



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Effective Date: March 23, 2023

Owner	Human Resources
Reviewer(s)	Human Resources
Approver(s)	County Manager
Applicable Policies	Respectful Workplace, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Whistleblower
Applicable Documents	N/A
Storage Location	DCo Services Hub, DocTract
Last Review Date	03-01-2025
Next Review Date	03-01-2028
Review Cycle	Three years

1. PURPOSE

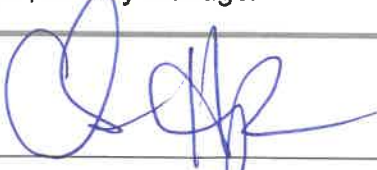
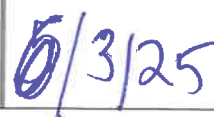
Durham County recognizes that social media allows a convenient and efficient means to communicate and share content. The ability to share content and communicate instantaneously has transformed both one's personal life and business operations. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, guidelines have been established for appropriate use of social media. The absence of, or lack of specific or explicit reference to a particular social media site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

2. POLICY

This policy sets expectations to ensure that social media activity will neither discredit, disrupt normal operation, nor impair an effective and efficient delivery of public services.

3. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all County employees covered by the Personnel Ordinance, and to all those pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding.

Claudia Hager, County Manager	Effective Date:
Signature: 	



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4. DEFINITIONS

Social media: Any internet communication tool that allows users to share content and engage with the public. This includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Durham County, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

5. GUIDELINES

The use of social media presents certain risks which requires the establishment of appropriate use guidelines. Employees are responsible for content posted (whether posted by the employee or by another individual for which you have knowingly allowed to post) through his/her social media account. Employees must understand consequences of the risks, as engaging in inappropriate social media post(s) can adversely affect an employee's ability to perform job duties, negatively impact relationships with coworkers, and could affect service to citizens of the County. Inappropriate and erroneous social media posts can unfairly impede legitimate business interest with customers, vendors, and contractors.

Courtesy must be exercised towards all fellow employees, customers, vendors, or any individual who performs services on behalf of the County. While it is understood that employees can express complaints or criticism, employees must avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that references Durham County and that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or bullying. Examples include but are not limited to offensive posts intentionally harming someone's reputation or contributing to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or county policy; or condoning or advocating violence or violations of law. Employees can reference the County's Grievance policy to file a complaint about a matter involving Durham County.

6. EXPECTATIONS

- Social media should not be used to harass abuse, terrify, threaten, or embarrass persons (including but not limited to Durham County or any agency or entity with which the County regularly conducts business or engages in the performance of an individual's job duties).
- Posting any information or gossip that you know to be false is prohibited.
- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of County information. Refrain from posting internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communication via social media or via any form of unauthorized electronic communication.



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- Do not post a link from your personal blog, website or other social media site to a county website.
- Refrain from using social media during work hours (except for breaks and meal periods).
- Exemptions must be authorized by management or be consistent with guidelines addressed in the Information Systems & Technology Acceptable Use policy.
- County email addresses are prohibited for personal use to register on social media networks, blogs or other online tools. The IS&T General Computer Use policy provides additional information regarding computer, network, email, and equipment usage guidelines.
- Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the County, unless otherwise authorized by the County to do so. Should you publish a work-related blog or post online, make it known that you are not speaking on behalf of the County. It is best to include a disclaimer such as *"The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Durham County."*
- Do not speak to the media nor communicate via social media on the County's behalf without obtaining prior permission from the County's Public Information Office. All media inquiries should be directed to the County's Public Information Office.
- The County prohibits any negative and/or retaliatory action taken against any employee for reporting a potential deviation and/or for cooperating in an investigation in accordance with this policy. Violations will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- Employees must review the County's Respectful Workplace, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Whistleblower policies to ensure his/her social media posts are not in opposition of applicable guidelines. Posts considered to be a violation include, but are not limited to discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct.

7. RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of Durham County supervisors and managers to uniformly administer, communicate, and ensure compliance with this policy.
- It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to interpret, monitor, and update the policy content.
- It is all employees' responsibility to comply with policy guidelines.
- Any violation or policy misuse will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal