

# Memo

Carmichael



RECREATION AND  
PARK DISTRICT

**To:** Advisory Board of Directors

**From:** Alaina Lofthus, Recreation Services Manager  
Tarry Smith, District Administrator

**Date:** June 21, 2018

**Subject:** Social Media Policy

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## ***Introduction/Background:***

The Internet and Social Media landscape is quickly growing and ever changing. These changes affect the way community members obtain information regarding the District and how the District interacts with the community. Social media tools allow the District to reach a broader, more diverse audience and provide event information, promote programs, post District projects, and share more about what the District does in the community.

Although beneficial, the use of social media presents challenges. This policy is intended to address those challenges and provide guidance for all District social media usage.

## ***Discussion:***

The Social Media Policy addresses three main areas. First, the General Information section outlines the selection of social media sites/outlets as well as the different roles employees of the District may have and the expectations of those roles.

The second section of the policy discusses items that must be vetted prior to posting any messages on District social media outlets. An example included in this policy is that posts must not contain profane language or content as well as posts must not include content that is contrary or detrimental to the District's mission, values, image and interests. This section also states CRPD will obtain permission from any person who appears in a photo that is posted to a social media outlet either through the District's photo release or verbal acknowledgement.

The policy's third section discusses the treatment of comments from outside individuals/organizations. The policy describes what type of content may be removed from District social media sites/outlets including comments with profane, obscene or pornographic language and content that promotes or fosters discrimination. The policy additionally discusses comments that should not be removed along with comments that should be shared with management prior to responding.

In addition to the actual policy, Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices offer additional points of emphasis meant to help employees who use social media on behalf of the District to address the challenges while maximizing the benefits of these technologies.

***Recommendation:***

Staff recommends that the Carmichael Recreation and Park District Advisory Board of Directors approve and adopt the Social Media Policy.

# Carmichael Recreation & Park District SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## **PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this policy is to address the quickly growing and changing landscape of the Internet, which also covers the use of Social Media. These changes have affected the means by which residents communicate and obtain information online. The Carmichael Recreation and Park District (CRPD) approves the use of social media tools to reach a broader, diverse audience. The use of social media is encouraged to further the goals and objectives of CRPD.

Although beneficial, the use of social media presents challenges. This document establishes a policy intended to address those challenges and guide all CRPD social media usage.

This policy applies to all CRPD employees who use social media sites and/or technology on behalf of CRPD. All preexisting and proposed social media websites and online community accounts created by CRPD employees on behalf of CRPD during the course of their employment are subject to this policy.

## **POLICY**

### **I. General Information**

CRPD has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of CRPD on the internet and specifically social media outlets. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

- A. New Sites/Outlets: There are many social media outlets readily available. Before utilizing a new outlet employees should consider the need and value of the outlet. Since social media outlets must be updated regularly, staff should calculate the time and effort it will take to maintain an outlet so that visitors continue to find value over time. As a rule of thumb, social media outlets should be updated at least once per week. Any employee wishing to utilize a new site must gain approval from the District Administrator prior to its use.
- B. Management: The Recreation Department will manage and oversee all content on each CRPD Social Media outlet to ensure adherence to this policy, including appropriate use, message and branding that is consistent with the goals and objectives of CRPD.
- C. Designees: Those designated and authorized by the Recreation Services Manager to utilize social media are responsible for regularly posting information, monitoring comments and removing any prohibited content. Designees are representing CRPD via social media outlets and must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of CRPD when posting on behalf of CRPD.

1. Designees shall not express their own personal views or concerns through such postings. Instead, postings should reflect the views of CRPD.
2. Designees must adhere to the District's IT Policy.
3. Designees administering CRPD social media outlets on behalf of CRPD are expected to understand the current terms of service for the social media site they are using.
4. Violations of these standards may result in removal of social media posts, use of outlets, designee authorization and may cause disciplinary action to be taken.

## **II. Information Posted on Social Media Outlets**

- A. Posted Information: All information posted to CRPD social media outlets on behalf of CRPD must:
1. Directly pertain to CRPD sponsored or endorsed programs, partners, services and events.
  2. Present CRPD in a positive light and professional manner.
  3. Contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential.
  4. Not contain any personal information except the names of employees whose job duties are relevant to the post and subject matter.
  5. Not include content that is contrary or detrimental to CRPD's mission, values, image and interests.
  6. Not contain religious messages or advocate or promote religious beliefs.
  7. Not contain content in support of, or in opposition to, any political candidate or ballot measure.
  8. Comply with all local, state and federal laws.
  9. Not contain profane language or content.
  10. Not contain sexual content.
  11. Not contain content that promotes, fosters or perpetrates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state or applicable local laws.
  12. Not contain solicitations of commerce, except for information posted by CRPD's authorized partners.
  13. Not contain content that conducts or encourages illegal activity.
  14. Not contain any information that may be considered detrimental to CRPD.
- B. Permissions: CRPD has full permission or rights to any content posted by CRPD, including photographs and videos. CRPD shall obtain permission from any person who appears in a photo that is posted by designees to social media outlets. Permission will be obtained either via CRPD photo release or verbal acknowledgement.

- C. Public Information: Information posted on social media outlets becomes public information and there should be no expectation of privacy in regards to the information posted on these sites.

### III. Comments from Outside Individuals/Organizations

- A. Posted Content: Including comments, photos and links must be related to the topic posted by CRPD or it will be removed.
- B. Comment Violations: Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on CRPD social media outlets and shall be removed by CRPD's designees:
1. Comments unrelated to the original topic or article.
  2. Comments in support of or in opposition of any political campaigns or ballot measures.
  3. Profane, obscene or pornographic language or content or links to such language or content.
  4. Solicitations of commerce, except for information posted by CRPD's identified partners.
  5. Content that conducts or encourages illegal activity.
  6. Any information that is illegal to disseminate or that might compromise the safety or security of the public.
  7. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright of another party.
  8. Defamatory statements.
  9. Threats of violence or injury to any person, property or organization.
  10. Content that violates federal, local or state law.
  11. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetrates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state or applicable local laws.
- C. Other Comments: If comments do not violate this policy, then the content should be allowed to remain, regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable to CRPD.
1. A comment posted by a member of the public on any CRPD social media outlet is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement or agreement by CRPD, nor do such comments reflect the opinions or policies of CRPD.
    - a. Comments that are sensitive in nature must be shared with the Recreation Services Manager and a response must be approved by the District Administrator prior to posting.
  2. CRPD reserves the right to remove any content that is deemed to be in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES**

Social media offers a new model for public interaction, but like much of the content on the internet, it is not necessarily secure or accurate, and the benefits it provides, such as facilitating the sharing of useful information and fostering increased public engagement, is not without challenges.

Designees must follow CPRD's policy and in addition should operate by following the additional guidelines, which are meant to help employees who use social media on behalf of CRPD address the challenges while maximizing the benefits of these technologies.

1. **Be Transparent and Truthful:** Your honesty, or dishonesty, will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. Always be careful and considerate. Once the words are out there, you cannot take them back.
2. **Be Timely:** The employee should review the web page at least once each workday to ensure comments and content are current and accurate.
3. **Be Cautious:** Make sure your efforts are transparent and do not violate CRPD's privacy, confidentiality and legal guidelines. Do not publish any material that is confidential. Never comment on anything related to legal matters or personnel issues without first consulting with your Supervisor/Manager. Also, protect your own privacy. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.
4. **Perception Trumps Reality:** In online social outlets, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. By identifying yourself as a CRPD employee, you are automatically creating perceptions about CRPD and your expertise.
5. **Be Judicious:** Use good judgment in responding to a post. Engaging any person posting in an argumentative or offensive manner should be avoided. If such comments warrant a response, take the conversation off-line. When in doubt ask your Supervisor/Manager.
6. **Be Responsible:** What you write is ultimately your responsibility so treat it seriously and with respect.
7. **Admit Mistakes:** If you make a mistake, admit it, be upfront and quick with your correction, and notify your Supervisor/Manager.
8. **Be Thoughtful:** If you are about to publish something that makes you even slightly uncomfortable, take a minute to review this policy and try to figure out what is bothering you. If you are still unsure, consult your Supervisor/Manager.
9. **Remember:** When in doubt, get approval from Supervisor/Manager.