



Tiny
TOWNSHIP OF / CANTON DE

The Corporation of the Township of Tiny Communication Policy

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Policy Number:
COM-003

Approval Date:
12/02/2011

Revision Date:

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POLICY STATEMENT:

The Township of Tiny is committed to excellence in municipal management with a focus on accountability, transparency, communication and customer service. As a result, the Township strives to provide open access to information about its policies, services, and initiatives. The Township recognizes that social media applications are widely being utilized as new communication tools with the potential to provide the public with timely information. The Township is committed to disbursing information in a range of formats to reach a variety of stakeholders.

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of the social media applications specifically so that the disbursement of timely and accurate information is balanced with the Corporation's need to ensure that:

- a. The use of social media tools does not compromise public safety or the Township's image.
- b. The information provided through social media is in line with the Corporation's vision and guiding principles.
- c. Social media content does not violate individual privacy or conflict with existing municipal policies and by-laws or other regulations as applicable.
- d. Social media content posted on behalf of the municipality is accurate, accessible, transparent and accountable.

DESCRIPTION/DEFINITIONS:

Social media tools are third-party internet-based applications that enable collaboration and sharing of opinions, insights, images, information and experiences through real-time conversations among individuals and groups.

Facebook is a social networking website intended to connect friends, family, and business associates.

Twitter is a website which offers a social networking and micro blogging service, enabling its users to send and read messages called *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the user's profile page.

YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share and view videos.

In a municipal setting, Facebook and Twitter can be used to communicate public notices, upcoming meetings, special events, public service information, etc. Other social media applications, such as YouTube, may be utilized from time to time under appropriate



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circumstances. Videos posted to YouTube will follow the same guidelines as all other social media applications as noted below and outlined in this policy.

APPLICATION:

Social networking applications shall be executed following the same guidelines as other Township communication applications. The following information will be permitted:

- Information pertaining to Township business and Township sponsored events and activities;
- Information pertaining to the Township Recreation Associations;
- Information pertaining to Public Health and Safety (i.e. road closures, inclement weather, etc.).

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

The C.A.O./Clerk's Department shall be the lead department for the Township's online communication strategies. All social media activity must be approved by the C.A.O. or designate. The C.A.O./Clerk's Department, in conjunction with the IT Department, will maintain and monitor the approved social media sites.

Login and passwords for the sites are confidential information and will be stored under the supervision of the IT Department.

Control of Content

The C.A.O./Clerk's Department will work collaboratively with staff to ensure that information published online regarding Township policies, programs, services, events and initiatives is accurate, easy to understand and accessible in multiple formats.

The C.A.O./Clerk's Department reserves the right to edit or remove content from social media sites that is deemed unsuitable, inappropriate or in violation of this Social Media Policy.

The Township of Tiny's website (www.tiny.ca) will remain the Township's primary and predominant internet presence for in-depth information, forms and online documents. All social media sites used will direct visitors back to the appropriate section of the website.

Each department shall be responsible for ensuring the clarity, accuracy and relevance of content posted on the social media sites. Each department should appoint an employee from its full-time staff to be responsible for online content relevant to that department. This practice is in place for municipal website content and increases the municipality's ability to provide up-to-date, relevant information.



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Township departments should carefully consider messages to be posted to the social media sites. Social media content generated by employees of the Township of Tiny are records owned by the Corporation and not the individual employee. In addition to being a record of the Township, content maintained in a social media format that is related to Township business is a public record and is subject to the rules of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Policy Compliance

The Township's Social Media Policy applies to all Township departments. All new and existing employees will be given a copy of the Township's Social Media Policy. Senior Management is expected to ensure that staff under their supervision are aware of this policy and take appropriate measures to ensure compliance.

All Township social media activity must also comply with relevant municipal policies, standards and by-laws including, but not limited to:

Township Vision and Guiding Principles
Township Technology Usage Guidelines
Corporate Accountability and Transparency Policy
Township Workplace Harassment Policy
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Unsuitable Content

The C.A.O./Clerk's Department, in conjunction with the IT Department, shall monitor all use of social media by employees for work purposes and will intervene to remove content that is deemed unsuitable. Content may be deemed unsuitable if it includes commercial endorsement or solicitation, personal political content, confidential information, objectionable material, discriminatory language, or violates the terms of this policy or other by-laws, policies or procedures of the Township of Tiny. For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions are provided to clarify the scope of what is considered unsuitable content:

- a. Commercial endorsement or solicitation includes endorsement by the Township of one product or service over another, as well as statements requiring or requesting receipt of any product, service or assets for personal gain or use.
- b. Personal political content includes support of, or opposition of, political campaigns or matters before Township Council, personal comments or opinions about Township staff and/or elected officials as well as personal views about the municipal political process.
- c. Confidential information includes classified-as-confidential or proprietary records in the possession of the Township, as well as information about members of the public, municipal staff and elected officials.



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- d. Objectionable material includes matter which may contain, but is not limited to, material promoting hate and/or violence, materials of pornographic, profane or sexually explicit nature. It also includes text that links to sexual or sexually explicit content, content that encourages illegal activity or contains information that may compromise the safety and security of the public or public systems or postings which violate a legal ownership interest of any party including interest in copyright and other intellectual property.
- e. Discriminatory language presents a discriminatory, demeaning or derogatory portrayal of individuals or groups or contains anything which, in light of generally prevailing community standards, is likely to cause deep or widespread offence. It is also language that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, family status, status with regards to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES/COMMENTS

Township staff will not respond directly to comments and inquiries that are generated by the public as a result of content posted on social media sites used by the Township. The C.A.O. will determine when exceptions to this policy are required.

DISCLAIMER:

The Township is not responsible for comments made by subscribers or members related to its social media applications and reserves the right to remove any content that is inappropriate for any reason and at any time. Third-party social media sites are private businesses with their own terms of service and privacy policies. The Township does not accept any responsibility for the operation of third-party social media sites and is unable to guarantee the privacy of individuals who access content provided to such sites by the Township.
