

City of Gladstone Work-Related Social Media Use Policy

4/23/10 Draft

While in the Course & Scope of Employment

The City of Gladstone acknowledges the growing popularity of Weblogs or “blogs” and other public Internet communications as a means for sharing professional and work-related experiences, ideas and information. However, because of the legal and other possible ramifications that may stem from publicly posting information, the following policy has been adopted regarding blogging and public Internet communications during work hours. All use of social networking sites by city employees on city time must be used for legitimate city business purposes and consistent with applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations, as well as department and city policies. Employees are provided access to computers and the Internet to assist them in performing their job duties.

Employees do not have an expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the City’s computer equipment, network, or Internet connection. The City also restricts the connection of personally owned computer equipment to the City’s system for Internet activity. The City monitors individual Internet access records from time to time and any abuse discovered subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

All City-related communications through blogs and social media are to remain professional in nature and must be conducted in accordance with the City’s Computer Procedure and Ethics Policy. Employees must not, while on City time, use City resources to post blogs nor access social networking sites to conduct private commercial transactions or engage in private business activities. Employees are expected to exercise good judgment and common sense in all electronic communications. Inappropriate use of social media and public Internet communications with City equipment or on City time may be grounds for disciplinary action. If a social media or blog account is used for City-related business, its entire content -both personal and job-related - is subject to this policy.

When creating social media or blog accounts that require individual identification, City employees are to use their actual name, not pseudonyms. (an exception is allowed for Public Safety Department employees engaged in legitimate and approved law enforcement investigations). Any employee using his or her name as part of a City application of social media or blogging must adhere to the following:

- Identify yourself and write in the first person. If an employee is expressing personal opinions, it must be made clear that the employee is speaking for him or herself and not on behalf of the City of Gladstone.

- Communication using City equipment or conducted on City time may be considered a public record subject to monitoring and disclosure to third parties.
- Different passwords are to be used for different accounts (both social media network accounts and existing mainframe accounts).
- Employees must make themselves aware of the Terms of Service (TOS) of the particular form of media. Each form of social media has its own unique TOS that regulates how users interact. Any employee using a form of social media on behalf of the City is to consult the most current TOS in order to avoid violations.
- The City's logo, letterhead or other material, including a photograph of yourself wearing or displaying the City's logo, are not to be communicated via social media unless prior authorization is obtained from the appropriate department director. No photographs of other City employees are to be included on social media without the express approval of the photographed employee.
- Employees are not to share confidential information on social media.
- Social media postings by employees that reflect negatively on the City, its employees, citizens, or that otherwise violate city policies will not be tolerated and will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.
- The City of Gladstone's equal employment opportunity policy and its policies prohibiting sexual or other harassment apply fully to use of the Internet, including social media and blogging. Employees are not to include any form of profanity, obscenity, image or language that is discriminatory, defamatory, libelous or slanderous in nature, or that violates copyright laws.

Personal Blogs & Online Posts Policy

The City of Gladstone recognizes that some of our employees may choose to express themselves by posting personal information on the Internet through personal websites, social networking sites, Weblogs or "blogs" or other public Internet communications. We value our employees' creativity and honor your interest in these forms of personal expression on your own time, should you choose to do so. However, problems may arise when a personal posting identifies or appears to be associated with the City, or when a personal posting is used in ways that violate the City's rights or the rights of other employees.

No Posting Using City Resources

An employee may not use City resources to engage in activities that create or maintain a personal blog, a personal website, or to upload data or to make personal postings online, nor may you engage in any such activities while on City time.

Guidelines for Online Posting

You may be legally responsible for content you post to the Internet, in a blog or otherwise. You may be held personally liable for defaming others, revealing confidential or proprietary information and for copyright infringements, among other things.

All City of Gladstone policies apply to anything you write in a personal blog, post to the Internet, or upload to the Internet while on City time and when using City resources. For example, you may not use personal postings to harass or threaten other employees or to reveal confidential information.

If, in the process of making a personal post or upload on the Internet, you identify yourself as an employee of the City of Gladstone, whether by explicit statement or by implication, you must clearly state that the views expressed in your post, at your blog or website are your own, and do not reflect the views of the City.

Please keep in mind that your personal postings may be read not only by your friends and family, but possibly by your coworkers and supervisors, as well as the residents of the City and the news media. Even if you post anonymously or under a pseudonym, your identity may be discovered relatively easily. It is expected that you will use common sense when deciding what to include in a post or comment. It is inadvisable to post something that you wouldn't want these people to read.

I acknowledge that I have received my personal copy of the City of Gladstone's Work-Related Social Media Use Policy, effective May 2010. I understand that it is my responsibility to read the policy and to abide by the rules, policies, procedures and standards as outlined in the Work-Related Social Media Use Policy. I also understand that violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures up to and including termination.

Employee Signature

Date