



# Social Media Policy

September 2018



# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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## **Purpose Statement**

This document defines the social media policy for CITY OF LA MARQUE and establishes guidelines for the use of digital media by city staff, volunteers or any person representing the city.

For purposes of this policy, a social media account is a website or app offered to the public to provide audio, video, still-photo or written communication between other members of the public and/or representatives of certain groups, businesses, organizations or departments. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, LinkedIn, website blogs with commenting capabilities, forums and emergency notification services.

The definition of content as used in this policy refers to any written copy, photos, graphics, videos, live-video streams, comments or any form of communicative content exchanged between parties through social media.

City of La Marque leadership encourages use of social media to further the organizational goals and the missions of its departments, where appropriate. However, City of La Marque has an overriding interest in deciding what is “spoken” on its behalf on social media sites and how the city is represented online. Principles of ethics, etiquette and social responsibility, as well as City policy and directives from City leadership, apply to social media and social networking sites.

The Social Media Policy applies to City of La Marque’s established accounts and any new accounts created in the future.

# PROFESSIONAL USE POLICY

## PROFESSIONAL USE

The professional use policy refers to city employees managing City of La Marque profiles on behalf of the City of La Marque, its offices, departments or volunteer groups. All official City of La Marque communication through social media should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with the City of La Marque 's communications policies, standards, practices and expectations. City employees should be mindful that inappropriate use of official City of La Marque social networking platforms can be grounds for disciplinary action. Only authorized individuals may publish content to City of La Marque social media platforms, websites or digital communication mediums. Employees may not use official City of La Marque social media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions or to engage in private business activities.

### Creation, Approval and Registration:

- Requests for creation of any new social media groups, pages, profiles or accounts representing the City of La Marque, its departments, affiliated organizations, boards or commissions must be submitted to the Public Information Officer and approved by the City Manager.
- Accounts will be created by the Public Information Officer.
- If approved by the Public Information Officer, permissions will be granted for management of individual groups, pages, profiles and/or accounts to a designated social media site manager.
- Existing social media accounts of any social media groups, pages, profiles or accounts representing the City of La Marque, its departments, affiliated organizations, boards or commissions must be registered with the Public Information Officer and identify the designated social media site manager.
- All City of La Marque social media site managers must have a city-issued @cityoflamarque.org email address.
- All City of La Marque social media login credentials will be provided to La Marque Information Technology Department's password management service.

### City of La Marque social media accounts should:

- Be administered by only the designated social media site manager or Public Information Officer.
- Include City, department, board and/or commission identification.
- Display official City or department logo as profile image or title header.
- Create vanity URLs, customized profile links when applicable.
- Include contact information, complete profiles and accurate descriptions.
- Have any available profanity filters set to the highest setting.
- Adhere to journalist industry standards of the Associated Press Stylebook.
- Be included in the City's archiving software, if applicable.

## **Oversight and Enforcement**

Employees representing the City of La Marque through social media outlets or participating in social media features on City of La Marque websites must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in City of La Marque social media platforms, blogs, or other digital media features. Information must be presented following professional standards for excellent grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity and accuracy, and avoid jargon, obscure terminology or acronyms.

City of La Marque employees recognize the content they post on social media are public and may be perceived as official City of La Marque statements. Social media should not be used to circumvent other City of La Marque communication policies, including news media policy requirements. All social media analytics will be tracked by PIO and spot checks will be conducted.

### **City of La Marque employees may not publish information that includes:**

- Confidential information
- Copyright violations
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM

## **Community Sharing Policy**

Sharing is a fundamental function of social media. As a municipality, a high level of discretion is required. Sharing community news and events is allowed but it must meet the following guidelines:

- Contributes to quality of life for citizens of La Marque.
- Enhances the perception and overall image of La Marque.
- Promotes travel and tourism within the City of La Marque.
- Must not promote any political individual, group or cause.

## **Records Retention**

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the City of La Marque and its employees, and as such, communications may be public records subject to Texas Public Information Act. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (for example, digital text, photos, audio and video). The department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.

- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e. ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.
- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.
- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g. PDF).
- Each social media site manager shall have self-service, read-only access to search and produce relevant social media records to fulfill public information and legal discovery requests as needed.
- City of La Marque utilizes an automated archiving solution provided by ArchiveSocial or other similar provider to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill the above record retention requirements.

# EXTERNAL POLICY

## EMPLOYEE INTERACTION

Personal social networking profiles should remain personal in nature and may be used to share personal opinions. Performing city business from personal accounts is strictly prohibited. Following this principle ensures distinction between personal opinions and official City of La Marque statements.

### Prohibited Use

- Employees, elected officials and volunteers commenting, posting or participating in city business from personal social media profiles and/or devices is prohibited.
- Using city property, such as a city-issued cell phone, tablet or computer, for personal social media use is prohibited.
- The above actions are grounds for corrective action up to and including discharge from employment.

### Personal social networking profiles should not:

- Be used in any professional capacity in regard to City of La Marque business
- Be used to relay and/or conduct work-related information
- Be used to accomplish job functions
- Use City of La Marque e-mail account or password

## Protecting Personal Social Media Accounts

Using personal social media accounts or personal devices to conduct city business makes the information, conversation, comments and/or posts open record and susceptible to request for public information.

### Connecting with citizens and colleagues on social media

City employees are civil servants and are in the public eye. La Marque citizens sometimes attempt to connect with city employees and volunteers on social media. When you connect with work acquaintances on social media your, personal actions become public knowledge. This is discouraged unless the conversation is truly unrelated to City business.

### Listing City of La Marque as an employer

Social media platforms have the option to list your employer. Most create a hyperlink that leads to the City's official social media platforms. This connection creates an association with the city. If you list City of La Marque as your employer on social media, actions on your personal accounts reflect upon the City. To the extent that you are self-identified as a City employee, City

leadership assumes that the activity in forum will adhere to the Employee Handbook and the City's judgement of ethical behavior.

### **Privacy settings**

Most social media accounts are searchable, share basic demographic information and display a profile photo. Users have the capability to control what's shown. To keep your information as secure as possible from strangers or curious citizens, it is recommended that you avoid leaving profiles set to "public". Managing privacy settings, guarding personal information, managing apps and controlling timeline could be considered good tips for protecting your career and maintaining personal and professional separation.

## **CITIZEN INTERACTION (THIRD PARTY CONTENT); TERMS OF USE**

By posting or commenting on any social media account created by City of La Marque, you participate by your own choice, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information you provide therein. You further agree to the following terms of use:

- The City of La Marque maintains a social media accounts for the purpose of engaging and interacting with our community, providing relevant and timely community news, information and events, distribution of crime prevention and public safety tips, for urgent notifications of critical incidents which may affect residents, business owners and visitors of La Marque, Texas, and the surrounding communities.
- All social media accounts used by the City of La Marque are designated as Limited Public Forums. City staff welcomes a person's right to express his/her opinion and encourages posters to keep comments relevant to the topic in question. Posting of any content on any social media platform used by the City of La Marque, by any visitor, follower, subscriber or fan, constitutes acceptance of the terms of use described here in this policy.
- The City of La Marque social media accounts are intended to be "family friendly." When applicable, the City uses platform-provided content moderation/filtering options to limit foul or obscene content.
- City of La Marque "Friending" or "Liking" other business pages, city employees, local elected officials and organizations does not indicate an endorsement of any kind.
- A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of La Marque social media accounts is the opinion of the commentator or poster only. Publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of La

Marque, nor do such comments necessarily reflect our opinions or policies.

- City of La Marque does not allow posting of photos or videos by anyone other than members of staff.

### **Moderation of Third-Party Content**

All comments posted to any City of La Marque, Highland Bayou Park, La Marque Bayou Fest, La Marque City Marshal, La Marque Fire Department, La Marque Police Department, La Marque Public Library social media site are bound by each site's version of Community Standards. City of La Marque actively monitors its social media accounts and will remove inappropriate content as defined below, without prior notice, and as soon as possible. City staff shall reserve the right to remove and/or block anyone who posts inappropriate material as determined by the Public Information Officer and/or social media site managers.

The City of La Marque reserves the right to remove comments that are offensive or profane in nature. User-generated posts will be rejected or removed (if possible) when the content:

1. is off-subject or out of context
2. is a personal attack
3. is threatening, defamatory, harassing or discriminatory
4. contains obscenity, profanity or material that appeals to the prurient interest
5. contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information
6. violates the right to privacy
7. contains offensive terms that target protected classes
8. promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin
9. displays or describes conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law or encouragement of illegal activity
10. may reasonably interfere with, inhibit, or compromise law enforcement investigations, tactics, responses to incidents and/or the safety of La Marque Police Department staff
11. contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
12. incites or promotes violence or illegal activities
13. violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party
14. advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual
15. promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates

This is not an all-inclusive list. We further reserve the right to temporarily ban access to our social media accounts for repeated postings that contain off topic, offensive or profane remarks and to permanently ban access if such comments continue when access is reinstated. If you wish to contest the removal or hiding

of your content, or your denial of access ("banned") from our social media accounts, you may do so by contacting us at 409-938-9255 and requesting to speak with our Public Information Officer.

### **Records Retention**

City of La Marque social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to City of La Marque business, including communication posted by the City of La Marque and communication received from citizens, may be a public record.

### **Emergency or Non-Emergency Requests for City Services**

The posting of requests for assistance to social media accounts, regardless if it is of an emergency or non-emergency nature, is discouraged and will not guarantee timely response by the City of La Marque or any emergency service provider.

To report a concern, visit [concern.cityoflamarque.org](http://concern.cityoflamarque.org) and use the City of La Marque Request Tracker system. For after-hours Public Services emergencies, call La Marque Police Dispatch at 409-938-9269.

If law enforcement assistance is needed, please dial 911. If you wish to report a crime or information relevant to a crime, please call La Marque Crime Stoppers at 409-938-8477. You may remain anonymous if you wish.

### **Questions**

Should you have any questions in regard to items contained in these Terms of Use, please contact the City of La Marque's Public Information Officer at 409-938-9255.