



## LARAMIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

<b>TITLE</b> Social Media	<b>APPROVAL DATE</b> 12/20/16
<b>SECTION</b> Workplace Expectations	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 12/06/2022

### **Introduction**

This policy is intended to establish rules and definitions for the uniform operation of authorized Laramie County social media sites. This policy will provide guidelines for work, personal and general social media usage within Laramie County Government. Public records laws and guidelines relating to social media use in government are also explained. Employer monitoring, reporting of violations and discipline for any identified violations are also included within this policy. The policy enacted in this document replaces the prior social media policy under "workplace expectations" and becomes active upon approval of the resolution adopting them.

Upon implementation of these policies, only sites meeting the criteria defined in this document will be considered "county authorized" social media sites. Social media sites which, based on content, imply or represent themselves to be sites or pages belonging to Laramie County Government but which do not meet the criteria indicated in these policies, will *not* be considered official county government websites. County employees placing content upon or operating social media sites which are not county authorized websites, must understand that they may be outside the scope of their duties, acting in their private capacity, and therefore, not covered by County liability insurance.

Violation of these policies by employees on a county authorized website may result in discipline up to and including termination. Further, employees violating these policies or applicable law on a county authorized website may be misusing County facilities and acting outside the scope of their duties, and therefore, outside the scope of County insurance coverage. This means the employee may be individually liable for any claim brought due to unauthorized activity on a County site.

### **Purpose**

A social media presence for Laramie County Government improves communication and interaction with the public and enhances County operations, particularly in the event of a crisis, disaster or emergency. This policy promotes a safe environment for employees to share subject matter expertise that will benefit the residents of Laramie County.

This policy is intended to provide a framework for use of social media when authorized by the County as part of an employee's job duties. This policy also provides general guidelines for the personal use of social media by all employees. This policy educates Laramie County Government and employees to prevent violating Municipal, State or Federal rules, regulations, or laws while using social media channels.



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The forms of social media or technology referred to in this policy include, but are not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok or other similar forms of online journals, diaries or personal newsletters not affiliated with Laramie County.

All use of social media or similar technology is subject to all County policies. Violations of County policies will not be tolerated whether conducted on duty or off duty.

### **Authority**

The policies are enacted pursuant to the authority as provided by Wyoming law, including but not limited to Wyo. Stat. Ann §18-2-101, 18-3-504 et seq. (as amended). Final authority regarding all social media activities on County authorized sites rests with the Board of Laramie County Commissioners.

### **Changes to This Policy**

Laramie County may modify this Social Media Use Policy as needed. A current copy of this document can be found on the Laramie County Government Website at [www.laramiecountywy.gov](http://www.laramiecountywy.gov)

### **Definitions**

The following definitions relate to terms as used within the context of this policy.

- *Employee*- as used in this document refers to any individual employed by Laramie County, an elected Laramie County official, the director of any county agency, any agent of the county or volunteer acting under the direction and control of Laramie County or its agencies.
- *Social Media* - a means of interactions among people in which they may create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.
- *Social Media site* – any form of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).
  - Social media sites include multiple formats, platforms, or systems, including but not limited Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok, listservs, websites, social network pages, blogs or posts or content placed on third part sites by County employees from any county network or using county facilities, equipment, its electronic or digital infrasture. The site(s) may be interactive, offering an opportunity for citizens of third parties to post content, comments or participate, or “static” being simply a one-way communication from a county agency, elected official and agency director or representatives.



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- *County Authorized Site*: A website or social media page/account approved by the County. To be county authorized site, the site must comply with the conditions contained in the Creation and Administration of County Authorized Sites below.
- *Misinformation*: Information that is false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.
- *Malinformation*: Information that is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, organization, or country.
- *Disinformation*: False information that is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.
- *Blog* - discussion or informational forum published on the internet and consisting of discrete entries (“posts”) typically displayed in reverse chronological order.
- *Spam* - unsolicited bulk messages, especially advertising, indiscriminately sent to any number of recipients

### **Personal use of Social Media**

Laramie County respects the right of employees to use social media and does not discourage employees from self-publishing, self-expression and public conversation and does not discriminate against employees who use these mediums for personal interests and affiliations or other lawful purposes. Employees are expected to follow the guidelines and policies set forth to provide a clear line between you as the individual and you as the employee of Laramie County.

1. Employees are personally responsible for their commentary on all “non-county” social media sites.
2. The County does not monitor employees’ personal social media platforms.
3. Content on an employee’s personal social media platforms may be used in disciplinary actions in the event the content violates State, Federal law or County policies or is otherwise relevant to any disciplinary proceeding.
4. Employees are encouraged to be careful in their use of social media to avoid the appearance that they are speaking on behalf of the County.
5. Employees cannot post a trademark or logo of the County, privileged or confidential information, including copyrighted information or photographs of other employees, residents, vendors or suppliers which was obtained or acquired in their capacity as County employees. Exceptions to this policy include sharing posts from a County Authorized Site on a personal social media page and photographs taken at public events sponsored by the County or its agencies.



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### **Creation and Administration of County Authorized Sites**

All County social media sites must be sponsored by a department. The department must include a link to this site from their departmental home page on the Laramie County's official website. The sponsoring department will be responsible for all management of an authorized social media site, and it is the department director or elected official's responsibility to maintain compliance with Laramie County policies. The accuracy, quality, and timeliness of all content on an authorized social media site are the responsibility of the sponsoring department. Designation of appropriate staff to maintain such a site is also the responsibility of the sponsoring department.

When creating a Laramie County social media site, all departments and employees should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. To be considered a *County Authorized Site*, a site or account must meet the following criteria:
  - a. Must be listed with the Laramie County Information Technology Department ("IT Department") as such by completion of an application containing the following information:
    - i. Site Address,
    - ii. Purpose of Site,
    - iii. Administrator and backup administrator of site, and
    - iv. Whether or not comments will be permitted or disabled.
  - b. Content must be archived by IT Department to comply with the Wyoming Public Records Act.
  - c. Supervised by an elected official or department director and have an administrator registered with the IT Department. Such departmental administrators must be current.
  - d. An IT Department's representative must be an "administrator" on the site with full administrative powers regarding the operation, review and control of the site.
  - e. If the site offers "verification," the County agency must apply for verification indicating that it is an "official" Laramie County Government site. If verification is not approved, that information must be provided to the IT Department.
  - f. The site or page must be operated and maintained in compliance with these policies.
2. All communications carried out on County sponsored electronic media must comply with appropriate use guidelines set forth by the County.
3. Turn off commenting on sites when possible. Two-way communication is permitted only with the advisement and consent of the agency's director or elected official and only when



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required to further county policies or goals. If comments are permitted, departments should be attentive to the potential for misinformation and concerns regarding removal of comments.

4. All official Laramie County social media sites will include a disclaimer similar to the following: “The information provided herein is provided as a courtesy and for informational purposes only. Comments are not regularly monitored however those deemed to be inaccurate, illegal, or offensive will be removed without notice and the commenter may be blocked.”
5. Posts made by County employees & comments by the public addressing the following topics will be removed:
  - a. No spam
  - b. No mis-, dis- or malinformation.
  - c. No off topic posts.
  - d. Promotion of illegal activity prohibited.
  - e. Copyrighted or licensed material prohibited.
  - f. Promotion of political organization or election campaigns prohibited.
  - g. Promotion of products or services prohibited
  - h. Posting of personal protected information prohibited
  - i. Violent, obscene, or discriminatory comments and personal attacks prohibited
6. Procedure for removal of comments:
  - a. When a comment is identified as possibly removable, the department should contact the County Attorney’s Office and the IT Department.
  - b. Prior to removal of the comment, the department must ensure that the comment has been captured by screenshot or otherwise. This screenshot and documentation of the reason for removal must be kept by the department to comply with the Public Records Act.
7. Any County authorized social media site will require the following administrative structure:
  - a. Assigned administrator: Responsible for ensuring that the use of the social media site adheres to this policy and all related County policies.
  - b. Backup administrator: Responsible for administrator’s duties in their absence.
  - c. Information Technology Department must be notified of the identity of the designated administrators and back up administrators at the time of creation and within 15 days of any change of administrator.
8. All County Authorized Sites should contain the following information in a prominent place on the site or page:
  - a. County Department
  - b. Disclaimer similar to that listed in section 4 above



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- c. Stated purpose of page
- d. Official contact for page

### **County Authorized Site Use Guidelines**

County Commissioners delegate to the Information Technology Department and County Attorney's Office the ability to remove or modify content of posts or sites that violate policy. The Information Technology Department maintains the authority to freeze or close County social media sites. The Information Technology Department and County Attorney reserve the right to remove or modify content of posts or sites that violate the policy.

The following conditions also apply to such use:

1. The employment related use of social media can range from passive review of social media profiles to the authoring of content on a department sponsored social media account. Any such employment related use must be approved by an employee's manager.
2. Employees authorized to publish content to a department sponsored social media site shall be designated as social media representatives by the employee's Department Manager/Elected Official with notice to the Information Technology Director. A designated employee identified by the Information Technology Director will also be named as an administrator on any county authorized site. The Director/Elected official shall be responsible for updating this contact information in the event of changes.
3. Employees may only establish county authorized sites, pages, or accounts in their official capacity as County staff with the authorization of their Department Director or Elected Official. Notification of all new official Social Media sites must be provided to the County Attorney and the Information Technology Director and approved by the County Commissioners. All County authorized social media sites are to be sponsored by a County agency, Elected Official or department and the content of such site will become the responsibility of that department. County authorized sites must conspicuously identify themselves as such at any opening page or presentation and apply for and obtain verification by the site sponsor where offered. Use of the County logo is authorized for this purpose.
4. Permission to author content on County authorized social media sites will only be granted to those employees who are authorized to speak on behalf of the County via these electronic communications media.
5. Employees are prohibited from disclosing confidential, personal employee and non-employee information and any other proprietary and/or nonpublic information to which



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employees have access. Questions regarding the release of information shall be directed to the employee's supervisor or County Attorney prior to release.

6. When communicating electronically on social media sites, employees shall speak respectfully about the County and its business. Employees should remain aware that they always serve as an ambassador of the County when acting on County authorized social media. Whether making posts on a website, social medial page or replying to a comment on social media, employees are limited to speak on items to which the employee is authorized to speak and must identify themselves and their role with the County.
7. Employees are expected to follow copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws when using on-line communications as a representative of the County. Unauthorized use of copyrighted materials, unfounded or derogatory statements, or misrepresentations violate County policy.
8. Employees, acting on behalf of the County, may not publish content to any third-party website or social media application that is unrelated to subjects associated with their position and duties with the County. When writing about County matters employees are encouraged try to add value, providing worthwhile information effectively and efficiently.
9. Honor the privacy rights of our current employees by seeking their permission and the permission of their Department Manager/Elected Official before posting information about the employee, including photographs or video.
10. Please seek written permission of parents of minor children before posting their photo or video online. This requirement becomes more important when there is one or two children in the photo/video. Exceptions to this policy include photographs and video taken at public events sponsored by the County or its agencies where children appear incidentally.
11. Employees should not refer to County contractors or suppliers without their approval. Care should be taken to not promote one contractor or commercial enterprise over another or provide preferential treatment of any kind.
12. Authorized social media sites are not to be used to express a political viewpoint or endorse a political candidate.
13. County-owned technology resources are the property of Laramie County, as is all data created, entered, received, stored, or transmitted via County-owned equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, sites or posts to third party platforms or sites containing any symbols or words, which could reasonably interpreted as a presentation from or endorsed by, Laramie County or any of its agencies or elected officials.



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### **Public Records**

Public Records requirements are mandated by the State of Wyoming. Each department utilizing a County Authorized Site is responsible to ensure compliance with all applicable public records laws. When government agencies publish information on the internet through a website or a social media page, there is a requirement to retain that information. The following guidelines are intended to assist departments in maintaining such compliance:

1. County Authorized Sites as defined in this document shall be registered with the IT Department. County Authorized Sites will be archived by the IT Department.
2. Content placed on any site which is not a County Authorized Site, will not be archived by the IT Department. Departments publishing information on sites not authorized by the County will remain responsible to provide this content pursuant to any public records request without assistance from the IT Department. Violations of the Public Records Act may be subject to sanctions pursuant to law as well as County disciplinary actions.
3. Copies of any content removed from any site are to be retained in an archival copy.
4. Technology permitting, a backup of the entire site should be retained on a regular basis.
5. If questions arise as to applicability of public records law to specific content, contact your Department Manager/Elected Official and the County Attorney prior to posting the information.

### **Employer Monitoring**

Employees have no expectation of privacy while using the County's technology resources for any purpose, including social media. The County monitors all use and may withdraw content deemed to be inappropriate, outside the scope of an employee's authority, or in violation of County policy as determined by the Department Manager/Elected Official and/or County Attorney's Office.

### **Reporting Violations**

The County requests and strongly urges employees to report any violations or possible violations of this policy to their supervisor, Human Resources or the County Attorney's Office.

### **Discipline for Violations**

The County will investigate and respond to all reports of violations of this policy. Violations will not be tolerated.