



Social Media Internal Organizational Usage

Procedure No.: ADM-7	Council Resolution No.: N/A
Department: Administrative	Authority: CAO
Effective Date: July 18, 2016	Revision Date: September 9, 2019, October 13, 2021, February 2, 2024
Review Date: March 2025	Repealed Date:
Supersedes: Social Media CS-IT-3	
Related Policy No.: ADM-7	
Related Policy Name: Social Media Internal Organizational Usage	

Purpose

These procedures will provide operational guidance for achieving the goals of the Town of Taber Social Media Internal Organizational Usage Policy.

Operating Guidelines

1.0 SCOPE OF PROCEDURE

- 1.1. This Procedure and its corresponding Policy applies inclusively towards these designations:
 - 1.1.1. All Town of Taber Management positions;
 - 1.1.2. All out-of-scope employees of the Town of Taber;
 - 1.1.3. All CUPE employees of the Town of Taber;
 - 1.1.4. All summer, seasonal, or casual employees of the Town of Taber;
 - 1.1.5. All volunteers of any Town boards, commissions, or committees;
 - 1.1.6. Mayor and Council of the Town of Taber.
2. The only exceptions for employees in regards to this Policy and Procedure is the employees of the Taber Police Service as indicated in Section 2 of this Procedure.

1.0 2.0 Taber Police Service

- a. The Taber Police Service policy and procedure manual supersedes this policy as it relates to social media sites and accessing social media during work hours. The Police Commission has approved policies, procedures, and orders of the Chief of Police in relation to social media and the Alberta Police Act, and Police Service Regulation, and codes of conduct govern the activities of police officers, community peace officers, and communications operators.



1.02 Social Media Setup & Department-Specific Profiles

- a. Only those social networking sites approved by the Chief Administrative Officer and as researched by the Information Technology team and Communications Coordinator will be allowed for use by the Town.
- b. No social media site may have duplication of Town profiles. Only one official Town of Taber profile or account may be created and operated for each site.
- c. Separate Town departments may have their own social media profiles, but they must be identified as such (i.e. Town of Taber Public Works or Town of Taber Recreation).
- d. Any Department Director who wishes to create their own social media profiles for their department must have the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer. Information Technology and the Communications Coordinator must also be made aware of the new profiles.
- e. Any Department Director who requests the creation of their own social media profiles must state their reasoning for the request, providing evidence in writing for any of the following:
 - a. The content the Department creates has overtaxed existing Town platforms to the point that their content has been denied;
 - b. There is a platform the Town does not currently use that better reaches the Department's identified stakeholders and desired audience;
 - c. The Department's current communications efforts have become untenable, unaffordable, or unavailable;
 - d. What the Department will provide in terms of staffing, budget, resources, and training to support the creation of another profile.
 - e. Whom the Department proposes will oversee the administration of the profile (Department staff or Communications Staff). If the Department intends to have their own staff handle the administration, the Department must indicate whom, how they will be trained, and what level of oversight Communications Staff will have over the platform as a whole. If proposing Communications Staff will oversee the new platform, the Director must outline expected staff time and speak to the Director overseeing Communications Staff for their agreement/assessment.
- f. Should a Department reevaluate their department-specific profiles and platforms and wish to delete or phase out a social media profile, Communications and IT will be notified immediately.
 - a. Communications will be responsible for coming up with a plan to phase out the platform in favour of other channels so the public does not experience an abrupt shift in the communications of the department.

1.03 Authorized Users of Town-Owned Social Media

- a. Use of unauthorized, personal social media accounts to represent the Town of Taber is prohibited.



- b. All designated and authorized users for Town social media platforms must be familiar with the inner workings of social media usage and the implications of use. They must also be familiar with the Town's Social Media Policies and Procedures as well as any Town of Taber Communications Plans.
- c. Authorized social media users shall only do so within the boundaries as defined by policies and procedures as well as their respective department's mandates.
- d. All authorized users of Town social media must adhere to all policies, procedures, bylaws and laws. This includes, but is not limited to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) Act, the Municipal Government Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- e. Only employees authorized as social media spokespersons are allowed to participate in social networking discussions related to Town business matters inside and outside of regular business hours. They shall do so in adherence to the applicable policies and procedures.
- f. All employees authorized as official Town of Taber social media users are required to change their login passwords to said platforms every 60 days. The passwords must adhere to any Town password policies and practices for security.
- g. Employees shall not use Town social media user IDs or the Town of Taber's name for personal use.
- h. To protect Town security and systems, employees shall not use @taber.ca email addresses as logins for private social media accounts (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or private logins for any other online accounts (ie: Amazon, Staples, Apple IDs, etc.). Town @taber.ca emails are to be used solely for business purposes and accounts directly related to the requirements of the employee's work (as approved by Information Technology).
- i. Prohibited uses of company identification on personal social media accounts include but is not limited to the following:
 - i) The Town's name in a social media identity as a username, "handle" or screen name;
 - ii) Using the official trademarked Town of Taber logo;
 - iii) Using any branding elements or other logos owned by the Town of Taber;
 - iv) Linking to the Town of Taber website;
 - v) Downloading and installing plug-ins or helper applications such as those that try to access the company email directory;
 - vi) Joining groups using a company user ID for personal reasons or adding personal friends to an employee's friends list.
- j. An employee authorized to represent the Town on the Town's social media accounts may dialog with the community, talk about activities, news happenings, and general interest topics without publishing confidential information. Employees shall use their best judgment to see to it that the views and opinions expressed are the official views of the Town of Taber.



- k. When using Town of Taber social media, an employee is required to use their real name, title and identify that they work for Town of Taber. They shall not blog anonymously, use pseudonyms, nicknames, or false screen names when speaking on behalf of the Town or using Town of Taber social media.
- l. Only Communications and/or Information Technology staff are authorized to edit the settings on any Town-owned social media. If another authorized user believes a setting needs to be changed, they will immediately notify any staff in the aforementioned departments.

1.04 Content of Town-Owned Social Media

- a. Posts on social media should be treated as quick excerpts of information. Brevity is key for social media use. Any posts that are large or contain large amounts of information should be posted on the Town website first and then linked to on a social media post.
- b. An employee shall not communicate anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. Employees will refrain from posting anything contradictory or in conflict with the Town of Taber website, policies, procedures or bylaws.
- c. Posts should have correct grammar and spelling at all times.
- d. Any photos must be approved by the Department Director or Communications Coordinator before they are posted to social media sites.
- e. Authorized users, when posting or commenting on Town Social Media, shall do so in a manner that promotes the reputation, and protects the privacy, physical security and intellectual property of the Town. Employees are expected to exercise good judgement and shall refrain from posting comments on social media that are, or can be interpreted as, harassing, hateful, insulting, threatening, discriminatory, defamatory, or sarcastic, or which may render any employee unable to perform his or her duties satisfactorily or lead to a refusal, reluctance or inability of any employee or third party to work with the party responsible for the posting.
- f. Authorized users shall always answer with facts, and never with opinions or conjecture.
- g. Authorized users must endeavor to ensure that the tone of the Town's social media accounts remains constant. The Town aims to create a friendly, sociable and professional "voice" on social media sites. However, friendliness should never come at the cost of professionalism and accuracy when speaking to the public on social media sites.
- h. Authorized users shall use the official platform identity to answer questions and comments. Using their private social media profile is not permitted (i.e.: answering as the profile "Jane Doe" instead of as "Town of Taber").
- i. Employees shall endeavor to let authorized users answer questions, comments, and concerns wherever possible, instead of using their own internal knowledge and personal profiles to answer. This will reduce the likelihood of private individuals



becoming “subject matter experts” who citizens reach out to instead of the Town directly. If employees see a question or concern on social media, they will bring it to the knowledge of the authorized user(s) of that particular platform. For after-hours concerns or comments, Communications Staff shall be contacted if the answer/issue cannot wait until next regular business hours.

- j. Content of social media posts should be relevant and timely to current events, Town initiatives and Council decisions.
- k. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material, sensitive material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly. Immediately notify your supervisor, and if the complaint is merited the post is to be deleted without delay. An apology to the offended party can be made upon the direction of your supervisor.
- l. Hashtags should be researched thoroughly before being used in a post to ensure that the hashtag is not controversial, insensitive or demeaning.
- m. If an edit is required on a social media post, it must be made clear that the edit occurred. This may be done by correcting the information in a comment, or by posting a note at the end of a post. If the edits are for spelling or grammar, then an edit note is not necessary.
- n. If an employee makes an error, the employee should be up front about the mistake and correct it quickly. If an employee chooses to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.
- o. If an employee reads or sees misrepresentations made about Town of Taber in the media, the employee should identify the error to their Director. The Director will then be responsible for responding to the misrepresentation or informing the Communications Coordinator. Any response to such misrepresentation must be made with respect and using facts.
- p. During a municipal election year after August 31st, should any candidate running for office (current member of Council or otherwise) request the sharing of election platforms/campaign information or any other content in contravention of Section 13 of the corresponding Policy ADM-7 to any staff responsible for Town social media platforms, the staff member is required to notify the Chief Administrative Officer immediately. The CAO or designate will then be responsible for informing the Chief Returning Officer who will then address the contravention of the Town’s Social Media Policy with that candidate.
- q. Authorized Town of Taber staff shall review the Town’s official social media accounts a minimum of once daily between the hours of 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM Monday to Friday to ensure all content is in compliance with all Policies and Procedures.
 - i. This excludes holidays unless otherwise directed by resolution of Council, or direction by the Chief Administrative Officer, the Director of Emergency Management, Information Officer, or Communications.
- r. The Town of Taber’s social media account strives to provide relevant information to the citizens of Taber in a timely manner. To this end, some content will receive higher



- priority than others will. Priority for social media content shall be as follows in descending order:
- i. Emergency information;
 - ii. Time-sensitive information;
 - iii. Council decisions affecting the community at large;
 - iv. Information about the Town's programs, projects, processes, initiatives, and other relevant information for the healthy functioning of our community and to further citizens' understanding of the municipal process;
 - v. Information about other organizations and events the Town of Taber partners with and is involved in;
 - vi. Any other information deemed by the Chief Administrative Officer or Communications to be relevant to the community.
- s. Citizens, community groups, and non-Town event organizers frequently ask the Town of Taber to share or advertise their event/information on the Town's official social media channels. These requests shall be deferred to other communications channels the Town is able to provide (i.e.: Corn Husk Chronicles, Community Centre LED Sign, etc.) or to other community advertising channels as appropriate.
- t. The only exceptions for Section 5. o) include the following:
- i. Events/days/celebrations of national, provincial, or municipal recognition that are being celebrated in the community (i.e.: National Indigenous Peoples Day, Heritage Day, etc.)
 - ii. Events, celebrations, or happenings that are of unique benefit to the Town of Taber and demonstrates economic benefit to the community or are of a very singular quality that it solicits community awareness (i.e.: One Horse Town, etc.). What is deemed as having a "singular quality" shall be at the sole discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or Communications.
 - iii. Other events/celebrations/information that the Chief Administrative Officer or Communications deems to be of unique interest to the community as a whole. What is deemed as "unique interest" will be at the sole discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or Communications.

1.05 Requirements for Irregular Employee Use of Town-Owned Social Media

- a. An employee who does not have regular authorized use of Town social media sites may request permission from their Director to conduct Town business using social media platforms.
- b. The Director must obtain approval from the Chief Administrative Officer to allow an employee access to Town social media sites.
- c. The Director, upon granting permission to their employee, will notify the Information Technology department and Communication Coordinator in writing indicating approval, the social media platform, the name of the employee and the anticipated time frame.
- d. All requests for employee business use of external social media must be submitted to the Information Technology department.



- e. The Information Technology Department will establish access for the applicable employees to the targeted social media site and make exceptions in the firewall, proxy, or Web content filter rules as necessary.
- f. The Information Technology department will create a user ID on the targeted social media service using the employee's corporate e-mail address and will communicate the initial account password to the employee.
- g. The employee will receive an account activation e-mail and will not change the password from the social media service unless they inform the Information Technology department and provide the new password to them.
- h. The employee must receive training from Communications on the particular social media account(s) they are accessing prior to being allowed access or commencing work on the accounts.
- i. The employee must also be overseen by Communications Staff and/or the Director for the duration of their social media use. This oversight includes (but is not limited to) approvals of editorial content calendars, approval on individual posts, meetings to discuss content, etc.

1.06 Security and Breaches

- a. The privacy settings on Town social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the Town of Taber website.
- b. Privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set so as to limit access.
- c. Any suspicions of a compromised social media account must immediately be reported to the Chief Administrative Officer, Information Technology department, and Communications Coordinator.
- d. Information Technology will attempt to change login and password information immediately to reclaim the social media account.
- e. If a breach has been confirmed, authorized users must acknowledge the compromise on any other available social media accounts and the Town website in order to alert the public.
- f. When the account is reclaimed, damage must be identified and corrected as quickly as possible.

1.07 Confidentiality

- a. Confidentiality must be protected at all times, and authorized users must be aware of the public nature of social media.
- b. Confidential information may include but is not limited to:
 - i) Details about the Town's computer systems;



- ii) Information regarding other employees;
- iii) Financial information;
- iv) Day-to-day operational details;
- v) Photos of the workplace and/or field work without prior consent or knowledge of those being photographed;
- vi) Personal information of residents/ patrons that has been provided to the Town.

1.08 Copyright and Protection

- a. Employees using Town Social Media shall adhere to all laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including Town of Taber owned copyrights and corporate brands.
- b. Patrons, partners or suppliers should not be cited or referenced without their approval. An employee should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. Employees should link to others' work rather than reproduce it.
- c. Do not post pictures, music or clipart that the Town does not own or does not have the rights to distribute.
- d. Employees will not use or share unlicensed software on the Town's sites or member pages.
- e. Photographs that are given to the Town of Taber with permission by the photographer must have written consent for use on social media. Wherever possible, credit to the photographer should be given when posting photos to social media.

1.09 Personal Usage of Social Media for Town Employees

- a. Employees of the Town of Taber have the same rights to free speech as any member of the public.
- b. Town employees must adhere to the official Employee Code of Conduct, FOIPP laws, and any other legislation and be aware that what they post on social media may be scrutinized to a higher degree because of their position for the Town.
- c. Employees may not represent the Town on their own personal media sites, make comments which are either expressly or impliedly on behalf of the Town, or make representations about the Town's view or position on a given topic.
- d. Employees shall be cognizant that sharing pictures of their work and/or workplace is strongly discouraged, as pictures may comprise confidentiality, safety, or security of Town systems, employees, and infrastructure. Pictures shall never be shared during emergencies except those as authorized by the Information Officer.




- e. Employees should use professional judgement even while on their personal social media sites. Just as you are a representative of the Town to the public on the street, the same is true for social media.
- f. A disclaimer is a good way to distinguish that your views do not necessarily represent that of the Town of Taber.
- g. Acting as private citizens on social media, employees must use personal or private email addresses and make every reasonable effort to make it clear that their use of a social media site is as a private individual, and not as a representative of the Town. To this end, if an employee publishes content online in a personal capacity which is or may be relevant to the Town and/or where the user's identity as an employee has been disclosed, it is best to use a disclaimer such as:
 - i) "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the Town of Taber's positions."
- h. Employees should be aware that a disclaimer such as the above does not grant them immunity from discipline should they post any unacceptable material as outlined further in this procedure, and as amended from time to time. A disclaimer serves to separate the private social media sphere of the employee, but does not absolve them of their actions on social media that may impact the Town of Taber, its employees, Council, citizens, business partners, and assets.
- i. An employee should be aware of protecting themselves and their privacy. Posted information will remain in the public domain and the employee should consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.
- j. Town assets should not be used for personal social media activity during working hours. Working hours exclude coffee and lunch breaks.
- k. Employees may not access personal social media on their personal devices at any time during the working shift other than during coffee and lunch breaks. Exclusions to this include emergencies and instances where the employee has made previous arrangements with their supervisor.
- l. The Town of Taber reserves the right to protect its brand, copyrighted materials, confidential information, Council, employees, volunteers, citizens, assets, and reputation from damages social media posts originated by employees on personal accounts may cause.
- m. Unacceptable personal social media usage for a Town employee includes:
 - i) Sharing or posting of confidential, privileged, or personal information on coworkers, Council, citizens, or business matters that employees may be privy to;
 - ii) Discriminatory or hateful language;
 - iii) Language that incites racism or hatred;
 - iv) Encouragement or demonstrative of illegal behaviour;
 - v) Encouragement or language that incites harm or danger to any individual or group;



- vi) Privileged information that Town employees may have access to but are required to keep confidential;
- vii) A post that may compromise the security of Town employees, public systems, equipment, buildings, or other property;
- viii) Violations of any municipal, provincial, or federal laws or bylaws;
- ix) Posts that may diminish or harm any relationship or has the potential to harm relationships between the Town of Taber and other public bodies or private corporations, or would serve to diminish the Town of Taber's brand and/or public relations.

1.010 Enforcement

- a. Violations of this policy shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may result in appropriate disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from employment on a just-cause basis.
- b. The Chief Administrative Officer will have sole discretion as to whether the violation(s) warrant discipline and/or dismissal, and it will be up to the CAO to decide what level of investigation and discipline is required for each case.
- c. Off-duty conduct may provide a basis for dismissal.
- d. The Town of Taber policy on progressive discipline is in force and breaches of this policy are subject to such.


David T. Hubbert
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Feb. 5/24
DATE

