

## Village of Schaumburg Social Media Procedure

### **Statement of Purpose:**

The Village of Schaumburg has placed a high priority on communicating news, events and information about its programs and services to the public and it uses a number of tools to successfully achieve that goal. Because technology is constantly changing, it is important the village remain informed and utilize communication methods that will best reach the intended audience.

With that being said, the emergence of social media is a driving force in communications today with various platforms available to not only engage and inform but also serve as a particularly effective way to communicate things quickly to a vast audience at no cost. The Village of Schaumburg recognizes the value of social media in today's communication landscape as a way to deliver information to the public, reinforce the positive brand of the village and engage the general public.

### **I. Procedure**

The Village of Schaumburg wishes to publicly represent itself appropriately, consistently, positively and transparently. The purpose of this procedure is to maintain the integrity of the village's online presence, and to ensure that it is used in accordance with village guidelines that have been established by the Village Manager's Office.

This procedure establishes protocols for the village to create and maintain an online presence; the terms of use for members of the public who engage the village through its online outlets; and guidelines for village employees when they communicate on social media sites as employees or private citizens acting on behalf of the village.

### **II. Definitions**

***Village Social Media Sites:*** Pages, sections or posting locations on social media established for the benefit of the Village of Schaumburg and used to communicate with the public on village business. Such sites are maintained by an employee of the village, authorized to do so as part of the employee's job.

***Social Media:*** A category of Internet-based technology communication tools that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn; microblogging sites such as Twitter and Nixle; photo- and video- sharing sites such as Instagram, Flickr and YouTube; as well as forums, weblogs (blogs, vlogs, and microblogs), online chat sites or any other such similar output or format.

***Speech:*** Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbols, photographs, videotape or related forms of communication.

***Terms of Use:*** Rules posted on social media sites and websites that govern its usage. The terms of use are posted by either the social media company or by an entity that creates an account using a social media/website platform.

**Work Time/Non-Work Time:** Work time is the period of time during any day of the week when a village employee performs his/her official duties and is being paid to do so. Non-work time is the time during the week when a village employee is not performing his/her official duties and is not being paid.

### **III. Village Social Media Sites**

While the village website ([www.villageofschaumburg.com](http://www.villageofschaumburg.com)) will remain the primary Internet communication tool for the village, the village recognizes that when used appropriately, and in conjunction with other communication methods, postings to village social media networks may assist in furthering the goals and mission of the village. Social media postings are often used as a supplemental form of communication in which to engage and inform the community as compared to traditional forms of communication (i.e. use of village website, press releases distributed to the media, newsletters, etc.).

The Village Manager or his designee is responsible for the selection and approval of social media tools and department/division use of social media for communication with the public about village activities, program and services. Before approval, each village social media account must have a strategy that defines the goal, audience, ownership and content development plan for each account that must be shared with the Communications Manager. Of those social media sites selected for use, the village will use a single account that is branded with the village logo. Exceptions will be considered by the Village Manager or his designee on a case-by-case basis (i.e. Prairie Center for the Arts).

#### **Appropriate Use and Responsibility**

1. Because social media sites serve as a communication tool, the village has an interest and expectation to decide who may “speak” and what is “spoken” on behalf of the village. The Communications Manager is responsible for acting as the village’s central public information center and will monitor the content on each of the village’s social media platforms to ensure:

- a) A consistent village-wide message is being conveyed; and
- b) Adherence to the Social Media Procedure is maintained. The Communications Manager, under the authorization of the Village Manager, also reserves the right to direct any department/division to modify social media content based on best practices and industry norms.

2. Department-specific content providers may be identified by the Department Director or their designee to produce and post content to social media sites, working within the established social media accounts to assist the Communications Manager. Content providers must have department director approval before being considered by the Communications Manager to assist with this responsibility. Any village social media content providers must remain in compliance with this established Social Media Procedure.

3. All village social media accounts must include an introductory statement that clearly specifies its purpose and scope. All social media accounts must link back to [www.villageofschaumburg.com](http://www.villageofschaumburg.com) for forms, documents and other village information. The Village of Schaumburg website, [www.villageofschaumburg.com](http://www.villageofschaumburg.com), shall remain the primary source of Village of Schaumburg information.

4. All profiles and village social media pages should be clearly identified as official Village of Schaumburg assets, displaying the village's logo as an identifying image. All social media pages shall have the Village of Schaumburg contact information prominently displayed, which includes physical address, phone numbers, village website, etc.
5. Posts shall be accurate and written using proper spelling, grammar and tone. Mistakes must be corrected promptly.
6. Examples of appropriate social media posts include news releases; community safety alerts; promotion of village programs, services, events and achievements; village job opportunities, ordinances/policies and public meeting notices; as well as other information that supports the goals and mission of the village.
7. Inappropriate social media posts include, but are not limited to, posts violating the village's or site's Terms of Use, use for personal gain, personal opinions, political campaign information, political stands, information to promote individuals or organizations not affiliated directly or indirectly with the village, the disclosure of confidential village business and information that may tarnish the village's positive reputation.
8. Comments on social media sites are to be treated as public comment and should be checked daily whenever possible. Content providers are encouraged to follow up with any user to help answer questions or resolve issues directly. Responses to such posts should be made in a timely manner, either directly or by other means to address the inquiry or issue.
9. Negative posts from the public on social media sites should only be removed if they violate the village's Terms of Use.
10. Conduct by village content providers on electronic media should follow the highest possible ethical standards.

#### **IV. Terms of Use**

The purpose of the village's social media sites is to present matters of public interest to residents, businesses and visitors. Civil, on-topic comments and questions from the public are welcomed on the village's various social media pages. Posts from the public on Village of Schaumburg media sites become public record.

The below Terms of Use has been established and maintained by the Village of Schaumburg. The terms of use shall be posted to [www.villageofschaumburg.com](http://www.villageofschaumburg.com) for easy access:

Please keep all comments appropriate. Inappropriate comments are subject to deletion by the administrator of this account. If you do not comply with the posting guidelines, an administrator will contact you and you will be blocked from posting any more information to the site. This forum is not monitored at all times. Do not use this forum to report emergency situations or time-sensitive

issues.

Please keep the following guidelines in mind when posting:

- The village does not allow graphic, obscene or explicit comments or submissions nor do we allow comments that at the village's sole discretion are abusive, threatening, hateful, inflammatory or intended to defame anyone or any organization or comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, gender identity or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.
- Content posted by persons whose profile picture or avatar, username or email address contains any of the aforementioned prohibited conduct will not be tolerated.
- The village does not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any commercial, political, financial, nongovernmental, non-profit or religious agency/organization, whether such solicitation is to support or commit to causes, groups or interests, to sign petitions, to solicit members or to seek the purchase of goods or services. The village reserves the right to, from time to time or on an ongoing basis, allow commercial messages or advertisements at its sole discretion.
- The village will not allow attempts to defame or defraud any person or financial, commercial or governmental agency.
- The village does not allow information intended to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Participation in social media is done at the user's own risk, which means users take personal responsibility for their comments, their username and any information provided.
- All comments are subject to public records law.
- The appearance of external links on social media sites does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the Village of Schaumburg.

## **V. Employee Use of Social Media**

Employees may be requested by the village's Communications Manager to use social media in the course of their duties (during "work time"), or on their own decide to use social media for personal matters (either during "work time" or "non-work time"). This section of the Social Media Procedure covers both aspects of social media use, recognizing the first amendment rights of public employees.

### **Work Time Social Media Use**

Use of social media during work time by village employees who have not been designated as social

media content providers will conform to the standards set forth in the village's equipment, email and Internet policies.

All employees, whether designated as social media content providers or acting as private citizens, are prohibited from disclosing information on the village's social media sites that is confidential or proprietary to the village or that would violate state, federal or local law or the village's policies.

Employees should assume they are at all times representing the Village of Schaumburg when making comments on the village's social media sites. All employees are responsible for maintaining the village's reputation and under no circumstances should employees present the village to the public in a manner that diminishes its standing within the community. Although social media sites are regarded as more casual than most communication tools, employees should use proper grammar and avoid jargon. When making comments on the village's social media sites, all employees, whether designated as social media content providers or acting as private citizens, must observe the following guidelines:

- Do not post malicious or mean-spirited remarks about any person.
- Do not use social media to harass, threaten, libel or slander, or malign co-workers, managers, village elected officials, any organization associated or doing business with the village, or any members of the public, including Web site visitors who post comments. The village's anti-harassment and EEO policies apply to the use of social media in the workplace.
- Note that most posts, comments and information are subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Keep in mind how a post or comment might be viewed by the Schaumburg community or general public before posting.
- These systems are not designed to replace communication between supervisors and employees. Communication between supervisors and employees shall continue in the same manner.
- Do not use vulgar, abusive or threatening language about or toward any person.

Employees who fail to conduct themselves in a professional manner, and/or who are found in noncompliance with any personnel manual policies, administrative protocols and department rules and regulations will be subject to the corrective action procedures found in the village's personnel manual.

### **Non-Work Time Social Media Use**

Employees choosing to post information during non-work time on any form of social media are expected to maintain a positive online image that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the village.

Employees may exercise their first amendment right of freedom of speech, or otherwise to engage in protected, concerted activity, but may be subject to disciplinary action for posts that are unreasonably disruptive to the work place, that violate the village's policies or have a detrimental effect on the image or operations of the village.

Employees making comments on external social media sites must not represent or portray themselves as a village employee authorized to speak on behalf of the village. This does not in any way prohibit employees from exercising their first amendment right to free speech.

Employees should refrain from posting information about their job duties or information gained in the performance of their job duties, including written statements, photographs and videos, using their personal social media accounts. If an employee chooses to do so, avoid any posting that might be interpreted as an official statement made on behalf of the village, on behalf of one's department or that might compromise perceptions of an employee's ability to do his/her job in an unbiased and professional manner.

Employees of the Village of Schaumburg may not use the village's logo or trademarks or the name, logo, or trademarks of any business partner, supplier, vendor, affiliate, or subsidiary on any personal blogs or other online sites unless their use is sponsored or otherwise sanctioned, approved or maintained by the village.

Employees are encouraged to review their privacy settings on their personal social media accounts to ensure their information is limited for viewing and sharing by others.

Village personnel should use discretion and common sense when establishing social media connections with co-workers, department heads and village elected officials, as well as using social media sites in general. Remember that what is written is public, may be public indefinitely and may spread to larger audiences. Refrain from posting information one would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper or on television.

It shall be the responsibility of each department director to ensure that subordinate employees are familiar with this procedure. Personnel whose online actions violate this procedure may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

It is reminded that the village's non-exempt employees must abide by all policies as indicated in the village's Benefits Handbook or applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding overtime and compensation. Any work performed outside of an employee's normal work hours must be approved by the department director and any unauthorized overtime can be grounds for corrective action, up to and including discharge. Department directors retain the authority to schedule employees for overtime as the workload of the department requires.

## **VI. Employee Monitoring**

The village reserves the right to monitor employee public use of social media including but not limited to statements/comments posted on the Internet, in blogs and other types of openly accessible forums, diaries and personal and business discussion forums.

Employees should have no expectation of privacy while using village equipment and facilities for any purpose, including the use of social media. The village reserves the right to monitor, review and block content that violates the village's rules and guidelines.

## **VII. Violations**

The Village will investigate and respond to all reports of violations of the village's rules and guidelines or related village policies or rules. Employees are urged to report any violations of this procedure to their department supervisor and the Human Resources Department. A violation of this procedure may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.