

TOWN OF HAMILTON SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
FOR TOWN OWNED SITES

I. Policy:

A. **Introduction.** The Town of Hamilton (the “Town”) depends upon a work environment of tolerance and respect for the achievement of its goals in serving the citizens of the Town.

B. **Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to provide notice to all members of the public of the standards required to communicate with their town through the use of Official Town of Hamilton social media sites and that they must conform to the law and this policy. This policy is designed to promote and govern the professional and personal use of social media in a responsible manner and to avoid uses that can: (1) breach confidentiality by revealing protected information about the Town, its citizens, or its employees; (2) expose the Town to legal liability for behavior that may be harassing, offensive, or maliciously false; or (3) interfere with the productivity and/or ability to perform essential duties and responsibilities of the Town.

II. Definitions:

1. The Town: Town of Hamilton.
2. Officials: Individuals who hold office in the Town, whether elected or appointed.
3. Employees: All persons employed by the Town regardless of position.
4. Users: Any member of the public (individuals or groups) who utilize Official Town of Hamilton social media sites or tools.
5. Social Media: Online forums in which Users participate in the exchange of ideas, messages, and content, including blogs, microblogs, and social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter).
6. Electronic Media: All forms of electronic communication, transmission, or storage, including but not limited to, websites and any content contained therein or related thereto.

III. General Provisions:

A. The Town uses social media sites as a means to disseminate information from the Town to the members of the public. Consequently, the Town has both an expectation of and a responsibility for the integrity and presentation of information posted on its social media sites and the content that is attributed to the Town, its Departments, and its employees and officials.

B. “Social media sites” means content created using publishing technologies through and on the Internet. The types of content and examples of services to which this policy applies include but are not limited to:

Media sharing – Examples: You Tube, Flickr, iTunes
Blogging/Microblogging – Examples: WordPress, Blogger, Twitter
Social Networking – Examples: Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Ning
Document and Data Sharing Repositories – Examples: Scribd, SlideShare, GoogleDocs
Social Bookmarking – Examples: Delicious, Digg, Reddit

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Widgets – Examples: Google Maps, AddThis, Facebook “Like”

- C. All Town social media sites require approval by the Town Manager before they are created.
- D. The Town may edit the content of or terminate any Town social media site at any time without notice.
- E. The content of town social media sites shall only pertain to Town-sponsored or Town-endorsed programs, services, and events. Content includes information, photographs, videos, and hyperlinks.
- F. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies.
- G. Any content maintained on a Town social media site may be considered to be a public record. No content that is proprietary, confidential, or not freely available to the public may be posted.
- H. Employees representing the Town on Town social media sites shall conduct themselves at all time as a professional representative of the Town and in accordance with all Town policies. Employees are reminded that those policies include compliance with all ethical obligations and non-harassment, as well as the Town’s Social Media Policy for Employees.
- I. Only certain employees are authorized to post on Town social media sites. Those employees shall not express personal views or concerns through such postings. Postings shall only reflect the views of the Town.
- J. Postings to Town social media sites shall NOT contain any of the following:
1. Direct advocacy regarding political campaigns or candidates, except as permitted by the Campaign Finance Law (G.L. c. 55) and Conflict of Interest Law (G.L. c. 268A);
 2. Profane language or content;
 3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, military service, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws;
 4. Sexual content or links to sexual content;

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5. Solicitations of commerce unrelated to Town business;
6. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
7. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other person.

K. Town social media sites may permit members of the public to comment on or communicate with Town employees, officials, or departments. Users must not harass any employee or official, regardless of the time, place, form, or manner in which the information is posted. Online posts that harass, defame, disparage, or threaten any Town employee, Town Official or any individual or group are expressly prohibited, even if the Town's name or the names of any of its personnel are not posted in the comment.

L. Prohibited comments or content will be removed from the site(s) by the Town upon their discovery.

IV. Amendment of Policy:

The Board of Selectmen may amend this policy from time to time at its sole discretion.