



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

Chapter: Administration

Section: Social Media Policy

Subject: Use Social Media for Official RDCK Interests

Board Resolution:	Established Date:	May 16, 2019 354/19	Revised Date:
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------

POLICY:

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for employees of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) to use when communicating via the RDCK's social media accounts, and to ensure that Board members and RDCK employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities when using official RDCK social media accounts. The policy also establishes expectations for conduct of all persons, including members of the public, who choose to participate in conversations on RDCK social media pages.

2. SCOPE:

There are three ways that RDCK employees, elected officials and volunteers may be using social media:

- a) *Use for official RDCK interests* implies the use of social media for the purpose of communicating organizational interests, programs, or policies externally. It may also include uses of social media intended for collaboration and communication internally, such as internal blogs or wikis.
- b) *Use for professional interests* implies the use of social media for the purpose of furthering specific job responsibilities or professional duties through an externally focused site or to engage with other professionals in a community of practice. In this case, the social media tool or site is not maintained by the RDCK, though the RDCK may benefit by enabling staff to educate themselves on important issues or to collaborate with their peers.
- c) *Use for personal interests* implies use that falls outside of an employee's job duties or professional affiliations and may include checking on personal social media accounts and sites during a lunch hour or designated break. Staff may maintain blogs or social media accounts related to communities, networks, or interests unrelated to their position at the RDCK.

This policy is primarily focused on a), the use of social media for official RDCK interests during work hours and with relation to achieving organizational priorities and objectives. It also offers guidance to Directors and employees on how to conduct themselves in their personal channels where their behaviour may reflect on the reputation of the RDCK. It does not govern the use of social media by employees or elected officials for personal interests outside of their work with the RDCK.

3. DEFINITIONS:

- **Social media site:** A platform or tool which allows for sharing of information or creation of online communities. Common examples include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The tools include, but are not limited to, blogs, wikis, podcasts, and sites to share photos, videos, and links to websites.



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

Social media sites are used by individuals and organizations to publish and share content, and interact with online communities.

- **Social media page:** A user-specific section within a social media site. A page acts as a centralized area where all of an individual user's shared data is stored.
- **Social media account:** An agreement with a social media site which defines permissions and access controls for a specific user. An account produces a profile which is linked to the name of the user.
- **RDCK social media account:** A social media account held by the RDCK and used for official RDCK interests.
- **RDCK social media page:** A social media page created and maintained by the RDCK and used for official RDCK interests.

4. INTRODUCTION:

Social media provides opportunities for local governments to further their strategic goals related to communication and engagement. The RDCK uses its social media accounts and pages to:

- share news and updates about decisions of the Board of Directors;
- promote RDCK programs, services, and events;
- encourage dialogue with RDCK residents, visitors, partners, and other audiences;
- disseminate time-sensitive critical information quickly;
- correct misinformation and understand perceptions of the RDCK; and
- build relationships and trust.

Social media is an attractive tool because it is generally publicly accessible and free to use, has established communities and networks, supports a wide range of content (including photos, videos, and audio material), and features interactive capabilities.

For a review of the advantages, disadvantages, challenges and types of social media, please refer to the Local Government Management Association of BC (LGMA) *Records Management Manual*, 5th Edition, Section 3.14.3.

For a current list of RDCK social media properties, contact the RDCK Communications Coordinator.

5. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER POLICIES – BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

A Director's personal social media channels belong to the individual Director but, if they are set up as "official" pages for the role as a Director, posts will be held to a higher standard of scrutiny, as per the Director's commitments under the *Code of Conduct*, to ensure they reflect appropriately on the entire organization.

Posts to a Director's "official" page will be viewed as potential content that the RDCK could repost or share from. Posts from personal profiles will not be viewed as for public consumption or republishing by the RDCK.



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

Directors should be aware that posts made to their personal social media pages may be treated as representative of the individual or organization by media or community members. This falls outside the scope of this policy. For guidance, Directors might refer to the *Code of Conduct*.

6. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER POLICIES – EMPLOYEES:

There are a number of policies that provide additional guidance to RDCK employees regarding behaviour expected of staff as it relates to social media:

- *Social Media – Guidelines for Conduct*
- *Internet & Electronic Communication Guideline*
- *Workplace Bullying and Harassment Program*

Employees are not to post to their personal social media accounts any comments regarding confidential, controversial or sensitive issues before the RDCK. This restriction is to ensure that the RDCK can meet its obligation to provide employees with a workplace free of harassment and bullying.

If, through an employee's personal use of social media, an employee identifies posts or comments that could be viewed as bullying or harassing communications towards themselves or another employee, they should not respond or retaliate. Rather, a record of the incident (such as a screenshot) should be made and reported to a supervisor as per the *Workplace Bullying and Harassment Program*.

7. OFFICIAL/RDCK USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

The official RDCK social media accounts and pages shall be managed by the Communications Coordinator or delegate. When RDCK social media pages are used for sharing Emergency Operations Centre information, the Information Officer will co-manage RDCK social media accounts and pages.

Existing departmental social media accounts and pages (e.g. for recreation departments/community complexes, fire departments) shall be managed by departmental staff designated by the General Manager of that department.

Management of social media accounts involves:

- posting approved content;
- monitoring for comments, messages and questions;
- addressing or removing posts or users that contravene the *Social Media Participants' Code of Conduct*; and
- flagging issues with the Communications Coordinator or General Manager of the appropriate department.

8. CREATING/DELETING ACCOUNTS AND PAGES:

The Communications Coordinator may recommend the creation of new official RDCK or departmental social media accounts or pages, if the need becomes apparent and capacity exists. Official RDCK social media accounts must be authorized by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

No new accounts may be established without the prior consultation and authorization of the Communications Coordinator and CAO. Departmental accounts should also be authorized by the General Manager of the department. The department will be responsible for ensuring there is sufficient internal capacity for the development of content intended for social media channels, such as written posts, photos and videos, and for maintenance of the account or page. If such capacity does not exist, the creation of the new social media account may not be authorized.

Log-in credentials for all social media accounts shall be provided to Information Technology and shared with the Communications Coordinator.

Accounts must be moderated, and an employee designated for monitoring any active accounts and ensuring that questions are responded to in a timely manner, and for ensuring that comments comply with the *Social Media Participants' Code of Conduct*.

Lapsed social media accounts should be deleted, or, if the information is important as a public record, archived for records management purposes, then updated (where possible) to contain a final post and biographic details (the "About" information under a profile). This will direct people to the RDCK's official channels, advising that the account is no longer active.

9. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:

a) Communications Coordinator

The responsibilities of the Communications Coordinator with respect to social media shall include:

- recommend and authorize, with the CAO, the creation/deletion of social media accounts and pages;
- create and delete RDCK social media accounts with the approval of the CAO;
- manage and monitor official RDCK social media accounts;
- coach and advise departments on the use of social media as part of their communication and marketing activities;
- review RDCK social media pages for content and edit that content where appropriate;
- use available technologies to scan external social media sites and pages to monitor references to the RDCK in online conversations;
- measure key metrics that indicate citizen engagement with, and use of, RDCK social media pages, and report on those measurements to senior staff and the RDCK Board as needed;
- coordinate social media training sessions for RDCK staff, volunteers or Directors; and
- any other responsibilities the CAO deems appropriate.

b) Information Technology

The responsibilities of Information Technology staff with respect to social media shall include:

- support the administration of RDCK social media accounts, and establish settings and security configurations;
- evaluate new technology options and recommend appropriate technologies to the Communications Coordinator and CAO;



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

- host, in partnership with the Communications Coordinator, social media training sessions for RDCK staff, volunteers, or directors; and
- any other responsibilities the CAO deems appropriate.

c) RDCK employees with social media responsibilities

Employees who are responsible for departmental social media accounts will have the following responsibilities:

- develop or source content intended for social media channels, such as posts, photos or videos, following best practices in social media and according to RDCK standards;
- post to and maintain social media pages on behalf of their department;
- manage and monitor departmental social media accounts and pages;
- become familiar with all relevant guidelines and legislation;
- alert the Communications Coordinator of inappropriate content on social media pages; and
- attend social media training sessions.

10. EMPLOYEE ACCESS AND PERMISSIONS:

Only authorized employees (see above) shall be permitted to access RDCK social media accounts or post information on behalf of the RDCK to any social media page.

Only an RDCK social media account may be used to post information to a social media page which suggests that the information is representative of the perspective of the RDCK.

Only the Communications Coordinator or delegate may delete information posted to an RDCK social media page.

Employees should refer to the *Social Media – Guideline for Conduct* for further guidance about occasional personal use of social media during regular work hours.

11. ACCEPTABLE USE:

Use of social media sites must be in accordance with this policy and other RDCK policies, common standards of conduct for government employees, and any relevant legislation.

a) Content

Each RDCK social media page shall include a discussion of the RDCK’s objectives for using the site, and the RDCK’s expectations of conduct for all site users who choose to post on RDCK social media pages.

All RDCK social media pages and accounts shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the RDCK and shall have RDCK contact information prominently displayed.

Each site shall include:

- an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the posts;



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

- if the wall is open, or publicly viewable comments are allowed, a *Social Media Participants' Code of Conduct* that outlines what is regarded as unacceptable and will be subject to deletion (see Appendix A);
- a disclaimer indicating that users are participating at their own risk and need to take personal responsibility for any comments or information they post on the page; and
- a notice advising users that information posted on RDCK social media accounts may be publicly disclosed under the terms of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

b) Standards

All information posted to an RDCK social media page shall follow best practices in social media and RDCK standards for clear and accurate communications. Employees responsible for creating social media content may consult with the Communications Coordinator to ensure posts meet these standards.

RDCK social media account activities, and information posted to social media pages by designated employees in departments, shall be reviewed on a regular basis by the Communications Coordinator.

Employees with social media responsibilities should use their judgement when determining which RDCK-related information is appropriate to post on social media pages. If in doubt, the employee should consult the Communications Coordinator for guidance.

c) Privacy and consent

Prior to posting information that specifically discusses of any of the following, the poster must obtain permission from the affected party prior to posting that information:

- individual residents, employees, elected officials or volunteers;
- citizens' associations or advocacy groups;
- vendors; and
- other stakeholders.

Signed release forms or waivers must be obtained and filed before photographs or audio/video recordings of any of the above are used in any RDCK social media page, if such were not recorded in a public place with no expectation of privacy (for example, at an open Board meeting where the public or the media are in attendance). In some cases, such as when in-person consent is not practicable, consent to use images may be obtained by email, provided consent is explicit and a copy of the email is saved. If in doubt, please consult with the Communications Coordinator.

d) Prohibited content

Posts must not contain any of the following:

- harassing, defamatory, libelous, threatening, hateful or demeaning statements;
- profane, rude, abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language;
- anything which a person of reasonable sensitivities may find to be offensive;
- sexual content or links to sexual content;
- matters before the courts or otherwise in dispute, or matters that could reasonably be assumed to proceed to litigation in the future;



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

- non-public information of any kind, including such things as in-camera items, unpublished details about RDCK (software, details of current projects, financial information, research and trade secrets);
- invasion of anyone's privacy or impersonation of anyone;
- references to illegal activities, unless for educational purposes;
- solicitation of business;
- spam;
- comments supporting and/or opposing political campaigns or referendums;
- anything contrary to the principles of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- information that compromises the safety or security of individuals or public buildings; and
- personal, sensitive, or confidential information about any person.

A post, whether created by an RDCK employee or a site user external to the RDCK, may be deleted by the Communications Coordinator if it does not adhere to these guidelines. The user who posted the prohibited content may be blocked without warning.

These guidelines will be housed on the RDCK website. A link to the guidelines will be posted on any RDCK social media site, with the phrase, "by participating, you agree to comply with the RDCK's Social Media Participants' Code of Conduct."

12. RECORDS MANAGEMENT:

All information posted to, or deleted from, an RDCK social media page shall be permanently recorded off-line, in order to satisfy requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *RDCK Records Management Policy* for retention and disposition.

13. MONITORING:

RDCK social media pages are not intended to be used as customer service channels. They are not monitored 24/7 and are not an emergency help-line. Accounts should contain information about who people can call for an immediate response, or in the event of an emergency.

Complaints or questions will be acknowledged and redirected to a traditional/formal customer service channel (e.g. email, phone call, letter to the Board, delegation to the Board).

14. COMMENTS AND INQUIRIES:

Comments should be enabled on official RDCK social media accounts. However, comments or links that contain prohibited content will not be allowed, and users posting such comments may be blocked without warning. (See *Prohibited content*, above.)

Most customer interactions should be directed back to traditional customer service channels, such as phone or email. However, when a general inquiry is posted and a response is deemed useful to RDCK constituents, responses can be posted back to the original poster's thread.



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

If a negative comment or post is received, the Communications Coordinator will advise the appropriate response. Staff should not counter with further negative posts. Staff should also refrain from participating in online conversations that are objectionable or inflammatory.

Comments or inquiries that contain third-party personal information, such as phone numbers or addresses, or pictures of third parties without their explicit consent, must be deleted.

15. BEST PRACTICES FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

Use of social media sites should support intended outcomes and include supportive resources (e.g., a link to more detailed information on the RDCK website).

Employees should ensure that words or ideas are expressed in a manner that will not have detrimental impacts on professional reputations, elected officials or the organization. Content should reflect what would be comfortably expressed in any other public forum.

Employees should provide timely and useful information and create conversations that are productive and meaningful. Social media sites are intended to facilitate two-way dialogue and the RDCK's use of social media should be interactive and not authoritative.

Employees should post information to RDCK social media pages on a regular basis in order to promote a dynamic online presence. Posts should be positive and professional, and aligned with RDCK communication standards and values. Posts should be clear and easy to understand, but can be personable and creative. If more information is available elsewhere, posts should contain links to the official RDCK, municipal, provincial, federal or other third-party site where that information is housed. Links to external sites should be reviewed first to ensure the accuracy and content of the destination.

Posts will not contain party political material, will not seek to persuade the public of a particular view, promote personal images of Directors or their individual proposals, decisions, recommendations, or personalize issues.

16. RELATED LEGISLATION:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation

APPENDIX A:



Number: 200-01-14
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Policy Manual

Social Media Participants' Code of Conduct

Welcome to the RDCK Facebook page [*or other social media page*]! The RDCK uses this page to share updates and information of public interest with residents, visitors, businesses and organizations. For the official source of information about the RDCK, please visit our website: www.rdck.ca.

We monitor this page and respond to comments during regular RDCK business hours, between 8:30am and 4:30pm. In some situations, such as during an emergency, we may use this page to share information and respond to inquiries outside of regular business hours.

In order to promote productive and respectful discussions, we require that all users of this page follow the guidelines outlined below. By participating, you agree to comply with the RDCK's Social Media Participants' Code of Conduct. Any posts not in compliance with these guidelines may be removed.

Posts, comments and links must not contain any of the following:

- harassing, defamatory, libelous, threatening, hateful or demeaning statements;
- profane, rude, abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language;
- anything which a person of reasonable sensitivities may find to be offensive;
- sexual content or links to sexual content;
- matters before the courts or otherwise in dispute, or matters that could reasonably be assumed to proceed to litigation in the future;
- non-public information of any kind, including such things as in-camera items, unpublished details about RDCK: software, details of current projects, financial information, research and trade secrets;
- invasion of anyone's privacy or impersonation of anyone;
- references to illegal activities, unless for educational purposes;
- solicitation of business;
- spam;
- comments supporting and/or opposing political campaigns or referendums;
- anything contrary to the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- information that compromises the safety or security of individuals or public buildings; and
- personal, sensitive, or confidential information about any person.

The Regional District of Central Kootenay reserves the right to block users who contravene the above.
