



THE CITY OF BALCH SPRINGS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

The City of Balch Springs, Texas (“city”) has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the city through the use of Social Media sites (including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). This Social Media Policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use of social media by the City as means of conveying information about the City and its events and activities to its residents.

The intended purpose behind establishing City of Balch Springs, Texas Social Media sites is to disseminate information from the City, about the City, to its residents.

Nothing in this policy shall be applied to prohibit or infringe upon any communication, speech or expression that is protected or privileged under law. This includes speech and expression protected under state or federal constitutions as well as labor laws or other applicable laws.

GOALS

The City of Balch Springs, Texas aims to effectively use Social Media Accounts to:

- Provide information
- Support community engagement and outreach
- Support marketing and promotional campaigns
- Frame the public conversation around The City of Balch Springs
- Assist with recruitment efforts

Please be aware that when engaging with this agency through social media, you agree to the following...

GENERAL POLICY

1. City Social Media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the City of Balch Springs, Texas and that they follow the City’s Social Media Policy.
2. Wherever possible, City Social Media sites should link back to the official City of Balch Springs, Texas website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with the City of Balch Springs, Texas.

3. Department-designated Social Media Administrators will monitor content on City Social Media sites to ensure adherence to both the City's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the City of Balch Springs, Texas.
4. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the department-designated Social Media Administrator(s) for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
5. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
6. The city will approach the use of Social Media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.
7. The City of Balch Springs, Texas's website at <https://www.cityofbalchsprings.com> will remain the City's primary and predominant Internet presence.
8. All City Social Media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
9. City Social Media sites are subject to the Texas Public Information Act. Any content maintained in Social Media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure. For Public Records Act requests, please contact the City Secretary's office directly.
10. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Balch Springs, Texas may be removed.
11. Employees representing the City government via City Social Media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with all City policies.
12. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time.

COMMENT POLICY

1. As a public entity the City must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
2. Comments or content containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the City:
 - a) Comments not related to the business of the city (or specific Department if Department-specific Site), or not relevant to the original topic;

- b) Violent, profane, obscene or pornographic content and/or language;
 - c) Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or national origin;
 - d) Content that threatens or defames any person or organization;
 - e) Content that is hateful or incites violence;
 - f) Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to, advertising of any non-government related event, or business or product for sale;
 - g) Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
 - h) Encouragement of any illegal activity;
 - i) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
 - j) Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party
3. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Balch Springs, Texas Social Media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of Balch Springs, Texas, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Balch Springs, Texas.
4. The City of Balch Springs, Texas reserves the right to deny access to City of Balch Springs, Texas Social Media sites for any individual, who violates the City of Balch Springs, Texas's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
5. Departments shall monitor their Social Media Sites for comments requesting responses from the City and for comments in violation of this policy.
6. When a City of Balch Springs, Texas employee responds to a comment, in his/her capacity as a City of Balch Springs, Texas employee, the employee's name and title should be made available, and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other City employees.
7. All comments posted to any City of Balch Springs, Texas Facebook sites are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>, and the City of Balch Springs, Texas reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and

Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

8. All comments posted to any City of Balch Springs, Texas Twitter sites are bound by Twitter's Terms of Service, located at <https://twitter.com/tos>, and the City of Balch Springs, Texas reserves the right to report any violation of Twitter's Terms of Service to Facebook with the intent of Twitter taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

REPORTING/REMOVAL OF UNAUTHORIZED COMMENTS

The City requires that Department-designated Social Media Administrators immediately notify the City Manager's Office if there is any posted material that may be inappropriate, that violates this Policy, or any City policy, is illegal, or that potentially infringes the copyrights or other rights of any persons. The City Manager's Office will investigate and respond to all reports of potential violations of this Policy.

Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the sponsoring Department for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available. Upon removal of content, the Social Media Administrator shall notify the commenter that their response has been deemed inappropriate and removed due to inconsistency with the City's content requirements.

The City reserves the right, at any time and without prior notice, to deny access to the Social Media site to any individual who violates this Policy.

TERMS OF SERVICE

Each type of social media maintains a "Terms of Use" agreement. All comments posted to any City Social Media Site are bound by these Terms of Use and the City reserves the right to report any user violation.

MODERATION OF THIRD-PARTY CONTENT

The agency does not necessarily endorse, support, sanction, encourage, verify or agree with Third Party comments, messages, posts, opinions, advertisements, videos, promoted content, external hyperlinks, linked websites (or the information, products or services contained therein), statements, commercial products, processes or services posted on any Social Media Site.

This agency social media site serves as a limited public forum and all content published is subject to preservation and disclosure in accordance with Texas Public Information Act.

User-generated posts may be rejected or removed when the content includes any of the following:

- Incitement of violence or violent behavior

- Defamation or spread of misinformation
- Copyrighted or commercial material
- Fraudulent material or accusations
- Obscene or illegal material.

We do not allow information intended to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems. You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.

RETENTION

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the Agency and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records

These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (e.g. digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule.

EMERGENCY POSTINGS

Social media sites are not monitored 24/7. If there is an emergency, contact 911.

References:

- Institute for Local Government > <https://www.ca-ilg.org/post/sample-social-media-policies>
- City of South San Francisco, Ca: Social Media Policy > <https://www.ssf.net/departments/city-manager/communications/connect-with-us/social-media-policy>
- City of South San Francisco, Ca: Social Center > <https://www.ssf.net/departments/city-manager/communications/connect-with-us/social-media-center>
- ArchiveSocial Sample Policy