

## Mackenzie County

<b>Title</b>	<b>Social Media</b>	<b>Policy No:</b>	<b>ADM060</b>
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<b>Legislation Reference</b>	<i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i>
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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish process, and designate roles and responsibilities for social media use for Mackenzie County. Social media will be used to inform ratepayers of County business, services and events.

### **Policy Statement**

Mackenzie County supports the use of social media to further the strategic direction and goals of the organization. Social media is a tool that may be used to complement traditional communication and marketing methods. Mackenzie County recognizes that a social media presence contributes to the image of the County.

This policy sets out standards and principles for communicating in an online setting on behalf of the County. Additionally, the policy serves to protect the County's reputation and ensure there is a consistent and professional approach to how the corporation and its employees communicate County business to ratepayers via online forums and social media/networking sites.

### **Definitions**

**"Away message"** a pre-set message that is sent to users in response to a direct message sent to a social media page outside of regular business hours.

**"Users"** members of the public on a social media platform who engage with others and react to content that is published.

**"Direct Message"** a private message exchanged between two users of a social media platform.

**"Post"** a display of content in an online environment.

**“Social Media Platform”** an online service or software platform that focuses on sharing and commentary by providing users with a profile and means to connect with the public in the form of text, images, audio and video, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A specific type of online service that enables users to build, integrate or facilitate community interaction and user-generated content.

**“Social Media Designate”** an employee who has been granted the authority to post to, monitor, and manage Mackenzie County’s social media platforms on a routine basis.

**“Third Party Advertisements”** advertisements that have been developed and/or published by an organization other than Mackenzie County, and do not directly relate to County business.

### **General Guidelines:**

Adherence to the following guidelines should be maintained at all times while using the County’s social media platforms:

1. The Communications Coordinator will be appointed as the primary social media designate. In the absence of the Communications Coordinator, a secondary social media designate will be appointed to post to, monitor, and manage Mackenzie County’s social media accounts.
2. Social media designates will be responsible for managing, prioritizing, and formatting the content to be posted on the County’s social media platforms.
3. Messages posted on social media should be short and concise. A link directing users to an information source should be provided whenever possible. Information pertaining to County-specific business should include a link to the relevant source materials on the County’s website. Information taken from an external source should include a link to the original source material.
4. The County’s social media platforms will be monitored during the County’s regular business hours of Monday to Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or as otherwise required by the Emergency Response Plan.
5. Where applicable, an automated away message should be set to send to users who attempt to contact the County through direct messaging outside of the County’s regular business hours of Monday to Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The away message should include:

- a. a statement indicating that the social media platform in question is only monitored during the County's regular business hours;
  - b. the County's regular business hours;
  - c. the after-hours number to call if the request is urgent.
6. Mackenzie County employees may not represent the County using their personal social media accounts. Employees should make every reasonable effort to make it clear that any interactions on social media are carried out as private individuals.
  7. Mackenzie County will not comment, react to, or otherwise interact with other social media pages unless it is to share or promote relevant information as deemed appropriate by the social media designate.
  8. Employees are responsible for discussing any information intended for release to the public via social media with the appropriate director or manager before forwarding this information to the social media designate.
  9. When sending ad requests to the social media designate, staff must include their respective director/manager. Ads of any information that is intended for release to the public via social media should be approved by the director/manager.

**Internal Use Guidelines:**

1. Social media designates will be responsible for regularly reviewing comments and determining which comments warrant a response.
2. In general, only comments that ask a question that can be answered by directing the commenter to a particular publically available source of information should warrant a response. Responses may also be given to correct statements that include misinformation, directing the commenter to the source containing the correct information.
3. Responses should be written in plain language. Whenever possible bureaucratic or formal language and technical jargon should be avoided.
4. Professionalism should be maintained in all interactions. Social media designates should not engage in combative behavior.
5. Social media designates should consult with the department head if they are unsure of how to respond to questions, or if more information is needed.

### **Councillor Participation:**

1. When participating in discussions on social media, Councillors are permitted to comment on County social media postings provided they have adequately considered how their response meets the goals/plan of this policy.
2. When commenting on County social media posts, Councillors may use their official Councillor title to appear clear and concise to users.

### **Public Use Guidelines:**

1. Users of Mackenzie County's social media pages agree to participate at their own risk and will take personal responsibility for any information provided, and will be responsible for protecting their own privacy.
2. Mackenzie County reserves the right to delete comments that:
  - a. contain vulgar language or name-calling;
  - b. are personal attacks, offensive, or discriminatory;
  - c. contain spam, advertising, or include links to other sites;
  - d. are clearly off-topic and/or disruptive;
  - e. advocate illegal activity;
  - f. promote particular services, products, or political organizations;
  - g. infringe on copyrights or trademarks;
  - h. violate any of Mackenzie County's policies or bylaws
3. Where applicable, the ability for the public to post comments containing photos, videos, or other imagery on Mackenzie County's social media sites will be disabled. In the event that disabling this function is not an option, Mackenzie County reserves the right to immediately remove any such material if deemed inappropriate as outlined in this policy.
4. Upon the first offense of violating these guidelines, a user will be issued a warning via a private direct message indicating the violation.
5. If a user violates these guidelines a second time, they may be banned from interacting on Mackenzie County's social media page indefinitely.
6. A warning message issued to the user should include:

- a. a statement indicating that the user is in violation of the policy;
  - b. a copy of the offending comment;
  - c. a link to the policy with a reference to the section of the policy which the user has violated;
  - d. and reminder that a second offense will result in the user being banned from the platform indefinitely.
7. Any direct messages sent to users, including warning messages, will be considered received after 7 days, even if the message has not been marked as read.

**Communication on Social Media:**

1. Mackenzie County will be committed to responding to questions and concerns received through social media within two business days whenever possible.
2. Direct messages sent to social media accounts will be treated as general correspondence.
3. The social media designate will respond to comments and messages as appropriate and will direct users to the appropriate source for information, forms, documents, or online services.
4. Exchanges that require private information or that cannot be answered easily online should be taken out of social media and brought into a more traditional channel of communication such as an email, phone call, or in-person meeting, when appropriate.

**External Sources of Information:**

1. Any public postings containing information obtained from an external source; that is, information coming from a source other than Mackenzie County, should include a direct link to the source of that information.
2. Mackenzie County will not share third-party advertisements that are not of benefit or relevance to Mackenzie County residents. Any requests from external organizations asking Mackenzie County to participate in advertising for third parties should be reviewed by the social media designate in consultation with the CAO or designate. The social media designate and CAO or designate, will determine whether a third-party advertisement is deemed appropriate for dissemination on Mackenzie County's social media pages.

3. Ad copy for all third party advertisements, including infographics, illustrations, captions, or otherwise, must be authored by the third parties themselves, and provided to the social media designate, electronically. A link to more information on the subject matter of the advertisement must also be provided.
4. Any non-profit group may approach the social media designate to request an ad for public posting, ideally sharing from the group's social media page is preferred. An emailed poster or verbiage will also be considered for posting. Non-profit groups are well known groups within the Mackenzie County area offering assistance, activities or information pertinent to interested groups of people.

**Establishing and Closing Social Media Accounts:**

1. The CAO is responsible for approving the establishment or closure of any social media accounts.

**Policy Enforcement:**

1. The CAO is responsible for ensuring that this policy is enforced.

**Related Policies/Procedures:**

HR001 – Employee Code of Conduct

ADM052 – Electronic Access and Acceptable Use Policy

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Resolution Number</b>
<b>Approved</b>	2023-01-25	23-01-085
<b>Amended</b>		
<b>Amended</b>		