

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established the following guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

"Social media" includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the County, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

GUIDELINES

The same principles and guidelines found in the County's merit rules apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind, not all speech of an employee is protected by the First Amendment. Speech is only protected if the statements touch on a matter of public concern; and even then, the employee's interest in the protected speech is balanced against the County's interest in regulating its workplace and efficiently providing services. For example, a statement by a government employee complaining about nothing beyond treatment under personnel rules is afforded no constitutional protection. Accordingly, conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of County employees or officials, or otherwise adversely affects members of the public or the County's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Carefully read these guidelines, the Code of Conduct, Confidential Information, Equal Employment Opportunity, Electronic Communications, and No Harassment policies, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, retaliation, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

The First Amendment does not require a public employer to tolerate an embarrassing, vulgar, vituperative, ad hominem attack, even if such an attack touches on a matter of public concern. If the manner and content of an employee's speech is disrespectful, demeaning, rude, and insulting, and is perceived that way in the workplace, the government employer is within its discretion to take disciplinary action. Examples of such conduct might include defamatory posts directed at officials, employees, contractors or vendors of the County; or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, age, gender, national origin, color, disability, religion or any other status protected by federal, state or local law or County policy.

Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. The Internet is immediate, nothing that is posted ever truly "expires." Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the County, County employees, County officials, or members of the public.

Maintain the confidentiality of confidential information and/or other information exempt from public disclosure.

Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to the County's website.

Express only *your* personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the County. Don't post photographs or videos of yourself county uniforms or items of clothing with the county's logo since it might lead to the misimpression that you representing the county.

Remember, when public employees make statements relating to their official duties, the employees are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the Constitution does not insulate their communications from employer discipline. If the County is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear

and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the County or people working on behalf of the County.

If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the County, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the County. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the County."

You must refrain from using social media while on working time or while using equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor, or other member of management; or consistent with the Electronic Communications Policy.

Do not use any the County's email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Employees are encouraged to report violations of this policy. The County prohibits retaliation against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Employees should not speak to the media on the County's behalf without contacting Community Information. All media inquiries should be directed to them.

Electronic mail

The County's electronic mail network is a method to communicate internal/external County government business. It should be used for this purpose only. All County employees should adhere to the county's communication policy and be mindful that all electronic mail is public record and subject to public inspection.

Electronic mail (e-mail) and public records

Volusia County's electronic mail (e-mail) system is for use to communicate internal and external County government business. Any writing – including electronic records – used to conduct the public's business is considered a public record and is subject to Florida Public Records Law. Therefore, e-mail is public information and is subject to public and news media scrutiny. Use of county cell phones or personal cell phones, personal computers or personal tablets used to conduct the public's business is considered a public record and is subject to Florida Public Records Law.

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact Human Resources.

Signature: *Toder Snipes*

Date: 1/12/13

Print Name: Toder Snipes

Employee ID #: 4997

Department/Division: Beach

Snipes

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