

14. Social Media Use

Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on 10/7/2014

14.1 Summary

Kittitas County recognizes the benefit of quick and directed communication provided by social media. It also recognizes the challenges related to records management, public disclosure laws, unrestricted public forums, and to the reputation of the County and its representatives.

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent standards for and ensure appropriate use of Kittitas County-sponsored social media sites used by Kittitas County offices/departments in reaching out to the public with the purpose of sharing information about Kittitas County.

This policy applies to all County-sponsored social media sites and to all Kittitas County employees and those performing business on behalf of a County office/department.

14.2 References

1. [Kittitas County Privacy Notice](#)
2. [RCW 42.56 Public Records Act](#)
3. [Records Management Policy and Procedures](#)
4. Technology Policy 11 Websites

14.3 Definitions

14.3.1 Public Record

Any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics ([RCW 42.56.010\(3\)](#)).

14.3.2 Social Networking

Any internet site that is focused on creating networks of individuals such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

14.3.3 Social Media

Internet-based communication tools that provide for immediate and interactive information sharing. Examples include forums, weblogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photo sharing, and chat.

14.3.4 Publishers

Employees and other individuals authorized to contribute to County-sponsored social media sites.

14.4 Policy

14.4.1 Kittitas County's Official Website

Kittitas County's official Website at <http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us> is and will remain the County's primary and predominant Internet presence.

14.4.2 Official County-Sponsored Social Media Sites

Every County-sponsored social media site account must be pre-approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

KCIT will create, configure, and have access to all County-sponsored social media sites and accounts.

Kittitas County's intranet (CAMAS) may be used to post messages to the County's website and to County-sponsored social media sites.

Applications on social media site shall not be used unless pre-approved by the Information Technology Committee.

14.4.2.1 Right to Remove Sites

County-sponsored social media sites may be removed by the responsible DH/EO without notice.

14.4.3 Use

All official Kittitas County presence on social media sites are subject to all related administrative policies, including, but not limited to, confidentiality, employee conduct, records management, privacy, and security of County technology assets.

14.4.4 Front Page Requirements and Branding

To help distinguish County-sponsored social media sites from other sites, and to facilitate their proper use, home pages of County-sponsored social media sites must:

- Follow the Kittitas County website style guide
- State the site is maintained by Kittitas County and is subject to this Social Media Use Policy
- Identify the office/department responsible for the information displayed
- Provide a clear statement of the discussion topic of the site so that the public is aware of the limited nature of the discussion and that inappropriate posts are subject to removal
- Have links to the County Privacy Notice and Social Media Disclaimer (section 14.4.7)
- Have a link to the county or office/department home page
- State the County disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials that the County deems inappropriate for posting which cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner.

14.4.5 Posting

Only publishers may post to County-sponsored social media sites. All publishers must sign the Social Media Use Policy Acknowledgement Form prior to using the service. No one may publish to County-sponsored social media sites unless they have signed the Social Media Use Policy Acknowledgement Form.

Publishers must adhere to content requirements described in Technology Policy 11 Websites.

14.4.5.1 Purpose of Posts

Posts shall be written to increase the public's knowledge, trust, and use of County office/departments, programs or services and drive users to the County's website.

14.4.5.2 Official Business Only

Employees and other individuals authorized to use social media to communicate on behalf of a County office/department should be mindful that statements posted represent the County, including its elected officials. Most social media sites do not allow editing of posts. Use discretion when posting.

Posts shall always relate to work matters within the subject matter jurisdiction of the posting office/department and should be consistent with the County's public service mission. Only information authorized by this policy shall be posted. Employees and other individuals authorized to use County-sponsored social media sites must ensure that all information posted is professionally presented, accurate, and appropriate for dissemination to the public.

Conducting official County business via social media is permitted only on approved County-sponsored social media sites. Use of County-sponsored social media sites for communications and postings that are not directly related to an official County business purpose is prohibited.

14.4.5.3 Copyright Laws

Postings must adhere to copyright laws and reference or cite sources appropriately. This includes, but is not limited to, quotes, text, images, and documents.

14.4.5.4 No Political Advocacy or Private Commercial Activity

Publishers must not use County-sponsored social media sites for advocacy of political purposes or to conduct private commercial activities.

14.4.5.5 Protection and Non-Disclosure of Confidential/Sensitive Information

Confidential, sensitive, proprietary or non-public information must not be posted.

Information posted on County-sponsored social media sites must not contain information that relates, or can be connected, to an individual or group of individuals containing specific health information (doctors, diagnoses, medication/prescriptions, etc.), personally identifiable information (names with social security numbers, bank accounts) or information deemed to be sensitive in nature or protected by Federal, State, or County rules and regulations.

It is the responsibility of the publisher to ensure that information posted on these sites does not contain confidential, sensitive, proprietary or personal information.

14.4.5.6 No Expectation of Privacy

Publishers should not have any expectation of privacy as to any posting.

14.4.5.7 Personal Use of Social Media

This policy is not intended to govern employees' establishment or use of personal social media accounts for personal purposes, outside the workplace and using non-County information systems. However, Employees should be aware that their use of social media may be perceived as representing the County and County government, and should tailor their use accordingly.

Postings and user profiles on personal social media accounts must not state or imply that the views, conclusions, statements or other social media content are an official policy, statement, position, or communication of the County, or represent the views of the County or any County officer or employee.

Employees utilizing social media for personal use shall not conduct official County business on personal social media accounts, or use the Kittitas County Government seal or other official County marks, or use the County government's name to promote or endorse any product, cause, or political candidate.

14.4.6 Comments

While the County welcomes public comment by email, letter, and phone, the receipt of public comments on a County social media site comes with certain legal risks and administrative challenges. Where comments are not desirable or practical, the office/department should carefully consider both appropriate social media and other media tools.

14.4.6.1 Daily Monitoring of Comments

The posting office/department must dedicate sufficient resources and time on a daily basis to monitor for disallowed comments or to respond to requests or questions. The social media account will be configured to send email to the office/department when a comment is posted, if the option is available.

14.4.6.2 Right to Remove Content

Kittitas County reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

14.4.6.3 Removal of comments

Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available.

14.4.6.4 Disabling of Public Comments

There may be occasions where disabling public comments on a social media site is desirable. In these instances, comments may be invited via email to a designated County office/department email address that is regularly monitored.

14.4.7 Social Media Disclaimer

This Social Media Disclaimer will be linked to from all County-sponsored social media sites.

Kittitas County Social Media Disclaimer

Thank you for using this Kittitas County social media site (the “site”).

This site provides an opportunity for sharing and discussing information about Kittitas County programs and activities. The comments and opinions expressed by users of this site are theirs alone and do not reflect the opinions of Kittitas County or its employees.

This site, including but not limited to all linked pages and subpages, is provided on an "as is" basis, and users are fully and solely responsible for their use of the site and for any results or consequences of such use.

Comments should be limited to comments related to the posted topic. This site is not the proper place to express opinions or beliefs not directly related to that topic.

Comments will not be edited by Kittitas County or its staff.

Further, any comment will be deleted if it contains:

- Vulgar, offensive, or harassing language.
- Graphic, obscene, or explicit language or materials. Nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful, or intended to defame anyone or any organization.
- Discriminatory language based on race, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or disability.
- Threats or personal attacks.
- Personal or sensitive information (e.g., phone numbers, email or postal addresses).
- The suggestion or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Comments promoting or opposing any person campaigning for election to a political office or promoting or opposing any ballot proposition.
- Solicitations or advertisements.
- Apparent spam, such as the same comment posted repeatedly.
- Intentionally or unintentionally incorrect or misleading information. Kittitas County reserves the right to respond to any comments containing incorrect or misleading information and/or delete such comments.

All links posted by users on this site will be reviewed and may be deleted.

Violations of this comment policy may cause the author to be blocked from this site without notice.

We understand that social media is a 24/7 medium; however, our moderation capabilities are not. Kittitas County may not see every inappropriate comment immediately, and we are trusting

in the maturity of our community to ignore personal attacks and negative speech or respond politely. Or even better - to ignore them.

Communications made through this site's e-mail and messaging system will in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment to Kittitas County or any official or employee of Kittitas County for any purpose. For example, a post or comment that asks that Kittitas County provide public records will not be considered a public records request until being sent through the proper channels. Likewise, a post or comment related to a proposed agency rule will not be considered by the agency.

In no event shall Kittitas County or its agencies, officers, employees, agents, or representatives be liable for any direct, indirect, special, punitive, incidental, exemplary or consequential damages arising from your accessing or using this site, including but not limited to anything contained in, displayed on, or deleted from this site. Nothing contained in or displayed on this site constitutes or is intended to constitute legal advice by Kittitas County or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agents, attorneys, or representatives.

14.4.8 Records Management

Content on County-sponsored social media sites shall not be offered in lieu of official information on the County's official Website. Wherever possible, content posted to County-sponsored social media sites will also be available on the County's website and contain links directing users back to the County's website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services.

14.4.8.1 Public Records

County-sponsored social media sites are subject to State of Washington public records laws (RCW 42.56). Any content published to a County sponsored site, including lists of subscribers and posted communications, is public record.

14.4.8.2 Records Retention

Public records on County-sponsored social media sites will be archived and managed in accordance with Washington State records retention schedules.

14.4.8.3 Requests for Public Records

Any requests for posts on a County-sponsored social media site shall be referred to the office/department maintaining the site. The posting office/department must be prepared to respond to requests for public records.

14.5 Responsibilities

14.5.1 Department Head/Elected Official (DH/EO) and their Designees

1. DH/EOs are responsible and accountable for social media posts submitted by their designated social media publishers.

2. Only authorized publishers may post, respond, comment, or manage County social media content. Employees who post to or respond to comments on a County social media site on behalf of the County and who are not authorized publishers are subject to disciplinary action.
3. DH/EOs are responsible for the accurate and timely posting of information and responding to comments/requests.
4. Commissioners should not comment or otherwise communicate via social media related to County business as this might constitute a meeting under the Open Public Meetings Act.

14.5.2 Employees

1. Publishers are responsible for the content they publish on any social media site or network and to manage their postings in a manner that supports a positive public image for the County agency.
2. County business may only be conducted on County-sponsored social media sites.
3. No personal posts may be posted to County-sponsored social media sites.

14.5.3 Information Technology

1. Setting up social media sites
2. Applying branding following the Kittitas County style guide
3. Linking to the County Privacy Notice and Social Media Disclaimer