



## **VILLAGE OF FOX LAKE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES**

### **Village of Fox Lake Social Media Policy for Use of Village Social Media Accounts by the Public**

**Effective date:** 11/13/2018

**Purpose:** The Village of Fox Lake hereby adopts a policy on the use of social media, regulating the use of the Village's social media accounts by the public. This policy sets out the Village's intention for the Village's social media account, which is to communicate with the public on Village-related events and news.

#### **Definitions:**

"Social media account" shall mean any and all of the Village of Fox Lake's accounts for online services for the Village, its departments, boards, commissions, or subsidiary bodies that allow for interaction with Village residents, including but not limited to: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

A. Limited Public Forum. The Village's social media accounts are limited public forums. The Village does not make its social media accounts available for general public discourse, but rather reserves and limits the topics that may be discussed on the social media accounts. The purpose of the Village's social media accounts is to inform citizens about Village events, programs, projects, activities, and other Village-related business.

B. Content Restrictions. Because communication via social media constitutes a limited public forum, the Village reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Content that is deemed not suitable for posting by the Village Administrator or his/her designee because it is not topically related to the particular subject being commented upon, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria defined below, shall be retained by saving a screenshot of the comment along with a memo to the file that describes the reason the specific content was deleted. This material should be retained pursuant to the Village's Record Retention Policy. Village social media account content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:

1. Profane language or content.
2. Slanderous, libelous, or defamatory language or content. Personal attacks will not be permitted.
3. Comments not topically related to the village business being commented upon.

4. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
5. Sexual content or links to sexual content.
6. Solicitations of commerce.
7. Personally identifiable information, such as an address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information.
8. Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.
9. Charitable solicitations or political campaigning.
10. Conduct that is or encourages illegal activity.
11. Copyright and trademark violations.
12. Duplicate posts from the same individual.
13. Content that includes private, personal information without consent.
14. Gratuitous links to sites that are viewed as spam.

If a visitor violates the Village's social media comment policy guidelines, the Village may, but is not obligated, to take any or all of the following steps:

1. Remove the content;
2. Terminate or block a visitor's access to the applicable Village site, page or pages; and / or
3. Report visitor(s) to the applicable social media site provider.

The Village recognizes the web is a 24/7 medium, and comments are welcome at any time. However, Village moderating of comments should only be expected to occur during normal business hours.

C. Notice. Users and visitors to the Village's social media accounts shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication of Village news, services and events and that it is a limited public forum. The policy regarding comment removal shall also be included. This notice shall be posted in a conspicuous location on the Village's social media account and should be posted in a consistent location on all of the Village's social media accounts.

**Village of Fox Lake Social Media Policy for Use of Village Social Media Accounts by Village Personnel and Elected Officials**

**Effective date:** 11/13/2018

**Purpose:** The Village of Fox Lake hereby adopts a policy regulating the use of the Village’s social media accounts by Village departments, elected officials and employees. Using this technology, the Village has the ability to publish news releases, highlight events, ordinances and media coverage as well as other information that supports the goals and mission of the Village. This policy provides guidelines and standards for the posting of information on the Village’s social media accounts by employees and elected officials. This policy sets forth that only specifically authorized employees may post information on behalf of the Village on the Village’s social media accounts and that all authorized employees must abide by this policy.

**Definitions:**

“Social media account” shall mean any and all of the Village of Fox Lake’s accounts for online services for the Village, its departments, boards, commissions, or subsidiary bodies that allow for interaction with Village residents, including but not limited to: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

- A. Administration. The Village’s social media accounts are Village property developed and maintained by the Village for Village business purposes only. Social networking sites, pages, feeds and information that are posted on the Village’s social media accounts shall be managed by the Village Administrator or his/her designee , except as otherwise provided herein. All of the Village’s social media accounts must be tied to an assigned generic Village email addresses. The Village Administrator shall maintain a list of all current Village social media accounts, logins and passwords. All posts to the Village’s social media accounts must be business related and approved by the Village Administrator or his/her designee(s). Said designee(s) may be employees within different Village departments (also referred to as “departmental designee(s)”). Designees whom are authorized to approve posts to the Village’s social media accounts must have a thorough and complete understanding of this policy, the categories of appropriate content for posting on the Village’s social media accounts, and the technical experience to properly administer such posts. All designees shall undergo training before being designated by the Village Administrator. All designees must notify the Village Administrator of any change of password.
  - 1. Police Department. The social media accounts for the Police Department are subject to this policy. However, the Village Administrator, after consultation with the Police Chief, shall designate at least one employee of the Police Department to administer the Police Department social media accounts. The Police Department may adopt additional policies regarding the Police Department’s social media accounts but said policy shall be reviewed by the Village Administrator and shall not conflict with the Village’s Social Media Policy.

B. Monitoring the Village's Social Media Accounts. The Village's social media accounts shall be monitored throughout normal business hours each day by the Village Administrator or his/her designee. Responses will be provided to public inquiries in a timely manner by the Village Administrator or his/her designee.

C. Using Village's Social Media Accounts.

1. Authorized Employees. No Village employee may engage in social networking activities on behalf of the Village unless expressly authorized to do so by the Village Administrator. Village employees engaged in social networking activities, as representatives of the Village, shall act and conduct themselves according to the highest possible ethical and professional standards when communicating via the Village's social media accounts. Village policies, rules, regulations and standards of conduct apply to employees that engage in social networking activities on behalf of the Village.
2. Discipline. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
3. Elected Officials. Elected Village Officials, with the exception of the Village President, are prohibited from posting or responding to items on the Village's Facebook page and other social media sites. This is done to avoid potential violations of the Open Meetings Act.

D. Standards for Using or Posting on Social Media Accounts.

1. Village Business. All posts to the Village's social media accounts must be business related. Non-business related posts, such as personal posts are strictly prohibited.
2. Adding Value. Employees should strive to add value to the Village of Fox Lake through social media interaction using the Village's social media accounts, and provide worthwhile information and perspective.
3. Transparency. The Village, through its employees, shall strive for transparency and openness in its interactions using social media.
4. Social Media Account Rules. The rules set by the social media account on which the Village's social media accounts are located shall be adhered to.

5. Business Hours. Employees who engage in social media activities as part of their job responsibilities may only do so during normal business hours, unless otherwise authorized, and shall properly record their time.
6. Consistency. Content posted on the Village's social media accounts shall be consistent with the mission of the Village of Fox Lake.
7. Official Accounts. All Village-related information disseminated by social media shall occur only on the Village's designated social media accounts. Village employees are prohibited from creating, maintaining, or contributing to a social media account on behalf of the Village and representing the Village without first receiving approval from their supervisor and the Village Administrator.
8. Privacy Laws. Employees using the Village's social media accounts shall obey all privacy protection laws (i.e. HIPPA) and protect sensitive and confidential Village information at all times. No employee may post or share any information about litigation involving the Village on the Village's social media accounts without prior approval of the Village Attorney.
9. Other Laws. Employees using social media accounts shall obey all copyright, public, retention, fair use, and financial disclosure laws; as well as any other laws that might apply to the Village.
10. Naming Others. Village vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders shall not be cited on Village social media accounts without their prior approval.
11. Improper Language. Ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, objectionable, and/or inflammatory content, and conduct that violates Village policies may not be posted to the Village's social media accounts.
12. Accuracy. Employees shall make every effort to keep interaction with the public on the Village's social media accounts factual and accurate, including providing credible information via Internet links when possible. Mistakes made by employees on social media accounts should be corrected, and there shall be no alteration of posts without indicating that the employee has done so. Employees shall retain a copy of the original post and any revised or corrected subsequent post by taking a screenshot of both posts and submitting them to the Village Administrator or his/her designee.

13. Confidentiality. Village employees must protect all Village of Fox Lake information that is considered to be non-public in nature, per Village policies pertaining to information classification and disclosure.
  14. Public Information. When using social media, Village employees should exercise appropriate caution about the release of public information. To be as transparent as possible, as much information that would be distributed via traditional communication avenues used by the Village should be distributed with social media.
- E. Standards for Interacting With Public. The Village Administrator or his/her designee and the departmental designee(s) shall monitor the Village's social media accounts and shall respond to citizen inquiries posted to the Village's social media accounts if required. Responses to citizen inquiries should follow the following standards:
1. Content posted on the Village's social media accounts may be conversational in nature but must remain professional, particularly if responding to a comment. Employees using the Village's social media accounts shall respect and accept opinions of those interacting with the Village's social media accounts, regardless of whether such opinions are positive or negative, provided the opinions are on topic and not offensive, denigrating or completely out of context.
  2. Disputes between a Village spokesperson and commenter on the Village's social media accounts shall be avoided.
  3. The Village Administrator or his/her designee shall distribute questions received on Village social media accounts to the appropriate department for response when appropriate.
  4. The Village Administrator or his/her designee shall forward requests for Village-related services received on the Village's social media accounts through proper channels.
  5. Comments or responses on Village social media accounts should be limited. The Village's social media designee should limit his/her response to (1) providing a factual response to a question posed (for example: when is the next Village Council meeting); (2) providing the information for the appropriate department which would be most helpful; or (3) encourage or direct persons interacting with the Village's social media accounts to use appropriate resources to request a Village service. The Village Administrator or his/her designee should work to develop standard responses to public questions and comments.
  6. Employees using the Village's social media accounts shall obey all privacy protection laws (i.e. HIPPA) and protect sensitive and confidential Village information at all times.

7. No employee may comment on litigation involving the Village on the Village's social media accounts without prior approval of the Village Attorney.
  8. Employees personal use of personal social media accounts shall be governed by the Village Employee Handbook
- F. Distributing Information Through Social Media Accounts. All Village departments, commissions and committees are encouraged to provide information suitable for dissemination through Village social media accounts. Information sought to be published on the Village's social media accounts shall be submitted to the Village Administrator so such information can be reviewed, and distributed through the appropriate social media accounts operated by the Village.
- G. Record Retention and the Freedom of Information Act.
1. Compliance With Laws. Village social media accounts should adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies including all Village policies, including but not limited to Information Technology, Human Resources, and the Illinois Local Records Act.
  2. FOIA. The Illinois Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") may apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be stored and retrieved in accordance with FOIA. All social networking sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
  3. Retaining Records. The Village Administrator or his/her designee shall review the Village's social media sites on a monthly basis for any records or content that is subject to the Illinois Local Records Act or the Village's Record Retention Policy. Posts or comments that require preservation must be maintained pursuant to the relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period per Village policy, in a format that preserves the integrity of the original records and is easily accessible.
- H. Identification. All Village social media accounts shall clearly indicate that such accounts are maintained by the Village of Fox Lake and shall bear the Village's official logo. The Village's website address and a single point of contact for inquiries about the social media account (i.e. a general email address or phone number) shall also be included for each social media account.