

**City of Newton
Social Media Accounts
Policy and Procedures**

I. Purpose and Goals

Social media is a powerful tool that can be used to increase effective lines of communication between the City and its residents. The primary goal for the City is to harness the usefulness of social media in order to increase responsiveness and accountability, benefiting all custodians. By increasing awareness through social media, the citizens of Newton and anyone who accesses the social media accounts will be able to fully participate in the services of the City, join in the community, and interact with the various departments of the City.

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents and businesses communicate and obtain information about the City online, the City's departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

This policy and set of procedures applies only to official City of Newton social media accounts and their custodians.

II. Departmental Management Requirements and Approvals

In order to establish a sanctioned social media account on behalf of the City, a proposed custodian must first submit a Social Media Account Request Form to the Director of Information Technology. The request form may be found on the City's website, or through the IT Department. All accounts require prior approval of the Department Head of the proposed custodian, as well as that of the Director of IT. The proposed custodian will be required to provide the type of social media to be used, a City email address to be linked to the account, and the password for the account. All information will be kept on file with the IT Department and the social media account may be accessed at any time by the members of the IT Department.

Department Heads are encouraged to develop internal policies for all social media accounts relating to appropriate content, frequency of updates, approved custodians of the accounts, and response time to postings from external custodians.

All City of Newton social media accounts are the property of the City of Newton.

III. Administrative Requirements

Approved Social Media Sites

The Director of IT will only approve accounts under this policy from any of the following forms of social media:

- Facebook
- Twitter

- Youtube
- Instagram
- Vine
- Nixle

However, the City recognizes that forms of social media change every day. If a proposed custodian wishes to establish a social media account using a service that is not on this pre-approved list, custodians should contact the Director of IT to propose such use. The Director of IT will consider the proposal and make a determination after investigation and consultation with appropriate departments.

Security Requirements

- The social media account must be set up using a City of Newton email address as the recovery email.
- A strong password is required and must be filed with the IT Department.
- The IT Department reserves the right and ability to change any password in its discretion.
- Passwords and login information will not be shared with anyone without prior approval of the Department Head, with the exception of IT for archiving, messaging backup and coverage.
- If, for any reason, the custodian of any social media account under this policy ceases to be employed by the City, the IT Department will change the password for such account.
- Terms of service and permissions for the individual social media sites will be followed.

Training Requirements

Training is required for all custodians of City of Newton social media accounts. Training will be supervised by the IT Department.

Archive Requirements

Under the Public Records law, all communications made or received by a government employee or entity is a public record and subject to disclosure. This includes all communications made via social media.

All social media accounts must be archived to the fullest extent possible, given any limitations related to the particular form of social media.

IV. Requirements for all Custodians

- Custodians are subject to the requirements of all City policies, including but not limited to the Telecommunications and Harassment Policies.
- Custodians are subject to all state and local statutes, regulations and ordinances.
- Custodians of social media accounts are required to read and understand their department's social media policy, if any, especially as it pertains to appropriate content and language, and the expected frequency of posting.

- Custodians shall not post or release proprietary, confidential, sensitive, or personally identifiable information.
- Custodians shall follow all departmental and administrative requirements.

V. Content

All content must comply with the Telecommunications and Harassment Policies of the City.

Social Media may not be used to post complaints an employee may have concerning the workplace. Any such complaints should be directed through the proper and appropriate channels.

Postings will consist of factual information that has been verified.

Opinions of the Custodian are not permitted.

Links to credible sources may be provided if available and relevant.

Custodians must be aware of and familiar with content that is retweeted, reposted or linked in any way.

Custodians are prohibited from posting any of the following to a City of Newton social media account:

- Profane, obscene, violent or pornographic language or content;
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sex, gender, marital or family status, military status, status with regard to source of income, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Defamatory or personal attacks;
- Threats to any person or organization;
- Content in support of, or opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
- Solicitations of commerce, including but not limited to the advertising for any business or of any product or service for sale;
- Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law, rule or regulation;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party (such as, but not limited to, copyright);
- Content not related to the original topic or to the business of the City, including random or unintelligible comments;
- Links to any of the above prohibited content; or
- Any other content deemed inappropriate by the City.