

SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY

STANDARDS & PROCEDURES

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PURPOSE & APPLICATION

Social media is an increasingly important mode of communication, information sharing, community engagement and marketing for the City of Hayward. It should be approached and leveraged in context and combination with other communication channels, both digital and non-digital, and in keeping with the City’s branding and professional standards.

The purpose of this policy is to establish and maintain general standards and responsibilities for the acceptable and effective use of social media platforms by the City of Hayward and its constituent departments.

This policy applies to all users of City social media accounts, regardless of their particular employment status or job function. The policy also applies to members of the public who comment or otherwise interact with the City through its social media channels.

Terms & Definitions

Authorized User — The term “authorized user” refers to any City employee, contractor, consultant or other individual responsible for the use, administration, management or monitoring of social media on behalf of the City of Hayward. The terms “authorized user,” “account administrator,” and “site administrator” are used interchangeably.

Communications and Marketing Officer — The Communications and Marketing Officer, also known as the Public Information Officer, manages the Community & Media Relations Division and is responsible for the Division’s performance and fulfillment of its roles and responsibilities pertaining to social media use, management, oversight and compliance.

Community & Media Relations Division — The Community & Media Relations Division manages social media accounts of the City of Hayward and supports and provides oversight of departmental social media accounts to maintain consistency of message and compliance with associated standards, policies and administrative rules governing and related to use of social media and other forms of digital media.

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Social Media — For the purpose of this policy, social media is broadly defined as Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation, and allow for content publication, social interaction and online community development across a large platform. These include but are not limited to social networking sites, mobile apps, microblogging sites, photo-based and video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, news sites and Internet-based messaging sites. For the purposes of this policy, the terms “social media account,” “social media channel” and “social media site” are used interchangeably.

Visitor — For the purpose of this policy, the term visitor refers to members of the public who read and otherwise use City social media accounts and channels. The terms “visitor” and “public user” are used interchangeably.

Ownership & Reach

All social media communication composed, sent or received on City Information Technology (IT) equipment, software or social media accounts are the property of the City of Hayward. Any person officially representing the City during or outside of work hours, on any City or personal device, continues to be bound by the strictures and guidelines of this policy, when communicating, posting or commenting via City social media accounts.

SOCIAL MEDIA STANDARDS

General

1. The City’s official website (<http://www.hayward-ca.gov>) is and will remain the primary online hub for all City information. Consequently, social media channels should be used in conjunction with the City’s website whenever possible and appropriate and generally should be used to amplify and extend distribution of important public information rather than serve as the primary source.
2. Social media is not acceptable as a primary method of information dissemination during an emergency.

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In these cases, social media may be used to amplify the broadcast of this information, but only after standard emergency public information protocols have been followed.

3. No department or City agency may establish or terminate a social media identity, account, profile, page or site without the approval of the Communications and Marketing Officer and City Manager’s Office. All new social media tools proposed for City use shall require the same approval.
4. All official City social media outlets are considered an extension of the City’s network and are subject to all related administrative policies and guidelines, including but not limited to policies and administrative rules on computer network use (e.g., Administrative Rule 1.7).
5. All official City social media profiles must clearly identify the pages as created and managed by the City of Hayward and if applicable the corresponding individual department, agency or division of the City.
6. Whenever possible, posts to City social media accounts should include links directing users back to the City’s official website for further information, online services or official statements from the City (e.g., news releases, Stack newsletter articles, and project and program webpages).
7. Only authorized users chosen by respective department heads shall have permission to create, publish, post on, or remove a public post or comment from any official City of Hayward social media channel. A roster of approved content creators/moderators will be maintained by the Community & Media Relations Division. Department heads are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of this list.
8. Official City social media channels are subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content posted to these channels is a public record.

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The Community & Media Relations Division shall maintain archival systems to preserve content posted on City of Hayward social media channels for purposes that include but are not limited to compliance with the California Public Records Act.

9. Employees should be made aware that their personal use of social media may be perceived as representing the City of Hayward and should tailor their use accordingly.
10. Visitors to all City social media channels should immediately encounter links to the City’s official website and – when appropriate – links to the City webpage(s) of the specific agency or department related to the social media channel.

Prohibited Use & Activities

The following section pertains to both employee uses of City social media accounts as well as public-generated content (posts to pages, comments, etc.), and is based on the full Social Media Posting & Commenting Policy beginning at page 7 of this document. The following activities are unacceptable and are prohibited on any and all of the City’s social media accounts and shall be hidden or removed as soon as possible:

1. Any use of social media that does not comply with federal, state and local laws and regulations, or with City policies set forth in this document or elsewhere.
2. Profane language or content, including sexually explicit images, cartoons and jokes.
3. Any content that includes ethnic slurs, personal insults, language that is harassing, defamatory, fraudulent or discriminatory on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.

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4. Political statements, messages, symbols or other images, including content in support or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures, except when sharing or otherwise communicating a formal action, endorsement or policy position of the Hayward City Council.
5. Religious statements, including comments that endorse or oppose any type of religious opinions or activities.
6. Solicitations of commerce.
7. Illegal conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
8. Comments not topically related to the content being commented on.
9. Anything that contains confidential information or information that compromises the security of City networks and information systems.
10. Content that violates legal ownership interest of another party.
11. Content that violates the terms of use governing the social media platform.
12. Hyperlinks to content that falls under one of the categories above.

Mandatory Notices

On each social media site, visitors shall be informed that the City disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials that the City deems inappropriate for posting, which cannot be immediately removed. Furthermore, visitors shall be informed that comments posted by members of the public are the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and the posting of a comment does not imply the City's endorsement or agreement, nor do public comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City.

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Also, visitors shall be informed that the City neither guarantees the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of external links, websites, or content linked thereto; that content generated by City staff or the public posted to an official City of Hayward social media site is subject to public disclosure; and that all use of and comments on City social media sites by members of the public are governed by this policy and may be hidden or removed if determined to be in violation of this policy or otherwise warranted.

Personal Social Media Usage

Although this policy is not intended to govern employees' use of personal social media accounts for purely personal purposes (outside the workplace and using non-City information systems and devices), employees are reminded that comments about City business and confidential matters on personal time using personal devices are not private conversations and may be open to public access.

Additionally, postings and user profiles on personal social media accounts must not state or imply that the views, conclusions, statements or other content contained therein are official statements, positions or communications of the City of Hayward, or that they represent the views of the City or any City officer or employee.

Use of City social media by any City officer or employee to personally comment on City business and confidential matters is prohibited regardless of how or when communicated.

ADMINISTRATION

The City's various social media sites are governed by a common administrative policy, rules and regulations for the development, manipulation and management of social media accounts. Platform-specific guidance and recommended use are available from the Community & Media Relations Division and will be proactively shared with authorized users from time to time as appropriate.

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1. A full inventory of the City’s official social media accounts shall be maintained by the Community & Media Relations (CMR) Division of the City Manager’s Office and shared with the Information Technology (IT) Department.
2. The CMR Division shall also maintain an up-to-date list of login and password information for all official City of Hayward social media accounts and provide a copy of the same to the IT Department. Department directors or their designees are responsible for providing updated information regarding any changes to social media account login information or administrative tools.
3. The IT Department may establish guidelines for password security for all social media accounts in addition and consistent with platform-specific password guidelines. All City accounts not in compliance with such password guidelines shall develop new, compliant passwords.
4. The CMR Division and IT Department reserve the right to immediately edit or remove content from any of the City’s social media accounts if it is determined by the Division or the Department that the content violates the policies in this document or represents a security risk (malware, etc.).
5. If an authorized user or designated administrator of a social media account is removed from that role, the department director shall inform the CMR Division immediately.
6. To facilitate the CMR Division’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities under this policy, all authorized users of all City social media accounts are strongly encouraged to use a common social media management platform to manage and manipulate departmental-level social media channels. The City’s current social media management platform is Sprout Social, and the account is administered by the CMR Division.



7. Authorized users are expected to monitor accounts on a regular basis and maintain an active presence on all City social media channels. New content should be shared on all City pages at least once every 48 hours unless otherwise approved by the Community & Media Relations Division. Accounts that fail to meet this requirement may be subject to removal or deactivation.
8. All social media authorized users and account administrators must sign an acknowledgment form indicating that they have received and agree to follow all of the terms, standards and guidelines set forth in this policy document.

Editing & Removing Posts From City Pages

It is never the City's preference to remove content from its social media pages. In certain circumstances, however, it may be necessary to edit or remove posts to ensure the provision of up-to-date and accurate information and compliance with this policy. Whenever possible, posts should be edited rather than deleted. Any questions should be directed to the Community & Media Relations Division and/or the Communications and Marketing Officer.

When it is not possible for a post to be edited or updated, social media posts may be removed from City pages under the following circumstances:

1. Information in the post is dangerously incorrect or misleading.
2. The act of posting a separate retraction or update would not be a sufficient solution.
3. The post does not meet the requirements of the City's Social Media Policy or Brand Guide.

When removing a post is warranted, the authorized user is required to upload a corrected version of the post, if possible, as soon as possible after deleting the original content.

Authorized users should always consult with the Community & Media Relations Division and/or the Communications and Marketing Officer before deleting a post on any of the City's social media pages.





Monitoring Public Comments

Social media accounts encourage the exchange of information and ideas, allowing visitors and public users of City social media accounts to ask questions and voice their opinions. Some of these comments can be negative or unsavory. The Community & Media Relations Division, Communications and Marketing Officer and authorized users have the authority and ability to hide or remove a comment, post, photo, etc. and/or block visitors or public users, though this is not the City’s preference and should only be done in a manner consistent with the City’s Social Media Policy.

In cases where comments are hidden or removed, the individual commentator will receive a direct message explaining the relevant terms of the City’s Social Media Policy and the reasons behind the removal. In such circumstances, visitors and public users should be invited to repost their comment in accordance with the City’s policies.

The City’s Facebook accounts should be set to automatically hide comments that violate the City’s profanity prohibition. Comments on Facebook and other social media channels must be monitored regularly. Comments may only be hidden or removed if they violate the City’s Social Media Policy. Before hiding or deleting a comment, authorized users should verify the violation. If an authorized user is unsure about hiding or deleting a comment, please contact the Community & Media Relations Division for direction. If necessary, the Communications and Marketing Officer will confer with the City Manager and/or City Attorney. Once a violation is confirmed, the comment can be hidden/deleted, and the user can be contacted.

Facebook comments in violation of the City’s policy should be hidden from the page. Instagram and Twitter do not offer a “hide” option; therefore, comments in violation of the City’s policy on these two channels or other channels not offering a “hide” option must be deleted. Please ensure archiving has occurred before hiding or deleting a comment.

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Guidelines for public-comment monitoring should be posted in the “About Us” or other appropriate section of each social media account. Guidance on the wording of these notices, as well as other “mandatory notices” referenced in the “Social Media Standards” section of this policy starting at page 2 of this document, are available from the Community & Media Relations Division.

Documentation

The following documentation is required for each authorized social media channel to ensure threshold levels of activity, content quality, message uniformity and brand integrity:

1. Channel-specific standard operating procedures
2. City and departmental branding standards
3. Overarching design standards
4. Outline of intended purpose and use for each channel

Guidance, recommendations and assistance drafting these procedures and standards is available from the Community & Media Relations Division.

Approved Social Media Platforms

Facebook

Instagram

X (formerly Twitter)

YouTube

Nextdoor

LinkedIn





New Account Proposals

Requests to develop new social media accounts, pages or profiles – or to employ a new social media platform that has not yet been approved – should be made in writing to the Communications and Marketing Officer using the “New Social Media Account & Platform Request Form.” Proposals should outline the following information clearly and succinctly:

1. Name of channel and/or platform (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.)
2. Rationale for development
3. Proposed departmental manager for the channel
4. Summary of intended use, including types of content to be disseminated, proposed account name or handle, tentative posting schedule, standards for monitoring of comments, etc.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING & COMMENTING POLICY

The following governs all posts and comments by City social media authorized users, site administrators, and visitors/public users of City social media sites:

Privacy Policy & Disclaimer

Any individual accessing, browsing and using a City of Hayward social media – whether as a visitor or an authorized user or administrator – unequivocally accepts the social media policies (hereafter ‘Policies’) set forth in this document. These terms and conditions apply only to the Social Media sites (defined here as third-party hosted online platforms that facilitate social interaction and dialogue, such as Facebook) that are managed by the City of Hayward.

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The City maintains the right to modify these Policies without notice. Any modification is effective immediately upon posting the modification on the Social Media Policy page unless otherwise stated. Continued use of a City of Hayward social media site following the posting of any modification signifies acceptance of such modification.

All users of a City of Hayward social media site are also subject to the site's own Privacy Policy. The City of Hayward has no control over third-party site privacy policies or their modifications. The City of Hayward also has no control over content, commercial advertisements or other postings produced by the social media platform that appear on the City of Hayward social media account as part of the specific social media platform's environment.

The City of Hayward operates and maintains its social media sites as a public service to provide information about City programs, services, projects, policies, issues, events and activities. The City assumes no liability for any inaccuracies that associated social media platforms may contain and does not guarantee that City social media sites will be uninterrupted, permanent or error-free.

Posting & Commenting

Although posts and comments are encouraged on City of Hayward social media sites that allow posts and comments, these sites are limited public forums and are moderated by City staff. All posted content (comments, photos, links, etc.) must be related to discussion of City programs, services, projects, policies, issues, events and activities, or subject of the original post being commented upon.

The following are prohibited on City of Hayward social media sites:

1. Posts and comments that are off-subject or not topically related to City programs, services, projects, policies, issues, events and activities.
2. Posts and comments that promote or advertise commercial services, entities or products except as stipulated in City marketing plans or determined by the City to be essential to economic development.

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3. Political statements, messages, symbols or other images, including content in support or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures, except when sharing or otherwise communicating a formal action, endorsement or policy positions of the Hayward City Council.
4. Religious statements, including comments that endorse or oppose any type of religious opinions or activities.
5. Posts or comments that promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, gender identity, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental health disability or social orientation.
6. Posts and comments that include vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language, personal attacks or unsupported accusations, or that incite or promote violence or illegal activities.
7. Obscene or sexual content.
8. Information that may tend to compromise the safety and security of the public or public systems, or that contains personally identifying or sensitive personal information of another person.
9. Illegal conduct, and content that violates legal ownership interest of another party.
10. Hyperlinks to content that falls under one of the categories above.

The City of Hayward reserves the right to remove posted content that does not comply with these Policies. All posts and comments uploaded to City of Hayward social media sites that allow posts will be periodically reviewed. All posts and comments are public records subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Visitor communications made through City of Hayward social media sites in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment of the City of Hayward.





Links & Embedded Content

Links to other sites from City social media sites — The City of Hayward may provide links to other websites or social media profiles as a resource to visitors. However, once visitors click on such links and leave the City’s site, the policies in this document no longer apply and the City is not responsible for the content that appears on such pages.

Links by other entities to City social media sites — Advance permission to link to City of Hayward social media sites is unnecessary. Entities or individuals linking to official City social media sites may not in any way without advance approval suggest a relationship or affiliation with the City, or that the City endorses, sponsors or recommends their products, opinions or site content.

Embedded content from City social media sites on other sites — Content embedded from any City of Hayward social media site shall not be misrepresented in any way, although advance permission for use is unnecessary. The use of content embedded from City social media sites on third-party sites may not in any way imply the City of Hayward’s endorsement, support, sponsorship or approval of the site without advance approval.

Copyright Policy

Material made available via City of Hayward social media sites is the property of the City of Hayward and intended for informational purposes only. Any re-use, transmission, duplication or distribution of any material found on an official City social media site must be clearly attributed to the City of Hayward. Commercial use of copyrighted material found on City social media sites is prohibited without the express written consent of the City of Hayward. Use of City of Hayward trademarked and copyrighted materials may not be used for any non-governmental purpose.

Contact Us

Visitors and public users of City of Hayward social media accounts with questions or concerns about City social media policy or its implementation should direct them to hayward.social@hayward-ca.gov.



Appendices & Related Documents

Authorized User Social Media Policy Acknowledgement Form

New Social Media Account & Platform Request Form





HAYWARD

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding

Employees with access to official City of Hayward social media accounts shall sign this acknowledgment that they have received, and understand, the Social Media Policy.

I, _____, hereby acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the City of Hayward's Social Media Policy. I have read and familiarized myself with the contents and I understand my responsibility for adhering to this policy. I agree to abide by the rules and procedures as outlined in the Policy.

DATE

PRINT NAME

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE



HAYWARD

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT REQUEST FORM

Social Media Request Forms and Passwords for all City-related accounts are managed by the Communications and Marketing Division of the City Manager's Office. When passwords are updated or changed, please send the changes to the Public Information Officer. For new requests, directors must approve all social media pages for their respective department. If you have questions, please call (510) 583-3908. A separate form for each social media channel must be completed.

Please note: a separate form is available for new Social Media Password Changes.

*** Has your direct supervisor and/or department director signed off on this social media account request?**

YES

NO

If no, please get your supervisor and/or department director approval before submitting this form.

*** Department & Division Name**

*** Name of Primary Account Monitor**

*** Email**

*** Extension**





SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT REQUEST FORM

* What social media platform do you wish to use?

* What is your desired launch date for your new account?

* Do you currently manage any other social media accounts for the City of Hayward?

YES

NO

* Do you currently have any social media-related responsibilities for the City of Hayward?

YES

NO

* If you answered yes to either question above, please provide details about your role/responsibilities.

* How would you rate your familiarity with using social media in a professional setting?

Very strong

Fairly strong

Average

Minimal

* How would you rate your general skills with social media?

Very strong

Fairly strong

Average

Minimal

* How do you plan on using this social media account? (Promotion, engagement, information sharing etc.)





SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT REQUEST FORM

* What type of content will you be posting on this social media account? Please include at least three examples.

* How often would you commit to posting to the channel(s) requested?

