

**IN.gov Governance Council  
Social Media Guidelines  
Guidelines Number: 14-01**



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**1. Purpose**

To establish usage guidelines of social media by executive branch agencies. Evolving technology and social media have created new communication opportunities with the public. Social media services, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. allow for interactive information sharing and collaboration. Social networking gives an opportunity to interact with the public and reach populations that do not consume traditional media.

**2. Scope**

This document is created as a baseline for state agency social media policies and/or guidelines. It is intended as a starting point and, where appropriate, supplemental to already existing agency-created social media policies.

This guideline applies to all executive branch employees and contractors creating or contributing to social media on behalf of State government both on and off the IN.gov domain.

**3. Responsibilities**

Agencies are responsible for the implementation and oversight of these social media guidelines. This applies to all State employees and contractors.

**4. Guidelines Statement**

1. Creating social media accounts should be a business decision based on an agency's specific needs, not a technology-based decision. Prior to creation of a social media account, agencies are required to complete the Social Media form and meet with the Social Media Committee for discussion and approval.
2. Privacy
  - 2.1. Each social media service has different privacy policies and agencies need to review the terms of service prior to creating an account, and periodically after account creation. The decision to accept a provider's terms of service is the responsibility of each agency – the State does not accept the terms on behalf of all state agencies.
  - 2.2. Content generated by state employees and third-party users on agency-managed social media accounts, profiles and pages is subject to the State's record retention policies and subject to the Access to Public Records Act.

2.3 No personally identifiable information, as defined by IC 4-1-6-1(b), or third-party e-mail addresses, without the account operator's consent, will be posted on state social media sites by employees.

2.4 The State is not responsible for personal content, as defined by IC 4-1-6-1(b) posted by other users and any such information is posted at his or her own risk. State personnel will remove personal information, such as Social Security numbers, address, phone number or driver's license numbers, when properly identified, but the State is not responsible for any damages caused by delays in removing the information.

### 3. Usage

3.1. Agencies that are using social media shall designate more than one employee to maintain a list of social media account(s), account user name(s) and password(s). Agencies are recommended to keep a list of employees with access to all social media accounts

3.2. Should an employee with administrative privileges to a social media account(s) be removed as administrator or leave employment, all passwords should be changed to maintain agency control. Passwords are recommended to meet the Indiana Office of Technology standards of security.

3.3. State personnel must not post any materials or images that are copyrighted.

### 4. Public commenting guidelines

4.1. Agencies may or may not provide a venue to allow commenting on social media platforms. If two-way communication is established, agencies must create commenting guidelines.

4.2. If two-way communication is allowed, it is recommended that agencies draft a formal process of vetting all replies generated by administrator participants.

4.3. If two-way communication is allowed, agencies should post commenting guidelines on the agency's website and on the social media outlet.

4.4. If comments do not follow established commenting guidelines, a record of these comments must be made before hiding or removing. These records are subject to the State's record retention policies and subject to the Access to Public Records Act.

4.5. Below, in Appendix A, is a sample of guidelines used by agencies already engaged in social media to moderate third-party comments. Agencies may want to consider any additional criteria that are agency-specific.

## 5. Exceptions

Agencies may create more specific guidelines or an agency-specific policy that build on these guidelines.

## **6. Related Policies or Documents**

Commission on Public Records retention schedule  
Commission on Public Records Electronic Records Policy  
De Minimus Use policy  
Information Resources Use Agreement  
Office of Technology Password Management  
Social Media Request Form

## Appendix A

### Sample Commenting Guidelines

Participants are encouraged to be civil and abide by the usage guidelines established by the social media service.

In addition, please be aware of the following:

- The agency monitors official sponsored social media accounts - including pages and profiles - but is not responsible for the content generated by third-party users.
- Comments, links and images posted by the public may not necessarily represent the views of the State or agency.
- Sharing of third party content, either via liking, sharing or re-tweeting, may not necessarily represent State or agency endorsement.
- Social media services may contain Website links and advertising from the social media platform. This does not constitute endorsement by the State or agency.
- If a third-party user posts copyrighted material that he or she does not have permission to use, the material will be removed upon notification.
- The agency does not allow profanity, obscenity, vulgarity, advertising or political campaigning in its social media efforts. Other posts that may be removed include hate speech, nudity, intellectual property of others and defamation against a person or people. Such content will be removed upon identification, but must be retained in accordance with approved record retention policies.
- The agency may also remove posts that do not follow established commenting guidelines, off-topic, excessively repetitive and/or disruptive to the online community and its social media efforts.
- Be aware that comments and discussions with state staff and officials via social media services are considered public record and will be retained according to approved records retention policies.
- Answers to questions from third-parties may not necessarily be correct.
- If a member of the public has an immediate concern about posted content, contact the agency's office either via telephone or e-mail.
- Third-party users should not disclose personal or financial information on social media services. Agency personnel will remove personal information, such as Social Security numbers or driver's license numbers, when identified, but the State or agency is not responsible for any damages caused by delays in removing the information.

Continuous violations of the above guidelines may result in the author being banned from the agency social media accounts. It may also result in an abuse report being filed with the social media service. Both banning and reporting of abuse may occur without warning and at agency discretion.