

Rule # 3-36

Social Media

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§ 3-36-010 Purpose

Establish policy and requirements for use of social media by County employees during work hours or using County devices or mobile devices, or other equipment. This rule is to be read in conjunction with MCPR 3-35 Use of Information Technology.

§ 3-36-020 Definitions

Posting: Placing any content on social media sites. This includes, but is not limited to, creating content for a new site, making comments, or inserting pictures on social networking sites.

Use of Social Media: Any use of web applications, sites or accounts that facilitates the sharing of opinions and information. Use of social media includes but is not limited to use of such formats as blogs, listservs, websites, chat, instant messaging, collaborative editing (e.g. wikis), on-line communities, photo-sharing, social network pages, posts, or other similar technologies, including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and other similar sites.

§ 3-36-030 Policy

The County encourages the work-related use of social media to facilitate the sharing of information, ideas, and opinions in support of the mission and business of the County. All content posted during work hours by County staff for Web applications, sites, or accounts created and maintained by the County ("County sites"); or for non-County blogs or other sites ("non-County sites") must be for authorized County business and comply with all federal, state and County laws, rules, and regulations and County or department procedures. Content posted during work hours (not lunch, breaks or personal time) and/or using County devices and systems must comply with the appropriate County rules and procedures. The use of social media is considered a use of information technology and as such is also subject to all provisions of MCPR 3-35 Use of Information Technology.

County sites must reflect the County image and are considered limited public forums. Comments are moderated and the County reserves the right to remove any employee or third party postings that are inappropriate or unlawful. Staff who contribute to or moderate County sites must follow specific rules to maintain the reputation of the County while protecting the First Amendment rights of citizens.

As public employees, County employees' free speech rights in the workplace are different than those of the general public. They are subject to a balancing act between the right of a public employer to operate efficiently and employees' free speech rights. The County's personnel rules incorporate limitations on free speech intended to maintain efficient government operations, such as the law's limitations on harassment in the workplace and political speech.

§ 3-36-040 Employee Responsibilities

A. Authorization for Use of Social Media

Employees must obtain written approval from their appointing authority prior to creating any County site for official County communication or communicating on behalf of the County on non-County sites unless doing so is a part of their assigned job duties. When submitting a request to their appointing authority to create a County site, employees must include a life cycle plan for maintaining, updating and removal of the site.

B. Responsibilities when Posting Content

When posting content on County sites or posting content on non-County sites during work hours (not lunch, breaks or personal time) or using County computers:

1. Employees are required to:

- a. Protect and respect the privacy of clients, partners, and other employees; get permission to use the name or likeness of County employees, and get a signed release or email approval to use the name or likeness of anyone outside of the County unless pictures to be posted were taken at a public event.
- b. Comply with federal, state and County laws including all public records, copyright, retention, fair use, privacy and financial disclosure laws.
- c. Comply with all applicable County personnel rules, including but not limited to MCPR 3-10 Employee Responsibilities, 3-40 Discrimination and Harassment-free Workplace, 3-35 Use of Information Technology (IT), and 3-30 Code of Ethics.
- d. Check facts, cite sources, avoid copyright infringement, present balanced views, acknowledge and correct errors, and check spelling and grammar before making a post live on any County or non-County site.
- e. Post only within the employee's area of expertise and knowledge.

- f. Make corrections expediently and note that a correction was made.
- g. Maintain confidentiality of County information.
- h. Express opinions in a respectful manner.
- i. Follow the rules and procedures of any social media site on which they are posting work-related content.
- j. Follow the County's applicable procedures for presenting content on County sites.
- k. Assist in regularly maintaining and updating active County sites.
- l. Follow their department and unit standards for identifying themselves when posting on a County or non-County site.
- m. Obtain Communications Office approval before posting anything as an official statement of Multnomah County unless the employee is an authorized spokesperson.

2. Employees are prohibited from:

- a. Making personal attacks, using insults or using threatening language.
- b. Making libelous and/or defamatory or false statements.
- c. Plagiarizing material.
- d. Sharing private, personal or confidential information.
- e. Making comments unrelated to the content of the forum, and/or providing hyperlinks to material not directly related to the discussion.
- f. Posting commercial promotions or spam.
- g. Posting information shared with County staff and/or stakeholders that is in draft form or is pending publication.
- h. Including content in postings for which the County does not own the copyright or does not have legal permission to use.

C. Engaging in Use of Social Media

Employees should always assume their social media communications during work hours (not lunch, breaks or personal time), or when using County devices or mobile devices are in the public domain and available to members of the public for publishing or discussion in all forms of media. Employees engaging in the use of social media

during work hours (not lunch, breaks or personal time) or when using County devices or mobile devices should have no expectation of privacy.

§ 3-36-050 Restrictions on Access and Content

The County reserves the right to:

- A. Monitor employee postings made during work hours (not lunch, breaks or personal time) or when using County devices or mobile devices.
- B. Review content before it is posted by an employee during work hours (not lunch, breaks or personal time) or when using County devices or mobile devices and to modify, remove, or prohibit any messages or postings on County sites that the County deems to be inappropriate.
- C. Restrict or limit access or permission to post content on any site from County devices or mobile devices or for County business purposes at any time without cause or explanation. Appointing authorities may issue department specific limitations on posting to any site from County devices or mobile devices or for County business purposes that are more restrictive than this rule.

§ 3-36-060 Sanctions

Employees who engage in improper use of social media under this rule are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

REFERENCES

MCPR 3-10-20 Employee Responsibilities

MCPR 3-30 Code of Ethics

MCPR 3-35 Use of Information Technology

MCPR 3-40 Discrimination and Harassment-free Workplace