

EXISTING

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

A. INTRODUCTION

This Policy is intended to provide guidance with regard to the personal use of social networking sites during non-work hours and on equipment not belonging to the Town of Millis. Use of such social networking sites during work hours or on equipment owned and/or maintained by the Town of Millis is strictly prohibited.

B. PURPOSE

Because of the Town's substantial interest in maintaining a professional, collegial, confidential, and impartial workplace, it is imperative that all Town of Millis employees who engage in use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Bebo, and others, accept the terms of this Policy and any such additional related policies that may be issued by the Town of Millis. Employees are expected to act in a positive manner and contribute to a productive work environment that is free from harassing or disruptive activity. Employees are encouraged to remember that information posted on the internet can be easily traced back to its author, and should think before posting information to any online source. Statements made by employees pursuant to their official duties are not insulated from discipline because they occurred on social networking sites. The list of social networking sites contained above is not intended to be exhaustive, and shall be deemed to include any social networking sites in existence at the time this policy is reviewed by the employee or created thereafter.

C. GUIDELINES FOR USAGE

1. Professional Judgment. Employees are encouraged to use professional judgment at all times with regard to personal use of social networking sites. In using social networking sites, employees should at all times be respectful to co-workers, residents, or persons seeking assistance from the Town of Millis. Employees should not disclose confidential information, engage in any unlawful activity, or convey information that is disparaging or defamatory while using social networking sites, and should refrain from making comments or statements based upon race, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, disability, maternity leave, genetics, active military status, or another basis prohibited under state or federal anti-discrimination statutes. Such statements or comments occurring online and/or through use of social networking sites will not be tolerated.

2. **Improper Practices. It is not possible to list all the circumstances that may constitute violations of this policy. Activities and/or actions which are considered offensive are messages or material which contain nudity, sexual references or implications, sharing demeaning pictures, cartoons, or jokes, racial or ethnic slurs, or other comments that inappropriately address someone's race, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, disability, maternity leave, genetics, active military status, or another basis prohibited under state or federal anti-discrimination statutes.**

3. Disciplinary Action. The department head will evaluate any suspected violations of this policy on a case-by-case basis. A violation of this policy or any attempt to bypass or to circumvent this policy may result in disciplinary action ranging from a verbal warning up to discharge from employment. Violations of this policy may also result in referral of a case to the appropriate authorities for civil or criminal prosecution.

D. VIOLATIONS OF POLICY

Violation(s) of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, up to and including termination from employment. Employees shall report violations of this Policy to their supervisor, or in the case of department heads, directly to the Town Administrator. Retaliation against another user for reporting a violation or violations of this Policy is strictly prohibited by the Town of Millis.

PROPOSED

Social Media Policy

The Town of Millis understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. It is also a tool that may be used to communicate more effectively with residents about town services. 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, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to anyone who is employed by the Town of Millis.

Guidelines

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media 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 web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or chat room, whether or not employed or affiliated with the Town of Millis, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the Town of Millis personnel policies apply to your activities online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects people who work on behalf of the Town of Millis may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and Follow the Rules

Carefully read these guidelines, the Town of Millis Conduct Policy, State Ethics Law, and the Town of Millis Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy to ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be Respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, residents, vendors, or people who work or volunteer on behalf of the Town of Millis. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage others, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or town policy.

Be Honest and Accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the Town of Millis, fellow employees, residents, vendors, or people who work or volunteer on behalf of the Town of Millis.

Post Only Appropriate and Respectful Content

- Maintain the confidentiality of The Town of Millis' private or confidential information. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal confidential information.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to the Town of Millis website without identifying yourself as an employee of the Town of Millis.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Town of Millis. If the Town of Millis is a subject in the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the Town of Millis, fellow employees, residents, or companies working on behalf of the town. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the Town of Millis, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Town of Millis. 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 the Town of Millis".

Using Social Media at Work

Social media may not be used while on work time or on equipment we provide unless it is work-related as authorized by your department head and is consistent with the *Town Telecommunications Systems Policy*. Do not use the Town of Millis email to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Retaliation is Prohibited

The Town of Millis prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Media Contacts

Employees should not speak to the media on the Town of Millis' behalf without first contacting your department head.