	<h1>Town of Cochrane Policy</h1>
<b>Policy No.:</b> <b>Policy Title:</b> <b>Approval Date:</b> <b>Revision Date:</b> <b>Department:</b>	<b>1107-02</b> <b>Social Media Policy</b> <b>July 14, 2025</b>  <b>Communications</b>

## Policy Statement

Cochrane recognizes the importance of engaging with the community through social media channels to disseminate accurate and timely information, foster public dialogue, and enhance trust.

Social media is a strategic component of the Town of Cochrane that promotes professional communication with the community. The Town uses social media strategically to support community awareness of our municipal projects, initiatives and updates as well as to disseminate information during a crisis.

This policy is in accordance with the values of Cochrane and complies with the best practices of both the industry and municipal government:

- Managing and moderating Cochrane's social media sites is an administrative function, supported through the Communications department.
- Digital engagement provides Cochrane with the opportunity to reinforce our commitment to public service and civic engagement.

## 1. Reason for Policy

- 1.1 This policy outlines the guidelines and standards governing Cochrane's communication on social media and networking platforms. Its purpose is to ensure the organization maintains consistency, transparency and professionalism in all online interactions pertaining to the municipality.
- 1.2 This policy applies to the publication of and participation in social media by employees speaking on behalf of the Cochrane as an organization or any part of Cochrane.

## 2. Related Information

- 2.1 Cochrane Public Engagement Policy
- 2.2 Employee Code of Conduct (AD D900)
- 2.3 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources (AD D906)
- 2.4 Municipal Emergency Plan
- 2.5 Media Relations Administrative Directive

### **3. Policy direction**

#### **3.1 Social media content**

All social media initiatives, including campaigns, posts and shares, will be developed, reviewed and managed by the Communications department to ensure consistency, accuracy and alignment with the Town's communication objectives and content guidelines.

#### **3.2 Authorized spokesperson**

Spokespeople authorized by the Communications department will represent the Town of Cochrane on social media channels.

#### **3.3 Crisis communication**

In the event of an emergency or crisis, the Communications department will manage social media communications in accordance with the Town's crisis communication plan. All information will be verified with appropriate authorities before posting to ensure accuracy and timeliness.

#### **3.4 Monitoring and moderation**

The Communications department will actively monitor social media channels during regular business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) and utilize automated moderation tools outside of these hours to uphold community standards. The Communications department reserves the right to remove users from official channels if they violate community guidelines or fail to adhere to established standards of conduct.

#### **3.5 Prohibited content**

To ensure Town of Cochrane social media sites remain professional and safe for all followers, the following content will be removed if posted on the Town's social media platforms:

- Personal attacks or defamatory statements
- Obscene or offensive language

- Comments or questions that are not directly related to the information in the post

Users who repeatedly violate these guidelines may be blocked from Town social media sites.

### 3.6 **Compliance with legislation**

Town of Cochrane official social media accounts are subject to Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). Any content related to Town business, including interactions, posts, and subscriber information, is considered a public record and may be subject to disclosure. Personal information collected through social media, such as names, email addresses, or usernames, must be handled in accordance with FOIP requirements and the Town's privacy policies.

## 4. **Definitions**

- 4.1 **Social media** refers to any online platform for publication and commentary, encompassing but not limited to blogs, wikis, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- 4.2 **Communication plan** outlines strategies and guidelines for effective communication on social media platforms. It encompasses directives for managing interactions, content sharing, and engagement to ensure a cohesive and positive online presence aligned with Cochrane's goals and values.
- 4.3 **Employee** includes permanent, part-time, temporary and casual staff who are employed the Town of Cochrane.
- 4.4 **Public forum** includes an open-access space, context, or group where individuals exchange ideas and discuss issues. These forums encompass social media accounts, online or traditional media and public meetings.
- 4.5 **Media** includes traditional news media (digital, print, radio and television), online publications (websites) and social media (blogs, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other sites where content is generated by users).

- 4.6 **Designated spokesperson** is an employee who has the authority to make public statements on behalf of the municipality.

## 5. Responsibilities

5.1 Cochrane Council shall:

- 5.1.1 Approve, by resolution, this policy and any amendments.
- 5.1.2 Ensure appropriate resources to allow for the ongoing engagement and communication through social media.

5.2 Cochrane Council may:

- 5.2.1 Identify policy, program, project and service decisions that will benefit from social media and provide direction to Administration.

5.3 Administration shall:

- 5.3.1 Ensure all employees adhere to this policy and relevant legislation.
- 5.3.2 Ensure that this policy is reviewed every two years.
- 5.3.3 Make recommendations to Council on the appropriate resources required.
- 5.3.4 Provide annual reporting on social media metrics.

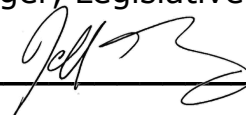
5.4 Administration may:

- 5.4.1 Establish procedures, practices, processes and/or plans to support implementation of this policy.
- 5.4.2 Ensure social media activity is part of a strategic communications planning process.
- 5.4.3 Provide guidance as employees adapt to the use of interactive communication channels.

## 6. End of Policy



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Manager, Legislative Services



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Mayor