

# **City of Springfield, Illinois Social Media Policy**

## **I. Statement of Purpose**

The City of Springfield's presence on social media sites is intended for informational purposes only. The City of Springfield, Illinois believes that the use of social media platforms can effectively broaden the reach of government communication to its constituents and foster a dynamic environment for social discourse. The use of social media by the City of Springfield, Illinois is to convey or obtain information that is useful to or will further the goals of, this local government. If you wish to contact the City of Springfield, please visit the City's official website at <https://www.springfield.il.us> or call the City at 217-789-2000.

**ALWAYS CALL 9-1-1 TO REPORT EMERGENCIES. THIS SITE IS NOT MONITORED BY THE CITY ON A 24/7 BASIS. DO NOT POST WARNINGS OR NOTICES REGARDING EMERGENCIES OR URGENT/DANGEROUS SITUATIONS ON THIS SITE.**

## **II. Administration of Accounts**

The City's official website is maintained and monitored by City staff to ensure that posted comments are constructive and suitable for all readers while respecting a range of opinions and points of view. Content posted by a member of the public is the opinion of that individual only, and its presence on this site does not imply the endorsement, agreement, or necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Springfield.

## **III. Public Content Policy**

Social media platforms not only provide the government with a communications venue but often allow for public comments to be posted to the City's sites. Any comment made by a member of the public as a social media user is that user's opinion only. Publication of the comment does not imply endorsement or agreement by the government nor reflect the opinions or policies of the government.

City social media sites are not public forums. This site may or may not allow the public to post comments or otherwise add content to the City's page. If this site allows comments, it is considered a "limited public forum" and the City may place reasonable restrictions in light of the purpose served by the forum.

The following enumerated list of the content **shall not be permitted** on the City's social media platforms and such content is subject to removal and/or restriction by the administrator. Content that:

1. Obscene, libelous, malicious, offensive, threatening, profane, or defamatory language, symbols, videos, or images.

2. Personal attacks, threats, or hate speech.
3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination in violation of the City of Springfield's Code of Ordinances or applicable law.
4. Advertising or promotion of a commercial business or enterprise.
5. Comments falling outside the scope of the topic under discussion.
6. Content containing personal information (i.e. birthdates, social security numbers, personal phone numbers, etc.), confidential, or other sensitive information.
7. Content of a sexual nature.
8. Content that breaches any law, confidentiality, copyright, or intellectual property rights.
9. Comments in support of, or opposition to, any political campaign, candidate, or ballot measure.
10. Content promoting or encouraging any illegal activity.
11. Content promoting or denigrating religion, atheism, or any spiritual belief.
12. Content exchanges between public officials in violation of the State's Open Meetings Act.

Each particular private social media enterprise maintains a "Terms of Use" agreement. All comments posted to any City social media platform are bound by those Terms of Use agreements and the City reserves the right to report any user violation to the respective enterprise.

The City of Springfield, Illinois reserves the right to remove content from, or deny access to, any government social media platforms if any individual or organization violates the Social Media Use Policy.

Anyone posting comments which violate this Terms of Use Policy may be prohibited from future participation.

#### **IV. Compliance with Laws**

The City's official social media resources are subject to the State of Illinois' Freedom of Information Act. With only certain limitations, content on official social media resources are public records and subject to public disclosure. Illinois state law and relevant City record retention policies apply to social media content. As official City records, social media content shall be preserved and retained in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record.

All-City social media platforms shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. Content posted on any City social media platform by any user is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and record retention laws and may be subject to e-discovery laws. Property that is protected by copyright or trademark should not be posted or maintained on a social media platform in violation of the owner's legal interest.

## **V. Employee Usage of Private Social Media**

The City of Springfield, Illinois recognizes that social media creates opportunities for community engagement, interpersonal connection, and self-expression, but it also creates risks and responsibilities. Everyone should assume that a colleague, supervisor, partner, supplier, or member of the public whether on a business or personal account could view any use of social media.

1. Therefore, any social media activity of the government employee that adversely affects the employee's job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of the City of Springfield or the City of Springfield's legitimate business interests, standing and reputation and/or strategic goals may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. In particular, department personnel is prohibited from the following:
  - a. Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, and religion, or any protected class of individuals.
  - b. Speech involving themselves or other department personnel reflecting behavior, which would violate the City of Springfield Employment Policies.
  - c. The personal use of any audio/video recording device, (such as tape recorders, cameras, camera phones, tablets - small portable computers activated by touching the screen, drones, smartphones, computers, etc.) on city premises is prohibited without the express prior permission of senior management and of the person(s) subject to recording. Video or audio recording in restrooms and/or locker rooms is forbidden.
2. Disclosure of confidential government information, sensitive information or personal information relating to government officials and employees, or members of the public, is prohibited.
3. It is requested that employees who identify themselves as employees of the City of Springfield, Illinois post a disclaimer on their own personal social media platforms that any posts or blogs are solely the opinions of the employee and not the employer.

4. Employees of the City shall not use employer equipment to access their private social media or use private devices to access their private social media during hours of employment.

## **VI. Disclaimer**

The City of Springfield, Illinois reserves the right to update this Terms of Use Policy at any time. The City of Springfield does not warrant or make representations or endorsements as to the quality, content, suitability, accuracy, or completeness of the information, text, images, video, graphics, hyperlinks, or other items contained on a social media site's server or any other server. Such materials have been compiled from a variety of sources and are subject to change without notice. The City's primary and predominant Internet presence is the City's official website at <https://www.springfield.il.us> and no other website or social media site shall characterize itself as such.

Except to the extent required by law, commercial use of the materials on this site are prohibited without the written permission of the City. Some of the links on the City's social media pages may lead to resources outside the control of the City of Springfield. The presence of these links should not be construed as an endorsement by the City of these sites or their content. The City is not responsible for the content of any such external site.

Except to the extent required by law, communications made through and comments made on the City's social media pages shall in no way be deemed to constitute legal notice to the City of Springfield or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agents, or representatives with respect to any existing or potential claim or cause of action against the City, its officers, employees, agents, or representatives where notice to the City is required by any federal, state, or local laws, rules, or regulations.