

# **City of Effingham** **Social Media Policy**

## **I. Scope**

This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the City of Effingham of Social Media sites (including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) as a means of conveying City of Effingham (“City”) information to its citizens.

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose behind establishing City of Effingham Social Media sites is to disseminate information from the City, about the City, to its citizens, to learn about the community’s needs and concerns, to contribute to relevant conversations, actively pull the ideas of citizens into the government innovation process, and promote departmental programs and services. Departments are encouraged to post topics of interest to the community, achievements by departmental personnel, and related information from other communities.

The City of Effingham has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the City on City Social Media sites.

For purposes of this policy, “Social Media” is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of Social Media include Facebook, blogs, Instagram, RSS, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Google Plus. For purposes of this policy, “comments” include information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on a City of Effingham Social Media site.

## **III. General Policy**

- a. **Disclaimer:** The City’s use of external Social Media tools is provided as a public service. The City disclaims liability for ads, videos, promoted content or comments accessible from any external web page. The responsibility of external content and/or comments rests with the organizations or individuals providing them. Any inclusion of external content and/or comments on external Social Media sites does not imply endorsement by the City of Effingham. The City disclaims any responsibility or liability for positions taken by individuals or entities in their individual cases for any misstatement, misunderstandings and loses, directly or indirectly, on the part of the user. As a user of the City’s Social Media sites, you further consent to your post being removed for any of the reasons set forth in this policy or for administrative reasons, including deletion of old posts or comments.
- b. **Legal or Official Notices Prohibited:** No communication to the City through Social Media shall be deemed to constitute legal or official notice for any purpose. No request made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) may be submitted to the City through Social Media sites.

- c. Official Identification Required: All City Social Media Sites shall make clear that they are maintained by the City of Effingham and that they follow the City's Social Media Policy.
- d. Website Linkage Required: Wherever possible, City Social Media sites shall provide a link to the official City or Departmental website.
- e. Social Media Coordinator: The Economic Development Specialist shall serve as the official Social Media Coordinator for the City of Effingham. He or she shall monitor content of all City Social Media sites to ensure adherence to both the City's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the City of Effingham.
- f. Departmental Monitoring Required: All City departments that provide Social Media sites shall routinely monitor their sites for comments requesting responses and reply as soon as practical.
- g. Policy Dissemination: The City's Social Media Policy shall be displayed on the City's Official website, [www.effinghamil.com](http://www.effinghamil.com), and made available by hyperlink to all Social Media users.
- h. City and Departmental Representation: Employees representing the City of Effingham and/or Departments of the City via City Social Media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with all Departmental and City policies. When an employee responds to a comment, the employee shall provide their name and title within the response. Employees shall not engage in debate with other Social Media users or respond to argumentative comments.
- i. Termination of Privilege: The City reserves the right to terminate a person's ability to post comments and/or submit materials or otherwise participate in the City's Social Media sites when the person violates the City of Effingham's Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.
- j. Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities: All comments posted to any City of Effingham Facebook site are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities located at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>, and the City of Effingham reserves the right to report any violations of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

#### **IV. Comment Policy**

The City of Effingham encourages you to submit your questions, comments, and concerns, but please note that this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum. The comments expressed by a member of the public on any of the City's Social Media sites is the opinion of the poster only and the publication of the comment does not reflect the opinions and position of the City of Effingham government or its officers and employees.

The City of Effingham, in the City's sole discretion, reserves the right to remove these kinds of comments, postings, and submissions:

1. Any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media policy;
2. Vulgar language;
3. Inappropriate or derogatory comments;

4. Obscene or sexually explicit comments;
5. Personal attacks of any kind;
6. Private, personal information submitted without consent;
7. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, genetics, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or intellectual disability, and/or sexual orientation;
8. Solicitation of commerce, advertising of any product or service for sale, commercial promotions or spam;
9. Discussion not relevant to topic;
10. Threats to any person or organization;
11. Comments in support of or against any political campaigns or ballot initiatives;
12. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Effingham;
13. Advocates illegal activity;
14. Violate any law or promote the violation of any law;
15. Promote political organizations or causes;
16. Infringe on copyrights or trademarks;
17. Made by a person masquerading as someone else;
18. Personally identifiable medical information; or
19. Information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations.

If you have any questions concerning the City of Effingham's Social Media platforms, please contact the Economic Development Specialist at 217-342-4304 or by e-mail at [effinghamil@ci.effingham.il.us](mailto:effinghamil@ci.effingham.il.us).

#### **V. Authorization and Review**

This policy shall be placed in effect through the passage of a City Resolution. This policy shall be reviewed and modified as necessary.