

Using County Social Media

Effective Date: 03/04/2013; revised 01/17/14, 07/21/21



[POL AD154 420Z](#)

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media pages managed by Whatcom County and for county employees who contribute to social networks on behalf of the County for County business purposes.

For the purpose of this policy, the term “**social media**” is defined as blogging, social networking, video sharing and other forms of electronic communication.

1. Whatcom County Uses Social Media for Public Service and County Business

Whatcom County operates and maintains its social media pages as a limited public forum to provide information and communicate about County programs, services, projects, issues, events, and activities to the public and our agency partners both within and outside Whatcom County.

2. County Executive Authorizes Whatcom County Social Media Sites

The County Executive will review [Social Media Site Requests](#) and sign off on approved requests.

3. Social Media Pages Follow Standard County Template and Guidelines

4. Department Head Authorizes Site Maintenance Within Current Staffing and Pay Range

5. Only Authorized Persons May Post Content to Whatcom County Sites

6. Whatcom County Moderates Interactivity

If the Department Head allows commenting on the department’s social media site, he or she (or designee) will regularly monitor and remove (if possible) or reject user-generated posts when the content:

- Is off-subject or out of context
- Contains offensive terms that target protected classes
- Contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information
- Contains obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest
- Is threatening, harassing or discriminatory
- Incites or promotes violence or illegal activities
- Contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
- Advertises or promotes a commercial product or service or any entity or individual
- Promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates

The County Executive, or designee, will provide guidance and periodically monitor and remove content for policy compliance.

7. Whatcom County Treats Social Media Content as Public Record

Whatcom County social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to Whatcom County business, including communication posted by Whatcom County or received from citizens is a public record. The department maintaining the site is responsible for responding to all requests for public records.

8. Whatcom County Prohibits Certain Activities When Using Social Media

Employees may NOT publish information on social media sites that include:

- Confidential information.
- Copyright violations
- Profanity, racist, sexist or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM.