



# *Social Media Policy*

Adopted:  
Resolution #

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## **Introduction**

Lee County has a business need to augment traditional communication methods with the use of social media channels. The use of social media presents opportunity and risk to the County and individual County departments. In general, the County supports the use of social media to further County and department missions and goals.

The County endorses the secure use of social media technology to enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity improvements. However, their application must not compromise data confidentiality and integrity. The same standards of conduct, principles and guidelines that apply to Lee County employees in the performance of their assigned duties apply to employee social media technology use. This document establishes countywide social media use policies, protocols and procedures intended to mitigate associated risks from use of this technology where possible.

Elected Lee County Departments may have their own implemented Social Media Policies already in place. In those cases, this document provides supplemental direction and guidance to be used at the Elected Department Heads discretion.

## **Section 1 – Governing Principles of Social Media Use**

### **1-1 Authorized Personnel and Equipment**

Only personnel authorized may establish, use, or administer social media accounts in the name of or on behalf of Lee County or County department. This requirement applies regardless of whether the account is established, accessed, or used by means of County information systems or by means of the employee's or others information systems, and regardless of whether the account is established, accessed, or used from Count or non-County premises.

Authorized personnel shall use only County approved equipment to post and monitor Lee County related social media, unless they are specifically authorized to do otherwise. Requests to post information over Lee County social media by personnel who are not authorized to post should be made through the Department Heads.

Employees, Board Members, or any County Representative must report unauthorized use of County social media or County social media accounts to its Department Head.



## 1-2 Social Media Use

Social media accounts established by the County, or any Lee County department, are to be used for County and department business purposes only. All profiles and County social media accounts should be clearly identified as official Lee County assets, using the County or Department logo as the identifying image. All social media accounts shall have Lee County contact information prominently displayed, including physical address, phone numbers, business hours, etc. All profiles and County social media accounts must prominently display links to the Lee County official website: [www.leecountyil.com](http://www.leecountyil.com).

All social media accounts are required to have two-factor authentication and passwords of at least 12 characters in length.

No County department may establish, use, or terminate a social media identity, account, profile, page or site (collectively, social media account(s)) without the approval of the Department Head.

Use of communications and postings of third-party advertising or political information is prohibited. Third-party advertising will be removed or disabled on official County social media pages. If this is not possible, a statement should be added to the effect that the County does not authorize or endorse any advertisement on the site.

No information or link (hyperlink) to any internet site or other materials or communications may be posted, or approved for posting, on a County social media outlet that is not directly related (as determined by its Department Head) to the goals, values, legal considerations and services and business objectives of Lee County.

## 1-3 Content Guidelines

Established guidelines for authorized content in the Lee County Social Media Policy is crucial to ensure that the messages shared align with the goals, values, and legal considerations of Lee County, Illinois. Content should be verified with Department Heads or through the department's authorized media personnel. If there is a question regarding if content is authorized to be posted, please contact your Department Head. Below are content guidelines for Lee County:

### **Accurate and Timely Information:**

- Ensure that all information shared is accurate, up-to-date, and reflects the current status of events, initiatives, or services provided by the County and its departments.

### **Public Service Announcements (PSAs):**

- Authorized dissemination of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that provide important information, alerts, or updates related to public safety, health, or other critical matters.

### **Community Events and Services**

- Promote and share information about community events, services, and programs offered by Lee County, fostering county engagement and awareness.

### **Policy and Legislative Updates**

- Share updates on County policies, legislative actions, and decisions to keep the public informed about governance and decision-making processes.

### **Recognition and Achievements**

- Authorized recognition of County employees, volunteers, and community partners for their achievements, contributions, and positive impacts on the county.

### **Engagement and Interaction**

- Encourage interaction and engagement with the county community by responding to comments, inquiries, and messages promptly and professionally.

### **Avoidance of Partisan or Political Content**

- Lee County prohibits the sharing of content that is partisan, politically biased, or supports specific political candidates or parties. Lee County's social media should remain neutral and non-political.

### **Crisis Communication**

- Authorized content and communication in the event of crises or emergencies, the County can use social media to disseminate critical information and instructions.

### **Consistency Across Platforms**

- Maintain consistency in messaging and branding across all Lee County social media platforms to present a cohesive and professional image of County.

### **Sensitive Information**

- Lee County prohibits posts or commenting on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties with which the County may be in litigation, pending contracts, building or IT security information, or personal matters.

## Section 2 – Record Management

### 2-1 Social Media Records

All social media communications made on official Lee County Illinois accounts are subject to public records laws, including the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). As such, it is imperative to recognize that posts, comments, direct messages, and other interactions on these platforms may be accessible to the public upon request.

### 2-2 Record Retention

This section outlines recommendations for social media record retention. The Lee County IT Department does not have an internal mechanism or service for backing up social media posts.

Social media records should be archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are requested.

When a department posts copies of existing records to the social media platform for reference purposes, these postings are not considered records because they are copies of existing records. Non-records postings can be added and removed by the agency under its posting policy and any applicable statute. However, if a department chooses to place original records or communications on social media, these become subject to the department's existing retention schedule.

Example of a Record Series for managing social media postings by a County department:

#### SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS AND POSTING LOG

Dates: 2023 –

Volume: 1 Cu. Ft. – 1 MB

Annual Accumulation: 5 Cu. Ft. – 5 MB

Arrangement: Chronological

Recommendation: Retain for three years after posting to social media site.

This record series consists of official department information sent to the public via the department's official accounts on social media vendor websites such as, but not limited to: Facebook, Messenger, Twitter and YouTube. Social media information does not include generic referrals to customer services or links to the department's website and general information already provided on the media platform.

Retention: Retain for three calendar years after date of posting to a social media platform, then destroy in a secure manner or, delete from system provided all audits have been completed, if necessary, and no litigation is pending or anticipated.

There is no statutory requirement under either the Local or the State Records Acts to retain the *social media platform* in its entirety in the form of a screen-capture or through additional digital storage services as a record.

## Section 3 – Public Digital Policy

### 3-1 Digital Policy

The below Public Digital Policy must be posted on each social media account established and maintained by Lee County, whenever such capability exists. The Public Digital Policy shall also be posted to [www.leecountyil.com](http://www.leecountyil.com) and individual department websites or pages for easy access:

Many Lee County offices have official social media accounts, and all fall under this general Lee County policy unless otherwise stated. Lee County endeavors to post this policy on all accounts where applicable. However, for social media platforms where it is difficult to post a full policy, Lee County will link to this page, which serves as the posting.

Our social media sites are not monitored 24/7. Please call or text 911 in an emergency.

The intent of official Lee County social media accounts is to serve as a communications tool between Lee County departments and the public. Lee County department staff and/or specific department personnel associated with the social media account are the sole administrators of our sites. This social media policy includes Terms of Use, Prohibited Content, and Disclaimers.

### Terms of Use

As a communications tool, Lee County shall utilize its various social media accounts to raise awareness among Lee County and neighboring residents and visitors, community partners, and interested fans and followers of the County's offices. These sites may include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, YouTube, Threads, and Twitter/X. Social media sites grant Lee County an additional opportunity to share messages with the public. The public is encouraged to share comments, ideas, and concerns. Lee County's social media sites shall comply with all applicable County of Lee policies and procedures.

Note that information, including personally identifiable information, that public members voluntarily submit to or publish on a Lee County page of a third-party site may be treated as public information.

Lee County reserves the right to edit or delete its own content for want of clarity, addition of information, correction of typographical fault, correction of scrivener's error, or other relative circumstances.

Lee County staff shall be the sole determining party when it comes to the execution of this policy. This policy is not intended to supersede the policies of third-party hosts, however, but is intended to supplement the platforms' expectations.

## **Prohibited Content**

The intended purpose of Lee County's social media sites is to serve as one of multiple vehicles of communication between Lee County and the public. Prohibited information, posts, tagged content, messages, photos, videos, graphics, and comments shall not be allowed and may be removed from the site. Subsequent prohibited posts by an individual will lead to that individual being blocked from the site. Such content includes the following:

1. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates illegal discrimination of protected status under the law.
2. Obscene content or links to obscene content
3. Violent content or links to violent content or information that may compromise the safety and security of the public or public systems
4. Solicitations of funds, commercial promotions, or advertising
5. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party (such as copyrighted materials, art, or other intellectual property)
6. Personal information including but not limited to e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, mailing addresses, medical information, identification numbers, passwords, or other personally identifiable information (PII)
7. Content containing links to malware, viruses, and/or malicious content that affects the normal functioning of a computer system, server, or browser
8. Defaming content or comments that are patently false assertions of facts

## **Compliance**

Lee County's social media sites are subject to the Local Records Retention Act. Social media content is considered Administrative Files under the County's records retention schedule and has a 3-year retention policy.

## **Disclaimer**

Lee County is not responsible or liable for any user materials or content posted in violation of this policy. Lee County shall make reasonable efforts to remove said materials during business hours but disclaims liability if circumstances exist that prevent or hinder efforts to remove said materials, including if the amount of discussion becomes an undue burden to monitor or the timeliness of the comments are no longer relevant.

Lee County does not endorse nor otherwise support or sponsor any advertising that may be posted by a social media platform on our pages. Lee County following another page also does not necessitate support nor endorsement. The views expressed by members of the public on official pages maintained by Lee County on third-party social media websites and applications do not reflect the official views of the Lee County government nor does Lee County guarantee the accuracy of such information posted by members of the public on those websites.





Social media platforms are privately operated, and the terms and conditions of individual platforms apply as governed by the platform itself. Lee County does not guarantee the reliability or accuracy of any third-party links. Lee County reserves the right to remove, at its discretion, any comment or conversation that is prohibited by this Digital Policy.