

Social Media Policy

Elk Ridge recognizes the value of a designated and qualified representative utilizing social media for reinforcing brand recognition, promoting transparency, engaging constituents and employees in conversation, and for delivering a wide variety of information to the public. Elk Ridge intends to leverage the reach of social media to communicate and deliver messages directly to its residents and to encourage involvement, interaction, and feedback.

This policy has been created to provide standards and guidelines for staff, appointed, and elected officials involved in the use of social media for municipal purposes, as well as an employee's personal use of such platforms. The term "social media" may refer to numerous websites, apps, and online tools including, but not limited to: Facebook, YouTube, Nextdoor, Twitter, Snapchat, and LinkedIn.

Purpose

This policy will establish guidelines for the use of city sanctioned social media by city (full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal) employees as well as elected and appointed officials, who use social media and social networking to interact with residents on behalf of the Elk Ridge.

To deliver clear, concise, and consistent messages on behalf of the city, this policy provides guidance on its management, administration and oversight.

Strategy

Elk Ridge's social media forums provide an interactive means of sharing information that relates to the city and engaging in ongoing conversation that is relevant.

Social media can be especially effective in communicating information in crisis situations when the timeliness of information is crucial.

While social media provides an effective forum for building relationships and conveying time-sensitive information in a concise and efficient manner, it does not serve as the city's sole or primary means of communication with residents, businesses, and others. Elk Ridge utilizes other well-established means (e.g. official website, public meetings, email notifications) to effectively share information with a variety of audiences.

Definitions

Social Media Sites. Third party websites, apps, or online tools which allow for the creation of content and dialogue around a posted item. Examples include but are not limited to: Facebook, YouTube, Nextdoor, Twitter, Snapchat, and LinkedIn.

City Social Media Sites. Those pages or posting locations that are established or maintained by an employee of Elk Ridge who is authorized to do so as part of the employee's assigned duties and using an authorized account established with a city email address.

Post. Content an individual or organization shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Profile. Information that a user provides about himself or herself or an organization on a social networking site.

Public Information. Information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by an individual officer or employee of a governmental body in their official capacity and the information pertains to official business of the City.

Moderator. A person who is responsible for posting or uploading on a social media platform. This person also monitors posts to decide whether comments require a response, engages with the community, investigates issues, provides customer support, and/or responds to inquiries.

Social Media Content. Informational text, weblink, video, graphics, or photographs posted to a social media site.

Utah's Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA). State law providing requirements and parameters for access to governmental information in the interest of transparency.

Temporary Custodian. A current or former governmental employee or official who has possession of public information that has not been provided to the City Recorder, or other designated or qualified representative, as the officer of public information. This information is usually contained on a personal device (e.g. cell phone, laptop) or in a personal account (e.g. email or social media).

Public Records

Emails, text messages, private messages, posts, and comments located on Elk Ridge social media sites are considered public information subject to GRAMA. Information contained on a temporary custodian's non-City social media sites *may* be considered public information subject to the act.

GRAMA and rules governing litigation may apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with these laws. Users who generate or post content for city authorized accounts must ensure that necessary records are retained and archived by working with the City Recorder's office.

Elk Ridge social media sites must clearly indicate in the profile section: *Any articles and other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.*

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Mayor (or designated and qualified representative) to act as the city's official spokesperson. The City Recorder is responsible for the maintenance of the city's official web presence via social media/networking and the internet.

Elk Ridge's department heads are responsible for:

- Ensuring employees are aware of, understand and comply with this policy.
- Relaying information for posting to city social media to the City Recorder.
- Ensuring all departmental contributors to the city's social media adhere to this policy.

Authorization

Elk Ridge will primarily utilize a central account with desired social media networks. Individual departments and employees will utilize the central account to convey desired information.

Benefits of one central account include:

- A unified, branded message for the organization.
- Combined and greater number of followers.
- Ease of use for audience.
- Increased information being communicated.
- Increased efficiency of internal communications.

Authorization for a department to establish a separate social media site shall rest with the Mayor (or designated and qualified representative).

- The request must state the necessity of separate accounts.

After the approval of a social media site by the Mayor (or designated and qualified representative), the following information must be shared with the Mayor.

- All login or password information (unless an administrator role can be set up).
- Updated login credentials (in the event they are changed).
- The names of all employees who are authorized to maintain or post on the social media site.

The Mayor (or designated and qualified representative) may disable a city social media site and prohibit posting of any site at any time and for the reasons including, but not limited to:

- Violation of this policy.
- Unprofessional use of this resource.
- Lack of use or disinterest by the public.
- A department's failure to maintain the site.
- In the interest of efficiency or operational necessity.

Brand Management

The official Elk Ridge logo and a general office contact email (staff@elkridgecity.org) should be displayed somewhere in the main profile to establish authenticity and brand awareness. Where possible, sites should link back to the official city website for forms, documents, and other information. Elk Ridge prohibits the use of its logo by unauthorized accounts, including private accounts operated by employees, elected or appointed officials or other third parties.

Following Other Social Media Sites

At the discretion of the Mayor, city sites may follow (become a fan, friend, etc.) other social media sites that are in some way associated with Elk Ridge (e.g. local businesses, sponsors or neighborhood groups), or have relevance and/or benefit to the community.

Additionally, official city social media sites shall have the following disclaimer:

Following, likes, retweets, shares, etc. are not official "endorsements" by Elk Ridge City.

Posting on City Social Media on Behalf of Elk Ridge

Use of social media sites must provide worthwhile information that assists the community at large in information dissemination that informs, solves problems, promotes activities or events, improves services, processes and policies, or builds a sense of community. Frivolous information shall not be posted. If there is uncertainty about something to be published, do not publish unless approved by the Mayor (or designated and qualified representative).

When possible, moderators shall use word-processing software with spellcheck capability before posting. Messages should be clear, complete, and concise follow the subsequent guidelines:

- Use correct grammar and spelling.
- Avoid jargon.
- Information should be factual and accurate.

Social media content must not:

- Use ethnic slurs, insults, or obscenities

- Violate another person's privacy.
- Violate intellectual property laws.
- Be proprietary.
- Violate Attorney-client privilege or disclose other confidential information.
- Be subject to State or federal privacy laws.
- Conduct political activities.

Private and non-profit business posts may only be placed or shared on the city's social media for the following reasons:

- A private and non-profit business has sponsored a city event or program.
- A business has just opened in the city.
- For informational purposes when the city is causing hardship to the business due to construction or maintenance.

Moderators are reminded that postings are widely accessible and retained for a long period of time. All content should be carefully considered. Engaging in conduct prohibited by other city policies will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action and/or termination.

Comments and Comment Moderation

To encourage engagement and increase transparency, it is Elk Ridge's intent to leverage social media as a method of two-way communications. To that end, comment and forum features will be activated to allow users to make comments and ask questions.

Official city social media sites shall state:

Social media moderation and instant messaging is available Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. through 4 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. These sites are not monitored 24 hours a day. In case of an emergency please call 911, the Non-Emergency Sheriff Dispatch at 801-798-5600, or the Public Works After-Hours number at 801-938-0440.

Moderators will reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. When disagreeing with others' opinions or providing comments, the moderator will do so in a meaningful, respectful, and relevant manner.

Moderators shall not comment on anything related to confidential matters, legal matters, litigating or any parties with whom the city may be in litigation with, without the approval of the Mayor (or designated and qualified representative).

Complaints and requests for service should be directed to the city's website or to the appropriate department to be addressed.

A standard reply may be used to direct users with concerns related to sensitive or complex issues. This standard reply shall read something like:

Elk Ridge is very interested in the insights and concerns expressed here. However, complex topics typically are not effectively discussed in forums such as this. Please contact the city at 801-423-2300 or submit a Complaint Form on the city's website if you wish to voice your concerns further or obtain additional information.

Posts containing criticism shall be allowed. The city will not edit other's posts. At times, moderators may determine other means/tools are more appropriate ways to respond to feedback or may determine that it is best not to respond to a post at all.

Social media pages may also state where appropriate:

The City reserves the right to require those who comment on its posts to comply with the Terms of Use of the social media site and will report users the city believes to be in violation of the Terms of Use.

Individuals who post or comment are legally responsible for their comments and/or posts. Users are encouraged to comply with all intellectual property rights of a holder and avoid the inappropriate disclosure of confidential information in all posts.

Personal Use of Social Media

Confidential, proprietary, and non-released city information should not be included in an employees' private social media activity. Employees who post private and personal information gathered through the employee's professional activities, distribute private information by email, or through text messaging may be subject to discipline under the city's policies and procedures.

An employee's public image in social media, if associated with the city, should meet the standards in the General Conduct section of the Elk Ridge Personnel Manual.

For employees with personal social media profiles and blogs:

- If an employee can easily be identified with or identifies themselves as a city employee on their blog or other social media profile, they should make it clear that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the city's views. To help reduce the potential for confusion, the following notice — or something similar — may be included on employee's sites and/or pages: "The views expressed here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."
- Additionally, employees should not associate their private accounts with their city email address. Nor should they use the city logo.
- Employees are encouraged to be respectful to the organization, fellow employees, residents, and other agencies.

- Employees are encouraged to only post truthful and accurate statements when referencing the city, co-workers, residents, and/or vendors.
- Employees not acting in their official capacity shall not represent or give the impression they are acting in their official capacity and should not imply they are a spokesperson for the city.
- Monitoring personal social media, including microblogging, text messaging, or instant messaging accounts should not interfere with an employee's work for the city and could lead to disciplinary action.

Employees should be aware that information posted to their personal social media sites pertaining to official city business may be considered public information subject to GRAMA. In doing so, the employee may become a temporary custodian of the city's public information. GRAMA makes the temporary custodian responsible for either turning over the public information to the City Recorder, forwarding the public information to an official city account (i.e. email), and/or preserving the public information for the duration of the retention period. Please contact the City Recorder for more information on the applicable retention schedule. Employees should respond to a request for public information from the City Recorder (or designated and qualified representative) within three business days.

Elected and Appointed Officials – Personal Social Media Sites

Elected and appointed officials may maintain personal social media sites but should maintain transparency that the Elected or Appointed Officials' site is a personal site and views or opinions expressed on the personal site are not necessarily reflective of the policy of Elk Ridge.

Elected and appointed officials should be aware that information posted to their personal social media sites that pertains to official city business may be considered public information subject to GRAMA. In doing so, the elected or appointed official may become a temporary custodian of the city's public information. GRAMA makes the temporary custodian responsible for either turning over the public information to the City Recorder, forwarding the public information to an official City account (i.e. email), and/or preserving the public information for the duration of the retention period. Please contact the City Recorder for more information on the applicable retention schedule. Elected and appointed officials should respond to a request for public information from the City Recorder (or designated and qualified representative) within three business days.

Questions regarding the application of GRAMA to content posted, created, or shared via an Elected or Appointed Official's personal social media site should be directed to the City Recorder (or designated and qualified representative).