

Policy No:	CC – 005
Department:	CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
Subject:	SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

prepared by

Social Media Staff Committee

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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
1.0 Purpose

The Social Media Policy establishes service standards and procedures relating to social media networks used by the City of Vaughan for the purpose of:

- 1.1 Providing accurate, timely and clear information about City services, programs and public safety to City of Vaughan residents, businesses, visitors and other stakeholders;
- 1.2 Increasing accessibility to local government in order to encourage greater interest and participation in local affairs;
- 1.3 Promoting greater transparency in government; and
- 1.4 Assisting City departments and employee site administrators to implement best practices on a consistent basis across the Corporation, and mitigate risks relating to social media usage.

2.0 Application

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Corporation of the City of Vaughan.

3.0 Definitions and descriptions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy, “social media” is understood to be content created and distributed primarily using internet and mobile-based tools designed for sharing and

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discussing information online and through mobile devices. As a Web 2.0 technology which allows users (i.e. visitors to a social media site) to post their own information (also known as User-Generated Content), social media networks provide two-way communications for sharing opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks.

- 3.2 The following social media tools are approved for use by the City of Vaughan: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr and LinkedIn. All additional social media tools proposed for City use will be reviewed by the Director of Corporate Communications.
- 3.3 The City of Vaughan’s official website at www.vaughan.ca remains the City’s predominant internet presence and its primary communications vehicle.

4.0 Content Development

- 4.1 All City staff using social media venues to communicate officially on behalf of the City must have prior permission from their Director and each City department is responsible for overseeing staff authorized to use social media.
- 4.2 The Corporate Communications department is responsible for identifying staff training requirements and conducting orientation sessions to provide an overview of content guidelines.
- 4.3 The Corporate Communications department, which is responsible for the integrity of the corporate brand and the City’s image, maintains “corporate” social media sites for communicating general information about the City to the public at large.

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- 4.4 City social media sites should be clearly identified as being maintained by the City of Vaughan through the use of the City logo, department name, and contributor’s job title.
- 4.5 Users and visitors to social media sites will be made aware that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between City departments and members of the public.
- 4.6 Each City social media site will include a standardized “Terms of Use” statement, provided by the Corporate Communications Department.
- 4.7 City social media sites will link back to the official City of Vaughan website for further information, forms, documents and online services.
- 4.8 In order to support communications with the public, a central listing or a central point of access for all social media sites managed by the City will be posted to a “social media page” on the City’s official website.
- 4.9 In compliance with the Vaughan Emergency Response Plan, all information issued by the City during a declared emergency is managed by the Public Information Section under the direction of the Emergency Management Team, including emergency information posted on the corporate social media sites.
- 4.10 In order to reach the widest possible audience during a declared emergency, staff administrators of social media sites will be provided with pre-approved emergency information by the Public Information Section under the direction of the Emergency Management Team for rebroadcast on their social media sites, if appropriate.

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5.0 Administrator Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 Each City social media account will be managed by one “primary” administrator and supported by two “secondary” administrators, one of which will be provided by the Corporate Communications department.
- 5.2 Administrators will attend an orientation session on the City’s social media initiative provided by the Corporate Communications department and assist in identifying any training requirements.
- 5.3 Administrators are responsible for ensuring their social media sites are used to post relevant and timely information about City programs and initiatives. Social media sites should add value to the City by raising awareness, sharing information, and encouraging public involvement.
- 5.4 All content – written copy, photographs, videos, external links, etc. – posted by a site administrator is the responsibility of the originating department.
- 5.5 City social media sites are updated and monitored during regular office hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- 5.6 All City social media sites will be remotely monitored by primary and secondary administrators outside regular office hours, including weekends and holidays, through email notifications of user posts or comments. The City will proactively moderate content through the use of filters and other available site features.

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- 5.7 All social media sites hosted by the City will require monitoring by the primary administrators to ensure all user comments are appropriate and respectful. Administrators, with the support of Corporate Communications, are responsible for removing inappropriate user comments, as defined in item 7.4 below.
- 5.8 Administrators must consult with their Directors to determine the appropriate response to any controversial comment or complaint posted by users.
- 5.9 Administrators should respond to questions received online if they directly relate to public information managed by the administrator’s department. For questions relating to other departments, the administrator can post a link to the City website section which addresses the question or request the information from the appropriate department for posting.
- 5.10 While City departments are encouraged to activate visitor comment features of social media, site administrators may disable this functionality if deemed appropriate.
- 5.11 To maintain security of network usernames and passwords, authorized employee administrators must use a username/password combination that differs from their City network login ID and password.
- 5.12 Administrators managing a City social media site are official online representatives of the City of Vaughan and should be courteous and respectful at all times when interacting with the public.

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6.0 Procedures

- 6.1 Information disseminated using social media technologies is considered public domain and subject to being re-printed in newspapers, magazines or online in any other web format.
- 6.2 Comments and messages posted to City of Vaughan social networking sites are considered transitory and will not be kept as permanent records by the City, with the exception of comments and postings made by the public during a declared emergency which need to be recorded and tracked as part of the official records of the emergency.
- 6.3 User comments or postings on a City social media site will not be considered or processed as official correspondence.
- 6.4 Departments can advertise their social media sites in department-produced communication vehicles, such as a program brochure. Every City social media site should link back to the “social media page” or social media directory on the City’s official website.

7.0 User comments

- 7.1 The City of Vaughan reserves the right to review, edit, modify or delete any comment submitted to a City social media site by a user (i.e. visitor to a City social media site).

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- 7.2 The City of Vaughan reserves the right to deny access to City of Vaughan social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Vaughan’s Social Media Policy.
- 7.3 Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Vaughan may be removed.
- 7.4 Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content will not be posted to City of Vaughan social media sites:
- Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
 - Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
 - Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, age, religion, gender, or national origin;
 - Defamatory or personal attacks;
 - Threats to any person or organization;
 - Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns;
 - Solicitation of commerce, not related to City business or initiatives;
 - Content in violation of any Canadian law;
 - Encouragement of illegal activity;
 - Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

8.0 Staff Participation

8.1 City employees using social media venues for work-related activities represent the City of Vaughan and are subject to this Social Media Policy, all City policies including but not

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limited to policies governing staff conduct, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

- 8.2 Inappropriate usage of City social media sites by City employees can be grounds for disciplinary action and may be grounds for dismissal.

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