

# OFFICIAL CITY POLICY

## CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY

General Information	
Policy Title: Social Media Policy	Department: Communications
Policy Owner (job title): Communications Director	Policy ID: 25-XXX
Council Approval Date:	Resolution Number: 25-XXXX
Effective Date:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Updated

### Policy Overview

#### Policy Description:

This policy governs the administration and use of City-sponsored social media accounts.

#### Purpose & Scope:

##### Purpose

The City of Golden Valley (the “City”) wishes to establish a positive and informative social media presence. Social networking in government serves two primary functions: to communicate and deliver messages directly to members of the public and to encourage public involvement, interaction, and feedback. Information distributed via social networking must be accurate, consistent, timely, and meet the needs of the City’s intended audience. Social media is used for social networking, and this policy seeks to ensure proper administration of the City’s social media sites by its representatives.

##### Scope

This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media websites sponsored, established, registered, or authorized by the City and any of its Departments or Divisions. The City’s social media accounts are exclusively those accounts listed in the official City of Golden Valley Social Media inventory maintained by and on-file with the City’s Communications Department.

The City does not create, collect, disseminate, or regulate use of any other social media accounts, including the personal accounts of its elected officials and staff. City staff should consult the Social Media Use Policy in the Employee Handbook for additional information regarding personal communications through social media. This Policy does not apply to undercover social media accounts established by GVPD to gather intelligence, investigate crimes, or monitor online activity for authorized and legal public safety purposes. The operation of those accounts is governed by state law and GVPD department policies and procedures.

Questions regarding the scope of this policy should be directed to the Communications Director.

#### Definitions:

- **Social Media Accounts** are internet and mobile-based applications, websites, and functions, other than email, for sharing and discussing information, where users can post photos, video, comments, and links to other information to create content on any imaginable topic. This may be referred to as “user-generated content” or “consumer-generated media.” Social media includes, but is not limited to:
  - social networking sites and apps such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Nextdoor
  - blogs
  - social news sites such as Reddit and Buzzfeed
  - video and photo sharing sites and apps such as YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, and Flickr
  - Wikis, or shared encyclopedias, such as Wikipedia

- an ever-emerging list of new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed above.
- **City Representatives** means all City employees and agents, including its employees and other agents of the City, such as independent contractors or elected officials.
- **Social Media Manager** means any City employee or agent with administrator access who, when posting or responding to a post, appears to be the City social media account owner.

#### **Related Documents, Materials & Resources:**

- [Golden Valley Employee Handbook](#)

## **Policy**

### **Overview**

City Representatives have the responsibility to use the City's Social Media Accounts in an efficient, effective, ethical, and lawful manner pursuant to all existing City policies, including this policy and the Social Media Use Policy in the Employee Handbook. The City will determine, at its discretion, how its Social Media Accounts will be designed, implemented, and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy.

The City's Social Media Accounts are considered a City asset, and administrator access to these accounts will be securely administered in accordance with the City's Computer Use Policy. The City reserves the right to shut down any of its Social Media Accounts for any reason without notice. The City does not create or maintain Social Media Accounts for its elected officials.

The City has limited control of Social Media Accounts on third-party platforms (ie, Facebook, Twitter, etc). At the same time, there is a general expectation by the public that the City have a social media presence to share information about current City projects and City business. The City's Social Media Accounts will be used for incidental, non-vital communication and general information only. It is not the purpose of the City's Social Media Accounts to be a medium for transactions of City business. The City Manager may authorize exceptions to this general rule, for example in the case of a natural or man-made disaster, if it is determined by the City that the best means of communicating with the public is through the social media account(s).

### **Rules of Use**

1. City Social Media Managers are responsible for managing City Social Media Accounts. No City Representatives other than Social Media Managers may post to or manage City Social Media Accounts.
2. All City Social Media Accounts must be approved by the City Manager to ensure Social Media Accounts are kept to a sustainable number and policies are followed. Facilities or departments wishing to establish a new Social Media Account must submit a request to the Communications Department, which will process the request and make a recommendation to the City Manager. No City Representative may establish Social Media Accounts or websites on behalf of the City unless authorized in accordance with this policy.
3. All approved Social Media Accounts shall be clearly marked as the City of Golden Valley account and will be linked with the official City website ([www.goldenvalleymn.gov](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov)).
4. All approved Social Media Accounts must conspicuously display or link to a public notice that informs the public of the purpose of the social media presence and the terms one agrees to in accessing, using, or posting to the City's social media page.
5. Administration of all City Social Media Accounts shall comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as proper business etiquette.

6. Social Media Managers shall not use City Social Media Accounts covered by this policy for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political, or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to City employment relations matters.
7. No City Social Media Account may be used by the City or any Social Media Manager to disclose private, non-public, or confidential information. No Social Media Account may be used to disclose sensitive information. If there is any question as to whether information is private, non-public, confidential, or sensitive, contact the Deputy City Clerk/Data Practices Compliance Official.
8. No City Social Media Account may use or transmit any documents, images, software, or other information protected by a copyright owned by an individual or entity other than the City without proper authorization from the copyright owner.
9. Outside of emergencies, disasters, or other circumstances authorized by the City Manager, no City Social Media Account may be used for transactions of City business. In the event a user initiates a request, application, or question through social media that affects City business or requires another City policy or process to be followed, the Social Media Manager may follow up with that user by phone, email, or other channels. If comments are allowed, in the event of a question of general interest, a response may be given in comments, the initial post may be edited, or a subsequent post may be created to include the information.
10. Social Media Managers may not edit or delete any posted comments without approval from the Communications Director or City Manager. Comments posted by members of the public may be removed only if they fall into at least one of the following categories:
  - obscene or pornographic content
  - direct threats to persons or property
  - material asserted to violate the intellectual property of another person
  - private, personal information about a person published without his/her consent
  - information that compromises a public safety security system
  - statutorily private, confidential, or nonpublic data
  - commercial promotions or spam
  - hyperlinks to material that fall into one of the foregoing categories

A member of the public whose comment is removed may appeal the removal of the comment and seek reconsideration of its removal by contacting the City in writing and explaining how the comment does not fall into one of the categories for removal. A written response should be provided as soon as reasonably possible.

11. The Communications Department shall provide training, direction, and support to City Social Media Managers regarding the management of City Social Media Accounts and interpretation of this Policy.

A member of the public who disputes the legality of any portion of this policy may dispute the particular portion in writing. The City will acknowledge the claim promptly and, after consultation with the City Attorney, respond to the claim concerning the legality of the policy portion as soon as reasonably possible.

## **Data Ownership and Retention**

All communications or messages within the City's Social Media Accounts, whether composed, sent, or received on City or personal equipment, are the property of the City and subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. As no transactions of City business shall be conducted through social media accounts, in accordance with the City's records retention schedule, the City shall retain all social media messages only until read.