

1. **Purpose:**

This policy is a guide to professional and proper use of social media as a means of communication. This is an evolving communication media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) aimed at communication, photo and/or video sharing including internet forums, weblogs, microblogs, social blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other web-based and mobile communication systems. This policy aims to ensure personnel exercise good judgement, decency, and common sense both while representing City Utilities professionally and personally. This expectation applies while engaged in various online activities both on and off duty.

2. **Definitions:**

- a. **Social Media:** A category of internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor), photo and video-sharing apps (Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs and other news sites.
- b. **Content:** Any item posted such as, but not limited to, written work, photos, videos, etc.
- c. **Page/Profile:** The specific portion of a social media website or a mobile-based social app where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
- d. **Post:** Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- e. **Speech:** Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, video recordings or related forms of communication.

3. **Business Use of Social Media**

- a. Only employees authorized by the Director – Communications/Energy Services may use social media on behalf of City Utilities.
- b. The Communications and Energy Services Department retains full editorial control over all content on City Utilities' social media sites and, when necessary, will edit or remove material if deemed inappropriate or in violation of any other CU policy or procedure.
- c. Authorized users will not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, defamatory language, obscenities, or engage in any conduct that may discredit City Utilities when using social media sites in an official capacity.
- d. Authorized users will protect City Utilities' confidential and proprietary information and are prohibited from sharing information that is confidential or proprietary.
- e. Authorized users will respect copyrights, trademarks, patents, service marks, and other intellectual property rights. Proper credit for others' work must be clearly indicated.
- f. Authorized users will not share usernames and passwords with non-authorized users. Usernames and passwords must be immediately changed if an authorized user has been removed or terminated.
- g. Content posted to City Utilities' social media sites is considered public record and is subject to the State of Missouri's public records laws.

4. **Personal Use of Social Media**

- a. Employees are not prohibited from having personal social media profiles, blogs, or websites.
- b. Employees are encouraged to share City Utilities' posts to their personal social media profiles and engage with City Utilities' content on social media. **Employees should not engage with negative comments on City Utilities' content.**
- c. When reference is made to or about City Utilities in a post or other content, the employee should ensure the post does not contain confidential information or verbiage that could discredit the employee or their employment as a City Utilities employee.
- d. Employees posting pictures or videos of workplace settings, whether publicly or privately, must ensure that all safety policies and protocols are followed by all persons in the photo or video, and no sensitive, confidential, or proprietary information or processes are included.
- e. Personal content that can be reasonably construed to represent City Utilities shall be accompanied by a disclaimer identifying that the content is the employee's thoughts/opinions, and not representative of City Utilities.
- f. Participation on publicly accessible internet postings, blogs, forums, electronic dating services, social networking sites, and similar websites, should be carefully considered for proper personal conduct. Employees may identify themselves as City Utilities employees; however, each member should consider that, as public utility employees, they are held to a high standard regarding standards of conduct and ethics. Employees should strive to prohibit the possible adverse consequences of internet postings. Employees shall not participate in any conduct that is likely to have an adverse effect on the reputation of City Utilities.
- g. Employees should be mindful that their posts and content become part of the worldwide electronic domain and the employee is solely responsible for the content they publish online, no matter the platform.

5. Social Media Community Guidelines

- a. It is the responsibility of authorized users to maintain and monitor City Utilities' social media community.
- b. Any threat made to or about City Utilities, its employees, or its facilities on any social media or online platform will be investigated to the full extent of the law.
- c. Comments or speech that may be regulated, blocked, hidden, or deleted:
 - i. Obscenity
 - ii. Defamation
 - iii. Threats (communicated intent to inflict harm or loss on another)
 - iv. Spam
 - v. Illegal activities
 - vi. Links to malware
 - vii. Promoting illegal discrimination
- d. Prior to hiding or deleting any content, authorized users will ensure the content is archived.

6. Limitations

- a. No sexual, violent, racial, ethnically derogatory material, offensive comments, pictures, artwork, video, or other reference may be posted to any of City Utilities' official social media channels.
- b. Employees shall not post any material on the internet that discredits City Utilities or may adversely affect the efficiency or integrity of City Utilities.
- c. Employees should consider the possible adverse consequences of all internet postings.
- d. Employees are encouraged to seek the guidance of supervisors regarding any posting that may adversely reflect upon either City Utilities or upon the professionalism or integrity of the employee.

7. Violations

- a. Failure to comply with any of the contents stated herein may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.