



<b>Title:</b>	Social Media Policy		
<b>Date Created:</b>	December 2019	<b>Adopted:</b>	January 7, 2020

## Purpose

Montrose County understands that social media can be a rewarding way for employees to share their life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers. The use of social media is also a valuable tool to conduct business and engage community members. However, use of social media presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. This policy is intended to assist county employees in making responsible decisions about their use of social media for business purposes and establish guidelines for personal use of social media as it relates to their employment with Montrose County. The intention for publishing a social media policy is to help all parties succeed in protecting employees, partners, and the county from illegal or damaging actions by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly.

Social media is an umbrella term that integrates technology, social interaction, and content creation. Because the nature of social media tools is ever changing and evolving, this policy reflects a flexible approach to defining social media. Social media includes but is not limited to, tools and websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, LinkedIn, wikis, and blogs. County owned/created social media tools are to only be used for business purposes in serving the interests of the organization and community members.

If an employee has questions regarding this policy, he or she should contact Human Resources or County Administration.

Violations of any section of this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Montrose County Corrective Measures and Disciplinary Action Policy up to and including termination.

## Procedures

Social media tools used for Montrose County business purposes need to be approved by County Management/Elected Official. To secure a social media account, the following steps must be taken:

- A. Set up a meeting with the County Manager/Deputy County Manager/Elected Official and Media Relations Manager or Digital Communications Project Manager for the following purposes:
  - 1) discuss the intent, need, expectations, and management of the account;
  - 2) determine the appropriate social media tools for the intended audience; and
  - 3) get approval.
- B. If approved in step A, submit a request to the IT Helpdesk.
- C. Set up the account(s), apply the IT User Policy where applicable.
- D. The Media Relations Manager and Digital Communications Project Manager must have administrative rights on all social media accounts established under the purview of County business.



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- E. Accounts must be regularly reviewed and updated.
- F. Questions and concerns must be responded to in a timely fashion by one of the social media administrators.
- G. Social media administrators should evaluate accounts on a monthly basis for effectiveness.
- H. If the account is static or no longer needed, the account must be disabled. Work with the Media Relations Manager or Digital Communications Project Manager and IT to disable an account.

### **Social Media and Business Use**

Social media is to be used for the promotion of county programs, activities, services, and public outreach and must always be up-to-date and active. Social media must be published using the approved Montrose County brand standards and guidelines. Users and visitors to social media sites should be clear that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the county/county program and members of the public. Communications made through social media will in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment to the county or any official or employee of the county for any purpose.

All comments will be reviewed after posting by the social media administrators. Comments posted by community members shall not be edited by the county; however, the county reserves the right to remove a comment if it uses vulgar, offensive, threatening, bullying or harassing language or is not related to the posted topic. Additionally, county social media accounts are not to be used to promote or oppose any person campaigning for election to a political office or any ballot proposition or initiative. The comments and opinions expressed by the network (friends, fans, followers) are theirs alone and do not reflect the opinions of Montrose County or its employees. All media inquiries should be directed to the Media Relations Manager.

### **Social Media and Personal Use: Civil Liability**

Montrose County employees who choose to engage in social media for personal purposes assume any and all risks associated with that use. Employees will refrain from using social media on work time unless it is work-related as authorized by County Management or Elected Official. When an employee clearly identifies his or her association with Montrose County and/or discusses his or her work the following shall apply:

- Employees are expected to behave appropriately and consistent with all County policies and the Code of Ethics.
- Employees are required to make it clear they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of Montrose County by including the disclaimer: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views, positions, strategies or opinions of Montrose County."



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- Montrose County e-mail addresses shall not be used to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.
- Members should consider that they may be subject to civil litigation for: (a) Publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group or organization. (b) Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern and would be offensive to a reasonable person. (c) Using someone else's name, likeness or other personal attributes without that person's permission or for an exploitative purpose. (d) Publishing the creative work of another, trademarks or certain confidential information without the permission of the owner.

### **Unacceptable Activities**

The following list is not exhaustive, but attempts to provide a framework for activities that fall into the category of unacceptable use of social media, both for business and personal purposes unless otherwise stated:

- Engaging in any actions that violate any Montrose County Policy including the Code of Ethics, IT User Policy and Prohibited Conduct Policy and Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Complaint Procedure.
- Inappropriate postings that may include threats of violence, bullying, or similar conduct.
- Engaging in any actions that may harm or tarnish the image, reputation, and/or goodwill of the county and/or any of its employees when participating in social media.
- Attributing personal statements, opinions, or beliefs to the county when participating in social media.
- Engaging in any activity that is illegal under local, state, or federal law while using Montrose County-owned resources.
- Violating laws pertaining to the handling and disclosure of copyrighted materials.
- Violating the rights of any person or organization protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property, or similar laws or regulations.
- Using Montrose County logos and any other Montrose County intellectual property in connection with any personal social media activity.
- Making fraudulent offers of products, items, or services originating from any Montrose County account.
- Effecting security breaches, including, but not limited to, sharing data that is restricted from public disclosure.
- Speech or expression that, while not made pursuant to an official duty, is significantly linked to or related to the Montrose County and tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of Montrose County or its employees. Examples include statements that indicate disregard for the law or the state or U.S. Constitution; expression that demonstrates support for criminal



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activity; participating in sexually explicit photographs or videos for compensation or distribution.

In addition, an employee is required to take reasonable and prompt action to remove any content that is in violation of this policy, whether posted by the employee and/or others, from any web page or website maintained by the employee (e.g., social or personal website).