

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT POLICIES

A-30 – Staff Social Media Policy

Preamble: This policy will govern the publication of any commentary, creation, editing, and posting of pages on social media by employees and any commission of the Central Coast Regional District (CCRD).

Social media is a collective term for the range of digital platforms and channels available to create and publish content to the internet. This includes but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future social media policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail, and the internet.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that CCRD employees must otherwise follow.

Purpose:

Social media provides an opportunity for the Central Coast Regional District (CCRD) to communicate to the public about the events and activities of the CCRD. It can also be a useful tool for communicating with residents during emergency operations.

This policy is designed to establish guidelines for Staff when communicating through the CCRD's social media accounts (i.e. in an official manner). Additionally, it offers guidance for Staff navigating their professional/public roles and their work-related social media channels.

The policy is intended to:

- Ensure awareness of privacy and security considerations when using social media;
- Ensure sensitive and personal information is identified and managed appropriately;
- Ensure awareness of roles and responsibilities when using social media; and
- Encourage a balanced, objective and respectful online engagement and information sharing with the public.

Policy:

1.0 Setting Up Social Media Accounts

Social media identities, logon ID's, usernames and passwords may not use CCRD's name without prior approval from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Once created, logon information must be distributed to the staff members who will have publishing privileges.

The official CCRD logo or another pre-approved image that is attributable to the Central Coast must be used as the profile image. Other pre-approved photos may be used as a cover photo, if the platform provides a space for one and provided they have been pre-approved

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT
POLICIES

A-30 – Staff Social Media Policy..... page 2

by the CAO. No new accounts should be established without the consultation and authorization of the CAO.

2.0 Approved Users

The Official CCRD Social Media sites shall be managed by the Administrative Assistant or, should the Administrative Assistant not be able to monitor or respond to Social Media, a designate assigned by the CAO. If a Departmental account (e.g. Emergency Management, Economic Development) is established it shall be managed by the Manager of the Department or a designate.

3.0 Publishing and Posting

The CCRD's Core Values are:

Accountability, Transparency, Good Governance, Professionalism, Integrity, Productivity, Sustainability, Inclusiveness and Resilience.

The tone of all posts, in all channels, shall be positive and professional, and aligned with CCRD values. Postings shall be clear, easy to understand, and direct the public to the CCRD's website for further information, or to further information on Provincial or Federal governments or their affiliated agencies.

Posts will not:

- contain party political material;
- seek to persuade the public of a particular view;
- promote personal images of Directors or their individual proposals, decisions or recommendations, or personalize issues; and/or
- canvas matters before the Board, or suggest bias or pre-determination on planning or program matters.

Posts will follow the CCRD Communications and Engagement Plan. If there is a conflict between the Plan and this policy, this policy will prevail.

Staff are prohibited from disseminating any private organizational information, or any in-camera items.

Confidential information including information from a third party may not be published on any of the CCRD's social media sites.

4.0 Monitoring

Social media channels for the CCRD are not a traditional/formal customer service channel. They are not monitored and are not an emergency help-line. Official CCRD Social Media accounts should contain information about where to call for an immediate response, or in the event of an emergency. As the social media channels are currently used exclusively for information sharing, privacy settings have been adjusted to reduce and/or eliminate commenting functions. This allows the information to be posted in a more controlled manner.

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT
POLICIES

A-30 – Staff Social Media Policy...page 3

5.0 CCRD and Your Audience

As a public service provider, CCRD will show respect for a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view and will be in alignment with CCRD's website. Posted topics will not be considered objectionable or inflammatory, which includes politics or religion.

If the Board as a whole has *publicly* taken a position on an issue, then the CCRD can use social media to share that opinion. This information should only be posted if the Board has publicly published their positions, and have done so in a relatively non-controversial manner.

In regards to political issues, such as a referendum, only post general information as required pursuant to the *Local Government Act*. Sharing and liking posts are always to provide clarity or information without publicly stating a position.

6.0 Controversial Issues

If the media contains any misrepresentations about the CCRD, corrections to factual information can only be made after gaining approval from the CAO. Ensure that only factual information is presented when posting about another party and that it does not reflect poorly on that party. Avoid engaging in any online conversations related to controversial issues during work or in your role as a CCRD employee.

Should the CCRD receive a negative post, the CAO will determine the appropriate response – i.e. if the comment deserves a response or if it should be deleted. If a negative post or comment is found online about the CCRD, Staff shall not counter with another negative post. Please consult the CAO so a proper response can be determined.

7.0 Correcting Mistakes

If an error is made, make a correction as soon as possible. If you choose to modify a post, make it clear that you have done so. If accused of posting something inappropriate (copyrighted material, defamatory statements, etc.), address this quickly and in an appropriate manner, such as removal of the post, so as to not risk legal action.

8.0 Disclaimers

Using disclaimers may not have much legal effect on social media platforms. If you have any concerns with what you are posting, ask the CAO or a colleague for a second opinion.

9.0 Social Media at Work

Unless conducting CCRD related business, social media is not to be used while at work.

If you have a social media account for your own use, remain cautious about what you post as you are an employee of CCRD and may be seen as such by others. Consider any information you post online in conjunction with this policy.

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT
POLICIES

A-30 Staff Social Media Policy cont... Page 4

10.0 Workplace Bullying and Harassment

Staff are not to post to their personal social media accounts any comments regarding confidential, controversial or sensitive issues before the CCRD. This restriction is to ensure that the CCRD can meet its obligation to provide Staff with a workplace free of harassment and bullying as outlined in the Respectful Workplace Policy – Policy E-8. As the CCRD is not able to monitor and manage social interactions outside its own official channels, it is not possible to ensure a workplace free of harassment and bullying unless Staff refrain from commenting on sensitive work issues in their personal social media feeds.

If, through a Staff member's personal use of social media, Staff identify posts or comments that could be viewed as bullying or harassing communications towards themselves or a Staff member, Staff should not respond or retaliate. Rather, a screenshot should be taken and referred to the CAO.

11.0 Copyright Laws

Staff will adhere to the laws governing intellectual property and must provide recognition to the original author/source.

12.0 Compliance with *Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act*

Most information posted on the CCRD's social media platforms will be information that has already been captured in official documentation (e.g. the website, notices, news releases, project or communication plans). As such, the information used in social media, when otherwise captured through official documentation, is transitory and can be disposed of accordingly.

Officials and employees of local government in British Columbia are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act), and have a duty to understand the key sections of this Act, and must avoid disclosing any verbal or written material that is meant to be confidential concerning the CCRD, its board members, officers, staff members or clients.

All CCRD social media channels shall adhere to applicable local, provincial and federal laws, regulations and policies including the Act. Site monitors must delete comments that contain third party personal information (phone numbers, addresses) and pictures of third parties.

Staff must not disclose or use confidential information gained by virtue of their association with the CCRD for personal gain, or to benefit friends, relatives or associates.

13.0 Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause in accordance with CCRD Personal Policy and BC employment laws.

Adoption: June 12, 2014
Reviewed: April 13, 2017
Amended: October 12, 2017
Amended: July 8, 2021