

Department:	Media and Public Relations	Policy Number:	M05-1683
Subject:	Social Media Policy	Effective Date:	11/12/2012
Bylaw No:		Revision Date:	24/03/2023
		Version #:	3

Town of Espanola Social Media Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines and standards to ensure the appropriate use and management of social media on behalf of the Town of Espanola.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Espanola website is the primary source of online information exchange with the general public and is the Town’s official internet presence. The Town also uses social media to enhance communication and information-sharing with the public and other audiences.

The Town supports and promotes the use of social media as a tool to deliver effective and accessible communication about municipal news, programs, and services to the community.

Social media tools offer many benefits, including:

- Sharing information on programs, services, and news to a wide audience;
- Promote/market the municipality online to local, regional, and national audiences;
- Disseminate time-sensitive information as quickly as possible; and
- Increase civic engagement by providing an additional tool for the public to communicate with the Town.

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Town of Espanola employees and officials who make public statements on Municipal social media sites and social networks that discuss, share, or comment on the Town of Espanola. This policy also applies to members of the public who use, comment, or post on municipal social media sites and social networks. The policy applies to all social media channels as defined in this policy. Appendix A includes a list of all current Social Media accounts owned and operated by the Town of Espanola within an official capacity.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

“Accessibility” or **“Accessible”** means the degree of ease that something (ex: device, service, environment) can be used and enjoyed by persons with a disability. The term implies conscious planning, design, and/or effort to ensure it is barrier-free to persons with a disability, and by extension, highly usable and practical for the general population as well.

“Chief Administrative Officer” or **“CAO”** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Espanola.

“Corporate Account” means the Town of Espanola’s primary social media account, within each of the selected Social Media channels, that provides communication for all Municipal departments and functions, and is managed, maintained, and populated by authorized Social Media Account Administrators designated to be responsible for corporate accounts.

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“Council” or “Councillor” means the Council of the Town of Espanola and any individual elected member of the Council of the Town of Espanola.

“Department Head” means the Director or Manager of a Department of the Town of Espanola, and who is a member of the Senior Management Team.

“Employee” means any person that is employed by the Corporation of the Town of Espanola. This includes all classifications of employees as defined in their respective contract (ex: Permanent Full-time, Permanent Part-time, Seasonal, Temporary Casual, Student, Contract).

“Information Technology (IT) System” means all electronic communication devices used by the Town of Espanola council, employees, or contractors which include, but are not limited to, all computer and telephone networks, devices, and applications, as well as mobile devices (ex: tablets, smartphones, pagers, etc.).

“Objectionable Material” means content that contradicts the principles established by the Ontario Human Rights Code or materials of a pornographic, profane, or sexually explicit nature, as well as content that may offend based on race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnicity, citizenship, creed, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, family status, religion, or disability.

“Official Record” means any record of information however recorded, whether in printed form, by electronic means, or otherwise: includes correspondence, a memorandum, a book, a plan, a map, a drawing, a pictorial or graphic work, a photograph, a film, microfilm, a sound recording, a videotape, a machine-readable record (or capable of being produced from a machine-readable record), any other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and any copy thereof.

“Online Communication” means the exchange of information using the Internet or mobile communication network for any purpose (ex: information using the Internet or mobile communication network for any purpose (ex: information sharing, marketing, public engagement, etc.).

“Separate Account” means a social media account set up by a Municipal department, board, or committee that is in addition to the Corporate Account. Separate accounts are managed, maintained, and populated by the authorized Social Media Account Administrator of the department, board, or committee and each Separate Account must be approved by the CAO. The Account is owned by the Town of Espanola and will remain within the Corporation after employment ends.

“Social Media” means the various online, accessible communication channels or technologies that enable individuals to join and/or participate in online communities for the purpose of publicly sharing information, ideas, messages, pictures, etc. These channels are currently approved to include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, as well as blogs, mobile applications, websites, photo boards, discussion boards, and any other online location where commentary is publicly shared and attributed to the Corporation, an employee, or an elected official of the Corporation.

“Social Media Account Administrator” means any employee designated by the Town of Espanola to maintain a particular Corporate or Separate Social Media Account, including writing and publishing content and monitoring, managing, and measuring account activity.

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“**Transitory Record**” means any record that has temporary usefulness and is only required for the completion of a routine action or until superseded.

“**Trolling**” means the activity of making deliberately offensive or provocative online posts with the aim of upsetting someone, eliciting an angry response and/or encouraging negative or unproductive discussion.

5.0 POLICY CONTENT

The Town of Espanola CAO, in consultation with the Senior Management Team, is responsible for designating the role of Social Media Account Administrator.

Where possible, a single staff person should be designated as the Social Media Account Administrator for each Corporate or Separate account that exists. This person is responsible for posting, monitoring, and maintaining the account on behalf of the Municipality, Department, Board, or Committee. In addition to the regular Social Media Account Administrator, an alternate Administrator should be identified.

5.1 Account Creation & Management

Before creating a corporate social media account or adding a new social media channel, discussion should occur between the Social Media Account Administrator, CAO, and any other applicable staff on the need for and benefit of a new account and/or channel. Adequate resources, including staff time and material, must be present for the creation of a new account.

The creation of a new account and/or channel should not take core content away from an existing account and should be done sparingly. Departments that are governed and/or heavily influenced by outside bodies (ex: Building Department, Fire Department, Public Library, Police Service, etc.) are good candidates for Separate Accounts.

Before creating a separate account for a department, board, or committee, employees must obtain permission from the CAO. Any corporate or separate social media account established by the Town of Espanola prior to the adoption of this policy will be reviewed by the Social Media Account Administrator(s) for compliance with this policy. Any significant recommendations from this review should be forwarded to the CAO and Senior Management Team for their review, discussion, and decision.

Every corporate or separate social media account created must have two (2) or more Town of Espanola employees, one of which must be a Department Head or member of the Senior Management Team, with full access and permissions to the account.

5.2 Acceptable Use of Social Media by Account Administrators

Social Media Account Administrators are permitted to engage in social media activity for corporate purposes. Social Media Account Administrators must use their judgment to manage their time and balance the integration of social media within their overall work plans.

i. Maintenance

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Social Media Account Administrators must maintain accounts to ensure they are kept current and relevant to the public. Social media accounts with frequent periods of inactivity (six weeks or more without new information) will be brought to the attention of the Social Media Account Administrator and relative Department Head for discussion on continuation. This does not apply to any seasonal accounts.

Social Media Account Administrators must undertake regular audits of social media comments to ensure inappropriate postings are removed in a timely fashion (ex: commercial advertisements, disparaging remarks).

ii. Purpose and Use

Social media should be used as a communications tool for the intent of enhancing communication from the Municipality to the public about programs and services for the following purposes:

- Raising awareness and sharing information
- Recruiting volunteers and employees
- Promoting Municipal events, programs, and services
- Increasing access to information for specific audiences
- Promoting opportunities for public involvement and comment on the Municipality’s operations
- Where possible, Municipal social media accounts should link back to the Municipal website, www.espanola.ca, for the purpose of downloading forms, and documents, and providing specific additional information.

iii. Conduct

Social Media Account Administrators using social media on behalf of the Municipality will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, including:

- Post accurate, credible, and consistent information and links that are consistent with the Municipality’s information, messages, brand identity, and policies (including the Municipal Website Policy). Department Heads are responsible for the accuracy and relevancy of any information forwarded to the Social Media Account Administrator for posting.
- Strive for transparency and openness, including when deemed necessary, identifying their name and position within the Municipality (ex: when executing Information Coordinator duties under the Emergency Response Plan).
- Adhere to the objectives, values, and guidelines established in the Town of Espanola’s Customer Service Policy (M05-01344).
- Publicly correct any information in a timely manner that has been communicated and found to be in error, using the same platform it was produced.
- Post content in a manner that is discreet, does not disclose confidential information or release personal or corporate information, without prior consent. Social Media content must take the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) into consideration.

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- Must not engage in offensive language, respond in a confrontational manner, or post content that is not professional or that contravenes Municipal policies and the Town of Espanola’s Employee Code of Conduct Policy (H00-01842).
- Must not use corporate accounts to express personal opinions or further personal agendas or business.
- If using the Corporate Account Profile to post in a public or private group (ie: Espanola & Area History), always include contact information for the department that is responsible for the content of the post and direct questions or comments to the department directly.
- Ensure proper protocols and permissions are obtained for posting any copyrighted materials (including documents, websites, logos, images, videos).
- Ensure the security of social media accounts is maintained, including password and login information.

Where possible, each social media account used by or associated with the Municipality should contain a disclaimer clearly advising visitors to the site that third-party comments are not official communications of the Town of Espanola. The disclaimer should also note that the Municipal Website is the official destination for municipal information and that social media accounts are monitored only during business hours, Monday to Friday.

Disclaimer example:

“Comments made by members of the public are not official communications of the Town of Espanola and are owned by the contributing commenter. These comments are not reflective of the Municipality’s views, opinions, and/or policies.”

This page is primarily monitored during regular business hours, between 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, excluding holidays. The Corporate website at www.espanola.ca should be used as the official resource for municipal information.”

Additionally, where possible each social media account used by the Municipality should contain the following reference to the Town of Espanola Customer Service Policy:

“As per the Town of Espanola Customer Service Policy, in order to ensure that information can be exchanged readily with the customer and the Municipality, customers requesting a response to a non-routine inquiry will be required to provide name, home address, telephone number, and email address to municipal staff. Failure to provide the requested contact information will result in the request not being processed.”

To support the Town of Espanola’s Disconnect from Work Policy (H00-01894), Employees/Account Administrators will not be expected to respond to comments or messages, or to post content outside of their normal working hours, except in the following circumstances:

- When a matter is timely and another Account Administrator is unavailable.
- Where unforeseen circumstances may arise (ie: event cancellation due to inclement weather).
- Where an emergency may arise.

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- Where an employee voluntarily wishes to access the Corporate Account and respond to comments or messages, while still during regular business hours.
- Other business or operational reasons that require the Employee’s attention in a timely manner outside of their normal working hours, within reason.

iv. Sharing/Reposting Content

When sharing or reposting content from a social media account that is not owned by the Town of Espanola, Social Media Account Administrators must follow these guidelines:

Content that includes external links:

- Connects the public with information and services provided by upper-tier governments or government-funded agencies or boards in Canada.
- Provides further information on subject matter found on the Municipality’s website. Such information must be provided by an official and/or accredited source.
- A Municipally affiliated organization, service club, or registered charity (direct partnership by way of funding, sponsorship, staff resources, or in-kind contributions).
- A business improvement area (BIA) or Chamber of Commerce (CoC) operating within the municipality.
- A professional association as determined solely by the Town of Espanola.
- Any organization approved by the CAO or Council.

Any posts that include links to a personal account/website, individual business account/website (except when part of a Municipal website Business Directory and/or BIA/CoC), political party/candidate account/website, or objectionable material as defined in this policy must not be shared or reposted on a Municipal social media account.

Content promoting events:

- Organized or funded by another level of government.
- Organized by a government-funded agency or board.
- Organized by a Town of Espanola affiliated organization/group.
- Funded in full, or in part, by the Town of Espanola.
- Sponsored by the Town of Espanola.
- Organized by a registered charitable organization operating within the Town of Espanola or the Sudbury District.
- Organized by a service club operating within the Town of Espanola, performing work that benefits Espanola residents.
- Organized by a BIA or CoC located in the Town of Espanola or Sudbury District for general promotional purposes.
- Located in a facility or on a property owned by the Town of Espanola.

Any posts that promote events that are for individual businesses (except members of a BIA/CoC), include objectionable material, do not comply with municipal, provincial, or federal legislation, are political in nature, or promote an individual religion or religious service, must not be shared or reposted on a Municipal social media account.

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v. Removal of Corporate Content

When sharing content related to temporary closures of roads, facilities, or services, posts should be edited to include any updates (as they are available) **above** the original post. Posts including any temporary closure notices shall be removed from the feed or archived where possible within 48 hours of the closure’s resolution to avoid any confusion or clogging of the feed.

Example:

Original Post:

The Town of Espanola is advising of a watermain break on TUDHOPE STREET between Spruce St. and Spanish River Dr. The road will be closed in this area until further notice.

Updated Post:

UPDATE: TUDHOPE STREET IS REOPENED AT 4:32PM.

The Town of Espanola is advising of a watermain break on TUDHOPE STREET between Spruce St. and Spanish River Dr. The road will be closed in this area until further notice.

vi. Records Management and Retention

Posts/user content deemed to be Official Records must be retained and purged according to the Corporate Retention and Destruction of Records Policy and comply with appropriate sections of the MFIPPA (A09-01822).

Posts/user content that is considered a Transitory Record of the Municipality is not required to be retained and may be purged from social media sites.

5.3 Personal Use of Social Media by Councillors and Employees

Municipal employees who are not Social Media Account Administrators are not permitted to publish or comment via social media in any way that suggests they are doing so in connection with or as representatives of the Town of Espanola. Employees are not to use personal social media accounts to respond to comments on Municipal accounts which pertain to their department(s).

Example of **not permitted** Employee’s Personal Social Media Account when engaging with a Corporate Account:

Economic Development Officer using their personal account to respond to a comment on a post by the Corporate Account inquiring about the Community Improvement Plan.

Example of **permitted** Employee’s Personal Social Media Account when engaging with a Corporate Account:

Manager of Recreation using their personal account to comment on a post by the Corporate Account inquiring about the holiday garbage pick-up schedule.

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Incidental or occasional personal use of social media on personal or workplace devices is allowed, providing such limited use will not result in any measurable expense to the Corporation in time, material, or productivity, and is subject to the limitation of this policy.

i. Conduct

The Municipality expects all Employees and Councillors who use social media to do so without breaching their duties to the Municipality and adhere to their respective Codes of Conduct. Employees and Councillors should consider the following:

- Even if you don't explicitly identify yourself as a Municipal employee or councillor, others may identify you as an employee or councillor by your name, your place of work, your photograph, or by the content you post.
- Identifiable Municipal employees should make it clear that their position does not officially represent the Municipality's position. Use phrases such as "in my personal view" or "personally..." to communicate that you are expressing personal views.
- Do not use visual cues that suggest you represent the Municipality. Do not post Municipally owned logos, photographs, graphics, or other media without the Municipality's authorization.
- Do not circulate any organizational or confidential information, such as internal deliberations about how decisions are made, personal information, such as client or employee information, or negative comments about the Town of Espanola, its Councillors, Employees, or residents.
- Do not disparage or embarrass the Municipality, individual Councillors, Employees, and others associated with the Municipality.
- Do not engage in workplace discrimination or harassment, or activity that includes inappropriate comments, photographs, links, etc.

Overall, Employees and Councillors are expected to conduct themselves professionally both on-and-off duty. Even when an Employee does not publicly associate themselves with the Municipality on social media, all materials associated with their page may be perceived to reflect upon the Municipality.

Further, Employees and Councillors should not expect confidentiality or privacy in relation to their online activities as they pertain to the Town of Espanola. The traditional legal view is that posting content on social media sites about an employer is considered a publication and not private activity. Councillors and Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online as it relates to the Municipality.

ii. Municipal Councillor and Other Government Accounts

If a Mayor, Councillor, MP, or MPP representing the Town of Espanola, Algoma-Manitoulin, or Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing riding has a personal social media account, the Town of Espanola's Corporate Accounts are permitted to like/follow the politician's account. Accounts belonging to Municipal Councillors or Mayor must be created and maintained by the elected member and not by municipal employees. Accounts belonging to all geographically relevant, sitting politicians of any party must be "Liked" or "Followed" to avoid showing favouritism.

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The Municipality’s social media accounts are permitted to share/repost content from posts belonging to a Municipal Councillor, Mayor, MP, or MPP representing the Town of Espanola, Algoma-Manitoulin, or Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing riding if the content does not clearly promote or criticize a political party, candidate, or ideology. Appropriate shareable content includes, but is not limited to, community events, funding announcements, bill/law announcements, etc. Overall, Social Media Account Administrators should use their best judgment when sharing/reposting content belonging to a political candidate or office holder.

Acceptable online presence of the Mayor of Espanola or of a Town of Espanola Councillor is informed by the Council Code of Conduct (C08-01687).

At the beginning of the Municipal Nomination Period or upon announcement that a Provincial/Federal election writ has dropped, all links, likes/follows, and sharing of content with a Councillor, Mayor, MP, or MPP site shall be stopped and/or removed until the Inaugural Meeting of the newly elected Council or Legislature is complete.

5.4 Security and Monitoring of Corporate Use

i. Information Technology

Town of Espanola staff may facilitate a request to monitor and oversee social media accounts and may:

- Allow internet access to an authorized user.
- Limit or prevent unnecessary functionality within social media sites.
- Enable technical risk mitigation controls, including filtering and scanning files exchanged with social media sites.

All information created on Corporate and Separate social media accounts using municipal technology is the property of the Town of Espanola. Reasonable technological and procedural measures, including auditing and random monitoring of social media accounts, will occur to ensure adherence to corporate policies and standards.

ii. Log-in and Password Management

Espanola’s Corporate and Separate social media accounts are owned by the Municipality. The CAO and Department Heads will have full “Administrator” access privileges to social media accounts managed within their area.

All credentials and details for Corporate and Separate accounts must be communicated to the Clerk’s Department. The Clerk’s Department will maintain a master list of any Municipal social media login information. Password changes must be immediately communicated with the Clerk’s Department.

Accounts created to represent the Town of Espanola must be associated with a valid Municipal email address (@espanola.ca).

5.5 Citizen Conduct

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Users and visitors to the Town’s social media accounts/pages should be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a communication platform and information-sharing tool between the Municipality and the public.

A hyperlink to the Espanola Social Media Policy will be posted on the respective social media account/page where possible. The Municipality reserves the right to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant, or unproductive content (ex: posts and comments) from social media accounts. If the user continues to post inappropriate, irrelevant, inaccurate, or unproductive content, the Municipality may ban/block the user from the site at the discretion of the staff/Senior Management Team.

The Municipality’s social media accounts/pages that the below citizen conduct criteria applies to are those that fall under the definition of Social Media in Section 4.0 of this policy. For example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts, websites (ex: www.espanola.ca), blogs, etc.

Comments, posts, or articles containing the following content will not be allowed:

- Comments not topically related to the topic and/or issue being commented upon.
- Account spamming, trolling, or over-posting.
- Posts that are meant to solicit sales, products, or goods and services.
- Profane, aggressive, hateful, defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive, or violent language or content.
- Content that includes or includes links to objectionable material, as defined in this policy.
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Information that may compromise the privacy, safety, or security of the Municipality, public, or public systems.
- Comments or posts that include inaccurate material or misrepresent facts as known by the Corporation.
- Comments or posts that impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, Municipal staff, or Municipal officials.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Town of Espanola is not responsible for any comments or use of material posted by users.

5.6 Legal

Comments and content uploaded to a social media account may be permanently available for viewing and printing and can be republished in other media without the Municipality’s permission. As a result, Social Media Account Administrators must ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and data protection laws are adhered to.

All Corporate and Separate social media accounts must adhere to applicable provincial, federal, and local laws, regulations, and policies, including other applicable Municipal policies.

Any content removed based on the guidelines in section 5.5 will be retained by the Social Media Account Administrator, and have supporting documentation, including time, date, identity of poster, reason for removal, and any required incident reporting.

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6.0 SOCIAL MEDIA MEASUREMENT

The Social Media Account Administrator will produce a bi-annual report (June and December) of analytics on the Municipality’s social media accounts. Reporting performance measures should include:

- Facebook – likes, engaged users, top posts, shares, comments, and demographics.
- Instagram – followers, impressions, hashtag usage, reposts.
- YouTube – views, likes, dislikes, comments, shares, and demographics.
- Twitter – overall followers, new followers, number of tweets, number of replies, impressions, engagement rate, retweets, link clicks, favourites, and top performing tweets.

7.0 POLICY COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated internally with staff, distributed directly to Social Media Account Administrators, and circulated to any staff who assist with content creation. The policy will be posted on the Municipal website for public access. The policy will also be hyperlinked on the Town of Espanola’s social media accounts.

This policy will be reviewed with staff on an ongoing basis as part of new Employee and new Councillor orientation sessions.

8.0 POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every two years or more often as needed to keep current with social media platform additions and updates.

9.0 COMPLIANCE

In cases of policy violation, the Municipality may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

Employees may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for violating this policy. Members of Council may be subject to action for violation of the Code of Conduct.

10.0 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Date	Comments
	11/12/2012	Issue Date
1	03/07/2016	Policy revised to reflect new accounts created
2	24/03/2023	Policy revised to reflect advancements in social media

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APPENDIX A:

Town of Espanola Corporate Accounts:

- Facebook: @TownofEspanola, <https://www.facebook.com/TownofEspanola>
- Instagram: @TownofEspanola, <https://www.instagram.com/townofespanola/>
- YouTube: @TownofEspanola, <https://www.youtube.com/@TownofEspanola>

Espanola Public Library:

- Facebook: @EspanolaPublicLibrary, <https://www.facebook.com/EspanolaPublicLibrary>
- Instagram: @EspanolaPublicLibrary, <https://www.instagram.com/espanolapubliclibrary/>

Espanola Fire Department:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089465684498>

Pre-authorized Local Accounts for Sharing/Reposting:

- Public Health Sudbury & Districts:
 - Facebook: @PublicHealthSD, <https://www.facebook.com/PublicHealthSD>
- Espanola Regional Hospital:
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057304006603>
 - Instagram: @espanola_regional, https://www.instagram.com/espanola_regional/
- Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce:
 - Facebook: @GreaterSudburyChamber, <https://www.facebook.com/greatersudburychamber>
 - Instagram: @GreaterSudburyChamber, <https://www.instagram.com/greatersudburychamber/>
- Ontario Provincial Police:
 - Facebook: @OPPNorthEast, <https://www.facebook.com/OPPNorthEast>
 - Instagram: @ontarioprovincialpolice, <https://www.instagram.com/ontarioprovincialpolice/>
- Ontario Professional Fire Fighter's Association
 - Facebook: @OPFFA, <https://www.facebook.com/OPFFA>
 - Instagram: @OPFFA, https://www.instagram.com/ontario_firefighters/
- Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs
 - Facebook: @ONFireChiefs, <https://www.facebook.com/ONFireChiefs>
- National Fire Protection
 - Facebook: @theNFPA, <https://www.facebook.com/theNFPA>
 - Instagram: @nfpadotorg, <https://www.instagram.com/nfpadotorg/>