



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy Statement

The City of Green Cove Springs actively utilizes social media to further the objectives of the City and its City Council. To ensure proper and consistent online representation, the Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for the design, implementation, and management of City-supported social media sites, as well as overseeing the use of other social media sites by Covered Persons. In the absence or unavailability of the Public Information Officer (PIO), the City Clerk, and the City Events Coordinator will act as backups to ensure continuity of duties. The City prioritizes maintaining the integrity of information posted on its social media platforms and the content attributed to the City and its officials.

Purpose and Scope

Purpose: To communicate requirements regarding the use of social media sites and increase awareness of acceptable conduct of Covered Persons, as defined in this policy, when interacting on City-Supported social media sites and personal social media sites.

Scope: This policy covers the social media channels that the City currently maintains, including Facebook, X, Nextdoor, and Instagram, as well as new social media channels and programs that the City adopts in the future.

Definitions

Social Media Channels: is the term that refers to internet-based digital communication platforms that integrate user-generated content and user participation to share information, opinion and other content such as photos, videos, articles, and other publications. Social media channels may include but are not limited to Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, Nextdoor, etc.

Social Media Account: shall mean any registration, login credential, tool, forum, website or network that is created or maintained by a Covered Person on behalf of City of Green Cove Springs for the purpose of establishing or perpetuating a social media presence.

Covered Persons: Covered Persons, for purposes of this policy, is defined as persons who perform services for the City of Green Cove Springs, with or without compensation, including:

- All full-time and part-time staff
- City Council
- Members of City boards, committees, and commissions
- Temporary Covered Persons



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- Volunteers
- Interns; and
- Others working on behalf of the City on City-Supported Social media sites.

Page: the specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

Post: shall mean any e-mail, message, picture, graphic, image, advertisement, notification, feed, stream, transmission, broadcast, podcast, video, instant message, text message, blog, microblog, status update, wall post, comment, and any and all other forms, means, or attempts at collaboration or communication that is uploaded, posted to, or otherwise displayed on or transmitted by, any Social Media Account or Network.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles: The City of Green Cove Springs Public Information Officer, Green Cove Springs Police Department Public Information Officer, City Manager, City Clerk, and City Event Coordinator are the only individuals authorized to use the City's social media accounts. This ensures that all communications are professional and consistent.

Responsibilities: The Public Information Officer and the Green Cove Springs Police Department Public Information Officer are tasked with monitoring all content and comments on the City's social media channels to maintain a professional and respectful online presence. In the absence or unavailability of the Public Information Officer (PIO), the City Clerk and the City Events Coordinator will act as backups to ensure continuity of duties.

Departments are responsible for:

- Forwarding requests to the Public Information Office to maintain a City supported social media site.
- Investigating, or cooperating with the Human Resources Department in investigating the conduct of Covered Persons.
- Taking appropriate action on violations or complaints related to this policy and its procedures.

Covered Persons are responsible for following this policy and its procedures when participating on both City-Supported Social media sites and personal social media sites.



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General Policy Around City Websites

- The City's official social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and X) will remain the City's primary means of internet communication.
- No City social media sites shall be established for the City Council, Commission, Boards, or Committees. The establishment of City social media sites is subject to approval by the City Manager and Public Information Officer or their designee. Upon approval, City social media sites shall bear the name and/or official logo of the City.
- Content on City social media sites is subject to oversight by the City Manager and Public Information Officer.
- Green Cove Springs official social media accounts will be used for providing information and transparency on the topics of city policy, City Council business, accomplishments, events, programs, news and announcements, to encourage social engagement with city residents, and for emergency alerts as well as information about various City boards and committees. The Public Information Officer will work with the City Clerk to make sure that all posts are archived and comply with Florida Public Records Laws.
- City social media sites are subject to the Florida Public Records Law. Any communication via City's social media platforms (whether by a City Covered Person or the public) are subject to monitoring and is subject to public disclosure. Relevant City of Green Cove Springs and Florida public records retention schedules apply to social networking content. Records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record.

Personal Site Social Media Policy

- Covered Persons cannot link from a personal blog or social networking site to the City's internal or external website. Covered Persons shall not utilize an official City email address to establish a personal social media account.
- Covered Persons are discouraged from commenting on City-related posts. If a Covered Person does decide to comment from their personal social media page, they are to be transparent about their identity and role within the City when commenting. Avoid misleading or false statements. If a Covered Person chooses to identify themselves, the City encourages the representative to understand that some readers may view the Covered Person as a spokesperson for the City. Because of this possibility, we ask that representatives state their views expressed in their blog or social networking area as their own and not those of the City, nor of any person or organization affiliated or doing business with the City.



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- Covered Persons are to maintain professionalism and respect in their comments. Avoid engaging in arguments or debates on official accounts. Posts should be respectful and not include discriminatory or offensive content.
- Unless specifically instructed, Covered Persons are not authorized and are restricted from speaking on behalf of the City. Covered Persons may not publicly discuss other Covered Persons or any work-related matters, whether confidential or not, outside City authorized communications. Covered Persons are expected to protect the privacy of the City and its employees and citizens and are prohibited from disclosing personal employee and non-employee information and any other non-public information to which Covered Persons have access.
- Covered Persons should understand the transferability of social media content and that they have no expectation of privacy on social media sites, regardless of their privacy settings. Private communications posted on the internet can easily become public.
- Ensure compliance with privacy laws and regulations. Covered Persons may not post/disclose in any manner City privileged information, including copyrighted information or City issued documents. Covered Persons may not post on social networking sites or on their personal blog any photos of any incident that they are responding to.
- If contacted by the media or press about a post that relates to the City, whether or not the representative is the author of the post, Covered Persons must refer the media professional to the Public Information Officer.
- Covered Persons are not to imply government endorsement of personal opinions or commercial products.
- Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to termination or removal from appointment.

Content Guidelines for City Websites

- Each post on the City of Green Cove Springs' social media channels should be regarded as an official statement from the City. Content must maintain a professional tone, clearly conveying the facts and implications of policy decisions, City programs, announcements, and City Council activities. However, the tone can be more conversational when discussing awards received by the City or its Covered Persons, as well as upcoming City events or Parks and Recreation programs.
- When posting a link, video, or photo, there must be text in the post to give context and direction to the link, video or photo posted. Credit of who took the photo or video must also be included with the post.
- Understand that any published content is in the public domain. When speaking on behalf of the City, it should be assumed that all communications are in the public domain and available for publishing and discussion in all forms of media. All content posted by authorized users should represent the City's point of view, not the point of view of individual Covered Persons.



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- Post the “Public Comments” and “Notice of Public Record” either directly on the social media site or as a link to the PDFs of both on the City Website. The agreement, in addition to its other language, shall clearly indicate that any post is subject to public records disclosure.
- The City will not use its social media channels to promote a private business, nor will the city “like” or “follow” any social media pages of a private business. The City may only “like” or “follow” pages and social media accounts of other counties and municipalities, state agencies, local and regional law enforcement, emergency departments, local community groups, nonprofits, charitable, and civic clubs.
- The City may only promote other events and programs run by Clay County, Clay municipalities, state agencies, local and regional law enforcement, and local community groups, nonprofits, charitable, and civic clubs. The City may also promote events that the City co-sponsors with a single person or community organization.

Content Management

The City is committed to serving the online community in a civil and unbiased manner. All comments or postings related to the City social media sites will be subject to monitoring by the City Manager and Public Information Officer.

The opinions and comments expressed by others on the City’s social media platforms do not reflect the opinions and positions of the City of Green Cove Springs, its officers, or Covered Persons. The City reserves the right to hide and/or not accept unacceptable submissions, after they have been archived for public record. The following are examples of unacceptable social networking content and comments. The list is not intended to be all-inclusive. Examples are:

- Profane or obscene language or content.
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetrates discrimination based on race, color, disabilities, religion, sex, national origin, or age.
- Business solicitation.
- Engagement in unlawful activities.
- Infringement of copyrights or trademarks.
- Confidential or non-public information.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public, City employees, or public systems.
- Tagging the city in posts to boost business visibility.
- SPAM and phishing comments on City posts.



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Accessibility

All content posted on the City website and social media pages must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

To ensure compliance:

- Use few hashtags. When using hashtags, abbreviations, or acronyms, apply camel case (capitalize the first letter of each word without spaces or punctuation).
- Use plain text in all social media posts. This includes:
 - Using common, easy-to-understand words.
 - Writing clear, short sentences in the active voice.
 - Spelling out acronyms the first time they appear in a post to aid text readers in identifying the agency.
 - Add captions to all photos. A simple caption describing the scene or the arrangement of elements in a graphic helps visually impaired users better understand the post.
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- Provide closed captioning, or access to captioning, for every video posted.

Authority: City Manager and Public
Information Officer
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