

<b>Description:</b>		<b>SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY</b>		<b>Policy Number: 62-26</b>	
	<b>WINNEBAGO COUNTY</b>		Revision Date:	7/16/18	
			Issue Date:	7/16/18	
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**(1) Purpose**

Winnebago County, Illinois (County) understands that social media is currently a widely used method to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities.

**(2) Scope**

To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media by County employees.

This policy is not intended to create arbitrary rules for social media usage or curtail constitutionally protected free speech.

**(3) Policy Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, *social media* can mean many things. Social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Nextdoor, and others. ***Social media includes*** all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's blog, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board, or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the County, as well as any other forms of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the County's Personnel policies apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. If any of your conduct adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects the community the County serves, the County's vendors, the people who work on behalf of the County, or the County's legitimate business interests, said conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

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**Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with work commitments.**

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**Know and follow the rules**

Carefully read these guidelines, and all County Personnel policies, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

**Be respectful**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, members of the public, vendors, or people who work on behalf of the County. Employees are encouraged to resolve work related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers, supervisor, or the Human Resources Department than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. However, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage employees, members of the public, vendors, suppliers, and any organizations associated or doing business with the County, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation, or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, or any other protected class status in accordance with applicable federal or state law or County policy.

**Be honest and accurate**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly, and disclose when posts have been edited. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the County, fellow employees, members of the public, customers, vendors, and people working on behalf of the County or competitors.

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**Post only appropriate and respectful content**

Maintain the confidentiality of the County's internal or confidential information. This may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other business-related communications intended for internal use or may contain confidential, private, or security information.

Abide by all state and federal laws, including privacy laws, including but not limited to private, personal medical/health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Follow all copyright laws, trade secret or other propriety right, public records laws, retention laws, fair use, financial disclosure laws, and any other laws that might apply to the County or your functional area.

Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a County website without identifying yourself as a County of Winnebago employee.

Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the County. If the County is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee, but that your views do not represent those of the County, fellow employees, vendors, or people working on behalf of the County.

If you do publish online content related to the work you do or subjects associated with the County, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the County. It is best to include a disclaimer such as *"The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the County of Winnebago."*

For safety and security reasons County employees shall not disclose employment information of Sheriff's Department, Circuit Court, or State's Attorney employees.

Employees shall not display Sheriff's Department logos, uniforms or similar identifying items on personal social or sites. Employees shall not post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause employees to be identified as a sworn officer of the department. Sworn officers who are, or who may reasonably be expected to work in undercover operations, shall not post any form of visual or personal identification. Sheriff's Department employees shall not post photographs or videos of

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accident scenes, crime scenes, security details, or fire scenes to which they are or have responded in the course of their employment.

Employees cannot advertise or sell County-owned property, products, or services through social media, unless they have received approval from the County Administrator, consistent with County Code pertaining to asset management and disposal.

**Use of social media at work prohibited**

Employees are not allowed to use social media while on work time, or on County-owned equipment unless authorized in writing by their department head. Do not use County of Winnebago email addresses to register on social networks, biogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use. Additionally, employees may not use their personal social media sites to conduct County business.

The County reserves the right to monitor and review the uses of the County's IT systems, and to block content that violates the County's policies, rules, and guidelines. The County has the right to monitor all communications on County-issued computers, laptops, cell phones, and any other device. It is impossible to guarantee that any information sent on County-owned equipment can remain private.

All County social media sites are subject to the Illinois Local Records Act, the Freedom of Information Act and e-discovery laws, and therefore, content must be able to be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with these laws. Any use of personal social media sites for County business is also subject to the Illinois Local Records Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and e-discovery laws.

**Employees should have no expectation of privacy while using any County-owned equipment and facilities for any purpose, including the use of social media.**

**Retaliation prohibited**

The County of Winnebago prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

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## **VIOLATIONS**

The County will investigate and respond to all reports of violations of this Social Media Policy or any related County policies, rules, and guidelines. All reports of alleged violations are to be directed to department\_ supervision, the Human Resources Department, or the County Administrator.

## **PENALTIES**

Any employee who violates this policy or any related County policies is subject to the discipline process, up to and including discharge.

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**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.


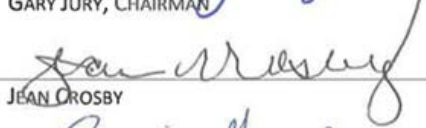
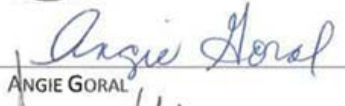

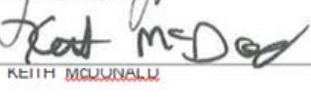

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that this Ordinance Amendment shall be effective immediately upon passage.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that the Winnebago County Clerk shall place a certified copy of this Ordinance Amendment upon its adoption in the records of office of the Winnebago County Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,  
**OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE**

AGREE

DISAGREE

 GARY JURY, CHAIRMAN	_____ GARY JURY, CHAIRMAN
 JEAN CROSBY	_____ JEAN CROSBY
 ANGIE GORAL	_____ ANGIE GORAL
 JOE HOFFMAN	_____ JOE HOFFMAN
 KEITH McDONALD	_____ KEITH McDONALD
EM NICOLSI  DOROTHY REDD	_____ EM NICOLSI _____ DOROTHY REDD

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The above and foregoing Ordinance was adopted by the County Board of the County of

Winnebago, Illinois this 16th day of July, 2018.



**FRANK HANEY**

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNTY BOARD  
OF THE COUNTY OF WINNEBAGO, ILLINOIS

ATTESTED BY:



**TIANA McCALL**

CLERK OF THE COUNTY BOARD  
OF THE COUNTY OF WINNEBAGO, ILLINOIS