

BY-LAW 2019-42 - SCHEDULE "A"
TOWNSHIP OF SABLES-SPANISH RIVERS
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers is committed to delivering the highest quality municipal services and administration. This is done in a fashion that is transparent, accountable and with a focus on effective communication and customer service. As a result, the Township strives to provide open access to information about its policies, services and initiatives. The Township recognizes that social media applications are widely being utilized as new communication tools with the potential to provide the public with timely information. The Township is committed to disbursing information in a range of formats to reach a variety of stakeholders.

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of the social media applications specifically so that the disbursement of timely and accurate information is balanced with the Township's need to ensure that:

- a) The use of social media tools does not compromise public safety or the Township's image.
- b) The information provided through social media is in line with the Township's vision and guiding principles.
- c) Social media content does not violate individual privacy or conflict with existing municipal policies and by-laws or other regulations as applicable.
- d) Social media content posted on behalf of the Township is accurate, accessible, transparent and accountable.

DESCRIPTION:

Social media tools are third party internet based applications that enable collaboration and sharing of opinions, insights, images, information and experiences through real time conversations among individuals and groups.

Social media includes websites where people can post information, build community knowledge, discuss issues and network. These online communities include but are not limited to:

- Blogs or weblogs
- Bulletin boards
- Chat rooms
- Discussion groups
- Instant messaging
- Photo/video sites such as YouTube
- Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc,
- Wiki

APPLICATION:

Social networking applications shall be executed following the same guidelines as other Township communication applications. The following information will be permitted:

- Information pertaining to the Township's business and events
- Information pertaining to Public Health and Safety (road closures, inclement weather, etc,)
- Information & events pertaining to non-profit groups or organizations within the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers*

** Information must be received in either a "Microsoft Word" or "Jpeg" format and will be posted when staff time permits. The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers makes no representation on the accuracy of information posted on behalf of non-profit groups or organizations.*

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

The Clerk's Department shall be the lead department for the Township's online communication strategy and presence. All social media activity must be approved by the Clerk or his/her designate. The Clerk (or designate) will maintain and monitor the approved social media sites. Sites will be monitored during the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers' regular office hours, Monday to Friday.

The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers Social Media sites are provided on an "as is" and "as available" basis. The Township makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, as to the sites' operation or the information, content or materials included on these sites.

Login and passwords for the sites are confidential information and will be stored in the Clerk's office.

The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers website (www.sables-spanish.ca) will remain the Township's primary and predominant internet presence for in-depth information, forms and online documents. All social media sites used will direct visitors back to the appropriate section of the website.

The Township's social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall be prohibited:

- Profane language or content
- Personal attacks on individuals or specific groups
- A violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination
- Sexual content or links to sexual content
- Encouragement of illegal activities
- Content related to promotions, sales, advertising not directly connected to the Township's events
- Content that promotes a particular candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Content that is believed to be inappropriate in the opinion of the Clerk's Department

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS/PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

For the purpose of this policy, "employee" shall include Township staff and Council members.

Use of an employee's Township email address, communicating in an official capacity, or discussing Township business, on personal or Township accounts, websites or networks, shall constitute conducting Township business.

Employees are discouraged from discussing Township business through personal social media accounts, website or networks. All Township business, whenever possible, should be conducted through corporate social media accounts by the appropriate Department and the Clerk.

When using social media or other online mediums, Township staff will conduct themselves in a manner that conforms to the Township's health and safety policies passed under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Employees should be cautious and aware of the following:

- Submissions are often permanent. Previous comments, thought deleted can be found through search engines.
- The laws of privacy, libel, copyright, human rights as well as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms apply online.
- If making online submissions using Township equipment or in any way referring to a professional relationship with the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers, then employees are subject to the Township's policies and provincial and federal legislation as well as personally responsible for the content of their submissions.

No employee may post or publish confidential information. Confidential information may include such things as unpublished materials, documents & statistics, current and future projects, financials, facts and

figures and other pertinent Township details. As employees you are bound by the terms of The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers, its policies, plans and procedures, guidelines, codes, protocols and By-Laws.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES/COMMENTS:

Township employees will not respond directly to comments and inquiries that are generated by the public as a result of content posted on social media sites. The Clerk shall determine if an exception to this policy is required and shall make the response.

BREACH OF POLICY:

A breach of this policy by an employee is a matter that will result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination.

DISCLAIMER:

The Corporation of the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers is not responsible for comments made by subscribers or members related to its social media applications, and reserve the right to remove any content that is inappropriate for any reason and at any time. Third party social media sites are private businesses with their own terms of service and privacy policies. The Township does not accept responsibility for the operation of third party social media sites and is unable to guarantee the privacy of individuals who access content provided to such sites by the Township.

For the most part, user comments and messages posted to The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers official social networking sites are considered transitory records and will not be kept as a permanent record by the Township. By using Sables-Spanish Rivers Social Media, users acknowledge and consent that their comments or messages may become part of the public record and used in official Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers documentation. It is at the Township's sole discretion as to which comments will be saved to form part of the Township's official business records.

The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers will not be responsible for any losses or damages suffered as a result of using third party Social Media sites. Those using Social Media participate at their own risk and for their own benefit, and in so doing accept that they have no right of action against the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers related to such use.