social media messages generated by employees of the County that relate to their status as an employee of the County. The regulation of employee speech is subject to the right of employees to freedom of speech as that right has been interpreted by the court.

The County’s website will remain the official location for content regarding County business, services, and events. Whenever possible, links within social media formats should direct users back to the County’s website for more information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the County.

Iowa County, Iowa  
Policy Manual

Title: Social Media Guidelines	Reference #: HR028
Section: Human Resources	Date Effective/Revised: 7/1/2016
Department (s): All	Approved By: Board of Supervisors

All County social media accounts should be viewable to the public and not use privacy settings.

The County logo and authorized departmental extensions should be used on all social media accounts to confirm authenticity of site.

If a department chooses to participate in social media, online representation on social media accounts is ultimately the responsibility of the Department Director. The Department Director shall appoint a social media moderator to control the social media account and ensure appropriateness of content.

Departments should regularly monitor and update accounts at least twice a week.

Employees representing the County via social media accounts must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the County and must comply with the Guidelines contained in this policy and with the provisions relating to “Prohibited Content”.

Any employee who discovers a violation of this policy shall immediately notify their Department Head who shall in turn inform the Chief Information Officer. An employee who violates this policy or uses social media for improper purposes shall be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment.

**Posting Guidelines:**

Employees should be conscious of what they post on social media sites and avoid presenting personal opinions that imply endorsement by the employee’s Department or the County. If posted material could be attributed to the employee’s Department or the County, the post must be accompanied by a disclaimer identifying the statements or opinions presented as those of the poster and stating that the statements or opinions do not reflect those of either the employee’s Department or the County.

Employees should not portray themselves as spokesperson for their Department or the County unless they are specifically authorized to do so by either the Department Head or the Board of Supervisors.

Departments that use social media accounts are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), First Amendment free speech rights, privacy laws, and information security policies established by the County.

Iowa County, Iowa  
Policy Manual

Title: Social Media Guidelines	Reference #: HR028
Section: Human Resources	Date Effective/Revised: 7/1/2016
Department (s): All	Approved By: Board of Supervisors

Employees may not post text, video, pictures, or other material that would reasonably be considered to be detrimental to the image of the County or of an individual Department. Only post material which you have permission to use.

Employees should keep in mind that once an item is posted it is publicly available on the Internet and cannot be retracted.

- a) Prohibited Content - The following content shall be prohibited on official County social media sites.
- b) Profane language or content
- c) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates illegal discrimination of any kind.
- d) Sexually explicit content or links to such content.
- e) Solicitation of others for commercial ventures, or religious, social, charitable or political causes.
- f) Making or publishing of false, defamatory, or malicious statements concerning any employee, supervisor, the County, or its operations.
- g) Personal information about employees.
- h) Posting of HIPAA protected information is not permitted.

Use of chat sessions in social media will not be permitted. The Department Head, CIO, or designated representative, reserves the right to delete submissions that are deemed inappropriate, according to prescribed unacceptable content standards. If any record is deleted for unacceptable content, it is the responsibility of the affected Department to retain a public record of that content and keep a record of why the information was removed.

Friends, fans, or followers should be removed if they continue to post inappropriate content. One warning should be given. If the individual posts inappropriate content a second time, they should be removed or blocked.

**Social Media Account Security:**

Department social media accounts should be tied to a County email address.

Moderators should never leave a workstation unattended when logged on the social media account.

Iowa County, Iowa  
Policy Manual

Title: Social Media Guidelines	Reference #: HR028
Section: Human Resources	Date Effective/Revised: 7/1/2016
Department (s): All	Approved By: Board of Supervisors

Only the Department Head and moderator(s) should know the login and password to social media accounts.

If the moderator changes, the login and password should also change.

**Personal Use of Social Media:**

Employees should make certain any online activities do not interfere with their effectiveness at work and ensure any on-duty personal use is limited in nature. If on-duty personal use is interfering with work effectiveness, employees will be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees should be mindful of blurring their personal and professional lives when using or accessing social media sites.

Employees may not use social media to engage in libelous, defamatory, obscene, or maliciously false behavior directed at the County, Departments, elected officials, appointed officials, other employees, or members of the public.

Employees may not post confidential information which they have learned through their employment with the County.

Posting of HIPPA protected information is not permitted.

Employees may not use their County email account in connection with a personal social networking account.

Employees shall not participate in online social media or forums on behalf of the County or their Department unless they are authorized to do so by the Department Head.

When violations of these guidelines occur, the County reserves the right to exercise judgment in determining the appropriate level of discipline by reviewing each incident on a case-by-case basis.