

8.17 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

While the City of Mineola encourages its officials and employees to enjoy and make good use of their off-duty time, certain activities on the part of its officials and employees may become a problem if they have the effect of impairing the work of any official or employee; harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile working environment for any official or employee; disrupting the smooth and orderly flow of work within the City; or harming the goodwill and reputation of the City of Mineola among its citizens or in the community at large. In the area of social media (print, broadcast, digital, and online), officials and employees may use such media in any way they choose as long as such use does not produce the adverse consequences noted above. For this reason, the City of Mineola reminds its officials and employees that the following guidelines apply in their use of social media, both on and off duty;

1. If an official or employee publishes any personal information about themselves, another official or employee of the City of Mineola, a citizen, or a vendor in any public medium (print, broadcast, digital, or online) that:
 - a. Has the potential or effect of involving the official or employee, their co-workers, or the City of Mineola in any kind of dispute or conflict with other officials or employees or third parties;
 - b. Interferes with the work of any official or employee;
 - c. Creates a harassing, demeaning, or hostile working environment for any official or employee;
 - d. Disrupts the smooth and orderly flow of work within the City, or the delivery of services to the City's citizens;
 - e. Harms the goodwill and reputation of the City of Mineola among its citizens or in the community at large;
 - f. Tends to place in doubt the reliability, trustworthiness, or sound judgement of the person who is the subject of the information; or
 - g. Reveals private information;
2. The official(s) or employee(s) responsible for such problems will be subject to counseling and/or disciplinary action, up to and potentially including termination of employment, depending on the circumstances.
3. No official or employee of the City of Mineola may use City equipment or Facilities for furtherance of non-work-related activities or relationships without the express advance permission of the City Manager.
4. Officials or Employees who conduct themselves in such a way that their actions and relationships with each other could become the object of gossip among others in the City, or cause unfavorable publicity for the City of Mineola in the community, should be concerned that their conduct may be inconsistent with one or more of the above guidelines. In such situation, the employees involved should request guidance from

- their immediate supervisor or the City Manager to discuss the possibility of a resolution that would avoid such problems. Depending on the circumstances, failure to seek such guidance may be considered evidence of intent to conceal a violation of the policy and to hinder an investigation into the matter.
5. Should you decide to create a personal blog, be sure to provide a clear disclaimer that the views expressed in the blog are the author's alone, and do not represent the views of the City of Mineola.
 6. All information published on any official or employee blog(s) should comply with the City of Mineola's privacy and/or data policies. This also applies to comments posted on other social networking sites, blogs, and forums.
 7. Be respectful to the City of Mineola, co-workers, citizens, vendors, and partners, and be mindful of your physical safety when posting information about yourself or others on any forum. Describing intimate details of your personal and social life, or providing information about your detailed comings and goings might be interpreted as an invitation for further communication --- or even stalking and harassment that could prove dangerous to your physical safety.
 8. Social media activities should never interfere with work commitments.
 9. Your online presence can reflect on the City of Mineola. Be aware that your comments, posts, or actions captured via digital or film images can affect the image of the City of Mineola.
 10. Do not discuss City citizens, vendors, issues, or business without express consent.
 11. Do not ignore copyright laws, and cite or reference sources inaccurately. Remember that the prohibition against plagiarism applies online.
 12. Do not use any City of Mineola logos or trademarks without written consent. The absence of explicit reference to a particular site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. If no policy or guideline exists, the City of Mineola's officials or employees should use their professional judgement and follow the most prudent course of action. If you are uncertain, consult your supervisor or manager before proceeding.