

City of Grain Valley Social Media Policy
08/13/2018

Purpose

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for the City of Grain Valley, including usage by all City employees, visitors to City social media sites and elected officials. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's blog, personal web site or social networking site.

Background

The intended purpose of the City of Grain Valley's use of social media platforms is to disseminate information from the City or about the City, to the public in a civil and unbiased manner. The City typically uses social media in order to highlight upcoming events, warn residents of potentially hazardous weather conditions, road closures, water service disruptions and other important information. Social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, have proven to be "user-friendly" methods to get information to community members, visitors, media and those who work in Grain Valley in an expedient and easily accessible method. Currently, the departments who host social media sites are Administration (City of Grain Valley), Grain Valley Police Department and Grain Valley Parks & Recreation. The guidelines set forth by this policy also extend to City of Grain Valley's use of content hosting sites such as YouTube.

Internal Use of Social Media

City of Grain Valley business and social media

The establishment and use of social media sites for the purposes of City of Grain Valley communication by any City of Grain Valley department are subject to approval by the Public Information Officer (PIO). All City of Grain Valley social media sites shall be administered by the PIO.

City social media sites shall make clear that they are maintained by the City of Grain Valley. They must clearly adhere to the City of Grain Valley Technology Policy (section 4 in the Employee Handbook). City social media accounts will only join a group or become a fan of a page if it is related to official City business, services, and/or events.

Whenever possible, City social media sites should link back to the official City of Grain Valley website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City of Grain Valley.

The PIO will monitor content on all City social media sites to ensure adherence to both the City of Grain Valley Technology Policy and the Social Media Policy. He/ or she will also monitor such sites to ensure the interests and goals of the City of Grain Valley are

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upheld therein. Each department or division using a social media account for City business must provide a list of administrators of each site to the Public Information Officer. Each of these sites must have an alternate administrator, in the absence of the primary administrator. The City Clerk shall be provided and hold record of all City of Grain Valley departments' social media sites' log-in information.

Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comments requesting responses from the City and for usage in violation of this policy. PIO shall determine how employees must identify themselves when participating in the social media forum.

Users of all City social media shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of the City of Grain Valley Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the PIO for a reasonable period-of-time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available. Inappropriate content must be "copied" and sent to the PIO so it can be documented and retained. If content that could possibly affect a police investigation or situation, is deemed inappropriate on a City site, forward such content to the Grain Valley Police Department, before it is removed.

City of Grain Valley social media sites are subject to State of Missouri public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The designee maintaining the site is responsible for responding to any public records requests for posted content on social media. Content related to City business shall be maintained in an accessible format pursuant to City policy and practice so that it can be produced in response to a request.

Employees and elected officials communicating on behalf of the City of Grain Valley via social media accounts must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City of Grain Valley. Employees that fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner may be subject to disciplinary action outlined in the City's Employee Handbook.

City of Grain Valley employees' social media for personal use

City employees are permitted to have personal social networking and social media sites. However, City employees are prohibited from making any statement on behalf of the City of Grain Valley verbally, electronically or in written form except when it is specifically part of the employee's job duties to do so. This prohibition is in effect at all times (the employee's time while "on-duty," as well as during personal time/ "off-duty"). It

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includes, but is not limited to, any posting on social media such as Facebook, Twitter or online news source, comments or blogs. Though City policy cannot restrict employees from communicating their own personal opinions or information via social media, it is advisable for the following to be adhered to as a representative (employee) of the City of Grain Valley:

- Don't disclose confidential information regarding the City of Grain Valley or its operations.
- Do not slander the City of Grain Valley, its citizens, employees or elected officials.
- Do not use any City photos or logos for personal social media posts or otherwise, unless granted permission to do so by supervisor.
- City employees are to exercise responsibility when posting or publishing information on social media sites for personal or professional purposes as they are a representative of a city/ government entity.

City of Grain Valley administration reserves the right to protect confidential information and their professional reputation. If a City employee is found to be misusing social media in a manner damaging to the City, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

City of Grain Valley Elected Officials' on Social Media

In addition to the aforementioned guidelines, city administration encourages elected officials to refrain from commenting on community social media pages or groups, (i.e.: Residents of Grain Valley on Facebook). In lieu of engaging on such community pages, it is preferential that elected officials communicate via their own "official social media account" – identifiable by their title and/ or ward in which they represent, to be utilized solely for City business, issues, announcements and/or announcements of City events. Elected officials are not required to use social media as a method in which to communicate with their constituents.

External (Public) Use of Social Media

The City of Grain Valley's social media accounts are not monitored 24/7, and as such, posts and responses should not be immediately expected. Accounts are typically monitored during normal business hours, designated as weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding holidays. Due to this, users are advised NOT to use the City's social media accounts to report a crime or emergency situation. Crime reports and requests for police, fire or emergency medical assistance must be made by dialing 9-1-1.

A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Grain Valley social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment

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does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of Grain Valley, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Grain Valley.

Comments containing any of the following, inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on City of Grain Valley social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by PIO:

- Comments not related to the original topic;
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or mental or physical disability;
- Defamatory or personal attacks;
- Threats to any person or organization;
- Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
- Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to, advertising of any business or product for sale;
- Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
- Encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

The City of Grain Valley reserves the right to deny access to City of Grain Valley social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Grain Valley Technology Policy or Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

This policy will be made available to users via www.cityofgrainvalley.org and posts on social media.

Signed by: 
Ryan Hunt, City Administrator


Ken Murphy, Asst. City Administrator