



# *District of Hudson's Hope*

Land of Dinosaurs and Dams

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**Council Policy No. 345/11**

Section Administration

### **Purpose:**

District of Hudson's Hope utilizes social media and social network sites to further enhance communication with various stakeholders in support of District goals and objectives. Designated District employees will have the ability to publish articles, facilitate discussions and communicate information through various media related to conducting District business. Social media facilitates further discussion of District issues, operating and services and furthers the goals of citizen engagement and education by providing members of the public the opportunity to participate.

### **Definitions:**

Social Media is any form of online publication or presence that allows employees and citizens to engage in multi-directional conversations in or around the content or an internet based application.

### **Policy Application:**

The District uses social media websites for the purpose of facilitating two way communications with the community. In addition social media allows the District of Hudson's Hope to:

- Increases government's access to audiences and improve the accessibility of government communication and engagement efforts.
- Help achieve strategic goals.
- Monitor and respond to current topics and emerging issues quickly.
- Increase the speed of public feedback and input.
- Proactively share stories to address current issues and projects.
- Open up local government to encourage citizen participation and support a strong civic culture.
- Increase transparency of government.
- Listen to residents and customers and enable us to improve District services, program and practices.
- Provide a venue in which we can celebrate the community by publicizing events and sharing stories, videos and photos.

### **Procedures or Guiding Principles:**

While using or establishing a District presence using social media, the following guidelines must be followed:

- All social media sites must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Upon approval from the CAO, designees and/or administrators can be employees that have a complete understanding of this policy and appropriate content and technical expertise.

- The content on social media sites shall adhere to District policies and federal and provincial regulations, including the Moderation Policy developed by the Government of British Columbia.
- Content on social media sites will be monitored to ensure adherence to this policy for appropriate use, message and branding consistent with the mission and values of the District. The District retains the authority to remove information from the sites as deemed appropriate.
- Whenever possible links to more information should direct users back to the District’s official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the District.
- Designees and/or administrators must not add or remove other designees and/or administrators without approval of the CAO.
- In order to adhere to records retention guidelines, designees and/or administrators must take a copy of any posts before deleting any information from social networking sites.

#### Internal comment guidelines for social media sites

Designated employees posting to the social media sites are responsible for reviewing comments and posting feedback. Employees can use their personal accounts to update social media websites, such as Facebook pages, as a company cannot be a user, but their identity would be hidden while posting information as the “District of Hudson’s Hope” and they would be required to only be completing work related duties while on a social media site during work hours. Employees should be knowledgeable about the topic and able to answer questions about the subject or consult with other employees that have expertise in the subject being discussed. During events where a state of emergency has been declared, monitoring of social media sites may be increased. As customer service is a priority, employees will respond to all inquires via social media in a timely manner during office hours; however, the usual methods of contacting the District for official correspondence will continue to be encouraged. In addition, if employees see that inappropriate content has been posted to the sites outside of regular office hours, they will be allowed to delete those posts according to the policy.

The following guidelines must be followed when posting to a social media site:

- Write what you know or have been requested to post by another District employee that has the expertise in that subject area and try to ensure that the information you provide is both factual and accurate. Write in the first person.
- Be transparent. Your honesty, or dishonesty, will be quickly noticed in social media environments.
- Be judicious. All statements must be true and not misleading and all claims must be substantiated.
- Be responsible. What you write is ultimately your responsibility. When responding to a request or questions, or stating information on behalf of the District, be sure you’re the right person to be doing so. When in doubt, consult your supervisor or CAO.
- It’s a conversation. Talk to the reader like you’d talk to real people in professional situations. Avoid bureaucratic language, formal language or industry jargon. Don’t be combative.
- Be open. One of the great benefits of social media is the interaction between us (you) and our citizens. Take in ideas. Share relevant feedback and input with colleagues. When in doubt, talk to your supervisor or CAO.

- Did you make a mistake? If so, admit it. Be upfront and quick with your correction.
- If it gives you pause, pause. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don't shrug it off and hit post. Take a minute to review the guidelines and try to figure out what's bothering you and then fix it. If you're still unsure, check with your supervisor or CAO. Ultimately, the decision about what you publish is yours – as is the responsibility. So be sure what you respond to you can deliver.

**Do not write any content or postings that involve or are related to the following:**

- Harassing statements.
- Anything which a person of reasonable sensitivities may find to be offensive.
- Matters in litigation or otherwise in dispute, or that could be in the future.
- Non-public information of any kind.
- References to illegal or banned substances and narcotics unless for public educational purposes.
- Pornographic, sexually-oriented, or otherwise offensive or illegal materials.
- Defamatory, libellous, offensive or demeaning material (don't engage in a combative exchange)

**Solicitation of business**

- Comments supporting and/or opposing political campaigns or referendums
- Information that might compromise the safety or security of public buildings or activities
- Disparaging/threatening comments about or related to anyone
- Personal, sensitive or confidential information of any kind about yourself or others.

As a citizen, as well as an employee, you can, of course, use social media in all the same ways as anyone else outside of work hours. It is important to recognize however, that what you publish on the Internet may reflect on your employer. Employees who use social media for personal purposes should:

- Use a disclaimer anywhere there may be uncertainty about the capacity in which they are acting. A disclaimer, such as: "The posting on this site are my own and do not represent the views or opinions of my employer" can help protect you
- Recognize that anything posted on the Internet, is there for good. Even if you attempt to delete the post, photo, comment, etc., it is likely that it has been stored in any number of other places. Content posted to the Internet should be thought of as permanent.
- Avoid sharing government or work related material in a personal space. Try and keep your personal online presence and your work online presence separate
- Respect copyright and fair use
- Above all, use common sense.

## Public comments guidelines for social media sites:

Social media websites that are maintained by the District will display a link to the public comment guidelines. These guidelines are:

*Welcome to the District of Hudson's Hope <insert name of social media website>! The purpose of this page is to share information of public interest with our many residents, businesses and visitors. We hope to be able to provide you with the most recent news stories, photos and videos from the District of Hudson's Hope.*

*If you are looking for the official source of information about the District of Hudson's Hope, please visit our website at [www.hudsonshope.ca](http://www.hudsonshope.ca).*

*The District of Hudson's Hope adheres to the Moderation Policy developed by the Government of British Columbia. Therefore, we won't post or accept comments that:*

- *Contain abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language*
- *Include defamatory, abusive, harassing or hateful remarks or make unproven or unsupported accusations against individuals or organizations*
- *Constitute spam, promote services or products*
- *Invalidate anyone's privacy or impersonates anyone*
- *Are far off-topic*
- *Are posted without the necessary rights, licences and consents*
- *Encourage conduct that may or would constitute a criminal offence or give rise to civil liability, or that otherwise violates any local, provincial, national or international law or regulation anywhere in the world*
- *Contain long embedded URLs*
- *Contain excessive links or contain code*
- *Are contrary to the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

*We do not edit comments to remove objectionable content, so please ensure that your comment contains none of the above. Your comments are welcome at any time, 7 days a week.*

*The District updates and monitors social media accounts during office hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30am - 4:30pm. As customer service is a priority, we will attempt to respond to all inquiries via social media in a timely manner during office hours; however, the usual methods of contacting us for official correspondence are encouraged.*

## Records retention:

The District of Hudson's Hope social networking sites will adhere to applicable provincial, federal and local laws. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act applies to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with the act.