

Township of Lopatcong Social Media Policy

Social Media, Websites and the Release of Information

I. Employee Use of Social Media

Employees of the Township of Lopatcong and/or municipal departments are not permitted to maintain any social media accounts, including but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, GooglePlus, Instagram, Pinterest, which purport to relate to the Township of Lopatcong or a department thereof. Employees with personal social media accounts shall ensure that they are strictly personal in nature and in no way relate to Township business. They should be named appropriately so as not to be confused with an official Township account. If the Township Council and/or Township Administrator deem any social media account to be named improperly, the employee shall rename it immediately.

II. Township Website

Any employee or department who wishes to have information posted on the Township website shall first submit the information to their department head for approval. Once approved, the department head shall submit information to the Municipal Clerk for posting. The Township Council and/or the Township Administrator shall have the right to modify or refuse to post any information it deems objectionable or contrary to the interests of the Township. The Township Council and/or the Township Administrator shall have the right to delete or withdraw any information posted on its website at any time and for any reason.

III. Official Township Social Media Guidelines

The purpose of this social media policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media by Township officers and employees when engaged in Township business. Social media at this time refers to, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, GooglePlus, Pinterest and any other form of communication that is open to response or comment. Rules are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the Township are properly authorized and in correct form; and that the public is clearly and fully informed that a message received by the Township from the public by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

The objective of the use of social media by the Township or its departments is to expand and facilitate the dissemination of information from the Township to its residents, taxpayers and the general public.

1. This policy governs all social media use by or on behalf of the Township and/or its departments.
2. The Township shall have a single presence on each social media site approved for use. Any pages or sites created and/or maintained by an individual department or instrumentality of the Township require prior approval of the Township Council and/or Township Administrator, and shall comply with this Social Media Policy.
3. Township social media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the Township of Lopatcong and that they follow the Township's Social Media Policy.

4. The Township's Social Media Policy will be presented on the social media site either by means of a link back to the Township's website or published in its entirety on the social media site.
5. All Township use of social media, including use by departments or instrumentalities of the Township, are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Open Public Record Act (OPRA), First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws, and information security policies (if applicable) established by the Municipality, its departments, affiliated boards, commissions and authorities.
6. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the Municipality's official website.
7. Employees representing Municipal government on social media outlets must identify themselves by name, and when relevant, by role at the Municipality. All Municipal policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Municipality.
8. The designated municipal webmaster(s) shall monitor content on all social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message, and branding consistent with the goals of the Municipality.
9. No 'friending' or 'liking' or other special relationship between a Township account and a third person is permitted.
10. Social media sites are not to be used by the general public for making any official communications to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, giving notice required by any statute, ordinance or regulation (e.g. notice of claim). Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Township social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting such a communication.
11. The Municipal Webmaster(s) shall have the authority to remove any Prohibited Content (see below) from any Township social media site at any time, subject to archiving and retention requirements. See section IV. Comment Policies.
12. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time.

IV. Comment Policies

1. The Township of Lopatcong shall enact a 'No Comment' policy for of its social media sites. All comments posted by a member of the public on any Township of Lopatcong social media site will be removed.
2. The Township of Lopatcong reserves the right to deny access to Township of Lopatcong social media sites for any individual who violates the Township of Lopatcong's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
3. Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comments in violation of this policy.

V. Applicability

1. This policy shall apply to all Municipal agencies and departments as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency or official permitted by the Municipality to post on Municipal social media sites.

2. In the event of a dispute or disagreement as between the Township Council and the Township Administrator on the interpretation or application of any clause or the exercise of any right under the Social Media Policy, the decision of the majority of the Township Council shall be final.