



Unified Government Human Resources Guide

Effective 04-06-15

SOCIAL MEDIA

I. Purpose

The Unified Government encourages the innovative and responsible use of social media to increase governmental transparency and efficiency, to communicate information to the public, and to improve services offered to its citizens. This policy sets forth rules for Unified Government social media sites. In addition, this policy addresses the responsibilities of Unified Government employees when using social media. This policy also addresses responsibilities for records retention when using social media.

II. Definitions

- A. “Chief of police” means the Chief of the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department or his or her designee.
- B. “Director” means the director of the Public Relations Department or his or her designee.
- C. “Social media” is defined broadly to mean any forum on the World Wide Web on which people can share ideas or information. Social media includes websites or web pages maintained by the Unified Government and those maintained by persons outside the Unified Government on which Unified Government employees may share ideas or information. Examples of the latter include websites or blogs having comment or feedback sections, wikis, social networks (such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), sites for posting photographs, audio recordings, or videos (such as Flickr and YouTube), virtual worlds, and message boards. Sharing of ideas or information may take many forms, including posting of articles, comments, photographs, music, videos, or podcasts, wall postings, tweets, and other forms in which ideas or information are shared.
- D. “Unified Government social media site” means any social media site maintained by the Unified Government or one of its departments, including a location on a private social media site, such as Facebook or Twitter, at which the Unified Government or a department maintains an official presence.

III. Work-related use of social media

- A. Unified Government social media sites are considered extensions of the Unified Government’s information networks and are governed by the Responsible Use of Information Technology policy in Section 7.3 of the Unified Government Human Resources Guide.



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- B. Unified Government social media sites will be administered by the director, or, in the case of the police department, by the chief of police, and used for the purposes of informing the public about Unified Government business, services, and events.
- C. Unified Government social media sites will comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including laws and regulations on copyrights, trademarks, records retention, open records, freedom of speech, and privacy. In addition, Unified Government social media sites will comply with all applicable terms of use, as well as with web standards and media policies established by the director.
- D. A department wishing to use a social media site must obtain the approval of the director. The Public Relations Department will assist the department with developing a social media site and determining a strategy for using social media. Each department that uses a social media site will have an official designee who is responsible for managing its social media presence. The director or, in the case of the police department, the chief of police will have administrative access to department sites, will maintain username and password information, and will monitor the sites to enforce compliance with this policy. The director (or, in the case of the police department, the chief of police) has discretion to modify or remove department content that does not comply with this policy or that the director determines is inaccurate, dated, or otherwise inadvisable or inappropriate.
- E. Unified Government employees must notify their supervisor if they intend to create or use a social media site to conduct Unified Government business.
- F. Each Unified Government social media site will include an introductory statement that specifies the site's purpose and directs users to the Unified Government's website. In addition, when possible, links to information will direct users back to the Unified Government's website for more information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the Unified Government.
- G. Posting of content, including comments, by the members of the public will not be allowed on any Unified Government social media site without the approval of the director. Before giving approval, the director will establish and publish site rules governing posting of content by the public.
- H. Department heads may permit employees to participate on non-Unified Government social media sites for work-related purposes. Employees must provide their department heads with their usernames and passwords for social media sites on which they participate as part of their job duties.



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- I. Employees must use sound judgment when posting comments on social media sites. While the adversarial nature of some postings may make it tempting to correct misinformation, such a response could escalate the controversy or even lead to unwanted or illegal disclosures. Rather than correct misinformation, employees should advise their department head of the problem.
 - J. Employees using Unified Government or non-Unified Government social media sites must conduct themselves as representatives of the Unified Government and in accordance with the policies in the Unified Government Human Resources Guide and the Code of Ethics (Unified Government Code, Sections 2-251 through 2-270).
 - K. Unified Government employees are prohibited from doing the following while using social media:
 - 1. Using profane, obscene, or insulting language or making comments that are disrespectful of any person or business;
 - 2. Engaging in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin or ancestry, religion or creed, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability;
 - 3. Posting sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - 4. Threatening harm to any person, property, or business;
 - 5. Knowingly or recklessly making false statements of fact;
 - 6. Disclosing any record or the content of any record that is not considered an open record under the Kansas Open Records Act without first obtaining the permission of their department head; or
 - 7. Posting content that violates the law or the legal rights or interests of any person or business.
 - L. Employees who are uncertain whether content may be posted under this policy should contact their department head for advice.
 - M. Unified Government employees who violate this policy may be disciplined, up to and including termination.
- IV. Personal use of social media
- A. Employees are expected to confine their personal use of social media during the workday to their breaks, but, unless prohibited by their department head or supervisor, may engage in brief incidental or occasional use of social media while working. Employees whose personal use of



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social media during the workday exceeds these limitations will be subject to discipline.

- B. The following rules apply to employees' personal use of social media (including off-duty use) that relates to or identifies the Unified Government, the individual's position with the Unified Government, or any Unified Government employee:
1. Employees must not engage in online conduct that would not be acceptable in the Unified Government workplace, including conduct prohibited by Section 2.1 Equal Opportunity in Employment, Section 2.2 Harassment in the Workplace, and other policies in the Human Resources Guide.
 2. Employees must follow the rules set forth in subsection III (K) of this policy, except that this policy does not prohibit or restrict speech that, under the circumstances, would be protected by the First Amendment or other law or public policy.
 3. Employees must identify themselves and clearly state that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the Unified Government by using a disclaimer such as, "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the position or opinions of the Unified Government."

Employees who violate these rules may be disciplined, up to and including termination.

- C. Employees should remember that they are personally responsible for the content that they post on social media sites and, for this reason, should act thoughtfully and cautiously. Employees can be held legally liable for posting content that is discriminatory, harassing, retaliatory, or defamatory, violates the site's terms of use, or is prohibited by law. Moreover, once published on the web, content may never go away.
- V. Records retention
- A. Content posted on Unified Government social media sites or by employees on non-Unified Government social media sites for work-related purposes may be considered a public record under the Kansas Open Records Act, K.S.A. 45-219 et seq., and must be retained in accordance with Kansas law and Unified Government records retention policies.
- B. The director will maintain a record of each Unified Government social media site, including the following:
1. A log file containing the name and location of the social media site, account ID, password, registered email address, date established, authorizing representative, and name of the person who created the account and agreed to the site's terms of use



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agreement or policy;

2. A record of the site's terms of use agreement or policy at the time the site was created and any updated versions;
 3. A list of authorized site content authors and editors; and
 4. A list of all past and current subscribers to the site.
- C. The director must retain a copy of all content posted on any Unified Government social media site that is not maintained by a specific department and of all content removed by the director under this policy.
- D. The department head must maintain a copy of all content posted on any Unified Government social media site maintained by the department, including any content that has been removed, and on any non-Unified Government social media site used by the department's employees for work-related purposes. Employees who use non-Unified Government social media sites for work-related purposes must keep a copy of all content posted.
- E. The director and the Unified Government's records manager will establish procedures for preserving social media content to ensure compliance with Kansas law and Unified Government records retention policies.

VI. Intent, interpretation, and application

This policy is not intended to prohibit or otherwise interfere with speech protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or other law or public policy. This policy should be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the First Amendment, applicable law, and public policy.