

BOROUGH OF RIVER EDGE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this social media policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media by Borough, entities. Rules are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the Borough are properly authorized and in correct form; that communications to the Borough by means of social media which can be viewed by the public are appropriate and pertinent; that all communications to the municipality are directed to the proper recipient; and that the sender is clearly and fully informed that a message received by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

Objective

The objective of the use of social media by Borough entities is to expand and facilitate communication between the Borough and its residents, taxpayers and the general public.

Definitions

“Social media” shall include, but not be limited to Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Google Plus, Instagram, and any other form of communication that is open to response or comment and shall extend to and include all future forms of social media.

“Borough-related information” shall refer to comments, information, articles, pictures, photos and other images. Content on Borough-created social media sites such as Nixle and reverse 911 may only be posted by duly authorized personnel.

“Borough entity” shall refer to boards, commissions, committees, departments, and any other group organized or created by the Borough or reporting to it.

Policy

1. This policy governs all social media use by or on behalf Borough entities and authorized user(s) as determined by the regulated entity and designated as such to the Borough Administrator and/or Borough Clerk.
2. This Social Media Policy shall be posted on the official Borough website, www.riveredgenj.org.

3. Social media shall be used solely to convey information about the entity posting it. No personal information or personal opinions shall be posted.
4. All Borough presence and activity on social media are an integral part of the Borough's information networks and must comply with the rules and policies governing the Borough's computers and electronic media, including but not limited to any applicable Municipal Internet Access and Use Guidelines.
5. All use of social media, must comply 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 Borough or the respective entity.
6. The Borough social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the Borough, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, requesting an inspection, giving notice required by any statute, by ordinance or regulations such as but not limited notices of claim. Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Borough social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting official communications.
7. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the Borough's official website www.riveredgenj.org.
8. If a social media site is frequently in violation of this Policy, it shall be permanently deleted.
9. Any employee or volunteer found to have violated any aspect of this Policy shall be banned from having a presence on social media for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Borough Council.
10. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Municipality's internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrator will be denied access to the sites. Any illegal activity shall be reported to the appropriate authorities.
11. The Municipality shall have a single presence on social media sites deemed appropriate for use by the governing body. Upon application in a form created by and submitted to the Borough Administrator and/or Borough Clerk, Borough entities may maintain a separate social media presence when deemed appropriate. Such request shall not be required to be very extensive, but shall contain enough information for the Borough Administrator and/or Clerk to assess the need for such social media presence, its purpose, and its compliance with this policy. The request shall also set forth the person or persons responsible for and authorized to post content on such sites and accounts. No

Municipal social media site established under this policy shall be established without prior approval of the Borough Administrator and/or Borough Clerk.

12. Any Borough entity, that receives permission create or use social media shall clearly state that it is authorized to do so by the Borough and that it follows this Social Media Policy.

13. The Municipality reserves the right to deny access to its social media sites for any individual, who violates this Policy, at any time and without prior notice.

14. All Municipal social media sites and all data and comments stored and communicated through the Municipality's social media sites remain the property of the Municipality, including the list of all the followers and friends generated by each of the Municipality's social media sites.

15. Any Borough entity using a social medium shall designate a member(s) of that department to post and monitor the site for comments requesting responses from The Borough and for comments in violation of this policy

A list of individuals that will have administrator and/or posting rights shall be provided to the Borough Administrator and/or Borough Clerk.

If a person who created the social medium site leaves a Borough Entity the passwords and/or access codes to the site shall be changed and a new authorized user be identified. This new information shall be filed with the Borough Administrator and/or Borough Clerk within two days of the change.

16. It shall be determined by each Borough entity as to whether they shall allow comments from the general public to be posted onto the social media site. Should the entity allow comments from the general public, the following guidelines are applicable:

- (a) A comment posted by a member of the public on any Borough 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 Borough, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Borough.
- (b) The Borough social media sites are not to be used for making any official requests to the Borough that would be applicable under the Open Public Records Act (OPRA). Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Borough social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for requesting official communications in accordance with OPRA.

17. Comments by the general public on limited public social media forums as set forth herein must be consistent with provisions of this policy. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on any type of Municipal social media site and are subject to editing, removal or restriction, in whole or in part, by the relevant department/division representative or their designee:

1. Comments not topically related to the particular social medium thread or topic or article being commented upon;
2. Profane, obscene, or sexual language or content or links to such language or content;
3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation or other characteristics protected by state or federal law;
4. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
5. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
6. Threats to any person or organization;
7. Conduct that violates any federal, state, or local law; or
8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

(c) If comments are related to the topic at hand, then the content must be allowed to remain, regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable to the Borough.

18. Authorized employees designated with posting/response privileges shall provide by name and title, and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Borough employees.

19. Borough entities are restricted from using the Borough's website, social media sites or accounts for personal use or gain.

20. Borough entities must not reveal or publicize confidential municipal information. Confidential, proprietary, or sensitive information may be disseminated only to individuals with a need and a right to know such information, and where there is sufficient assurance that appropriate security of such information will be maintained. Such information includes, but is not limited to, personnel information, medical records, criminal history information, confidential informant identification, and intelligence and tactical operations files, and attorney-client privileged information.

21. All comments, articles and the like posted on social media by Borough entities and their members must be civil and unbiased. The following content is prohibited and subject to removal:

- a. Comments unrelated to the particular post being commented upon;

- b. Comments that promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- c. Comments containing vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations;
- d. Obscene or sexually suggestive or explicit content or links to obscene or sexual content;
- e. Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity;
- f. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- g. Comments from children under 18 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a Borough media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 18 years old;
- h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- i. Content that incites violence;
- j. Photographs or videos of minor children without a signed waiver of the child's parent and/or guardian;
- k. Personal information of a person other than the poster;
- l. Spamming or repetitive content;
- m. Solicitation of political support or political contributions;

22. The Borough Administrator shall evaluate reports of violation of this policy and has the discretion to require the removal of item(s) subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements. When directed by the Administrator, the authorized user(s) shall remove the designated content immediately.

Should the authorized user(s) feel aggrieved by the actions of the Administrator, they shall have the opportunity to bring the matter for discussion before the Personnel subcommittee.

Refusal to comply with the directive of the Administrator may result in the authorized user(s) from being permitted access to Borough Social media and the Mayor and Council reserve the right to terminate authorization of continued use of social media by a Borough Entity.

23. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Borough's Mayor and Council.