

**TOWN OF VIENNA, VIRGINIA  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

<u>Subject:</u>  <b>SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY</b>	<u>Regulation No:</u> 3.1	<u>Effective Date:</u> August 16, 2010
	Supersedes: N/A	

**I. PURPOSE**

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information, and to enhance communications with various stakeholders in support of Town goals and objectives, Town of Vienna Departments may utilize social media and social networking sites.

**II. POLICY**

1. The Town of Vienna social media sites shall be (a) approved by the Town Manager, the Public Information Officer and the requesting Department Head; and (b) administered by the Public Information Officer or their designee. Designees can be any department employee or volunteer designated by the requesting Department Head that has a complete understanding of this policy and has appropriate content and technical experience.
2. All Town of Vienna social networking sites shall adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies, including Information Technology and records retention Town policies and other applicable Town regulations.
3. Virginia Freedom of Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies apply to electronic content and therefore all social media content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws. A clear plan of document storage must be established and approved by the Town Manager prior to the creation of a social media site.
4. Town of Vienna social media sites are subject to the Library of Virginia's (LVA) Public Records Act. Relevant Town of Vienna and LVA records retention schedules apply to social media content. Records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant record retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using the approved platforms and tools.
5. All social media sites and entries shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
6. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
7. The Town of Vienna social media content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:
  - No personal attacks or threats against other users or individuals; no libelous, harassing or abusive statements; no submission of personal information or likenesses of other persons without their consent.
  - No attacks on individuals or groups based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or other classification.
  - No content that is obscene, vulgar or sexually explicit. This includes masked words (\*\*), acronyms and abbreviations.

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- No commercial product promotions or off-topic messages; no spam, links to other sites, chain letters, pyramid schemes or fraudulent or deceptive messages; no false claims of affiliation with any third party.
  - No posting of information affiliated with or promoting political campaigns.
  - No posting of copyright infringing material, or any material whose posting on our site could result in infringement of any third party intellectual property or privacy of publicity rights.
  - Site administrators will have the final say in interpreting these rules.
8. All Town site administrators/moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of this policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with this policy.
  9. All social media sites shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Town of Vienna and shall have Town contact information prominently displayed.
  10. Employees representing the Town government via social media platforms must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Town and in accordance with all Administrative Services regulations and Town policies. See Section III, Guidance for Participation in Social Networking.
  11. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**III. GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL NETWORKING**

The Town of Vienna understands that social networking and Internet services have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among stakeholders and residents. Social media sites are online communities of people or organizations that share interests and/or activities and use a wide variety of Internet technology to make the interaction a rich and robust experience. Employees that choose to participate in social media sites as a Town employee shall adhere to the following guidelines.

1. All Town policies, rules, regulations and standards of conduct apply to employees that engage in social media activities *while conducting Town business*. Use of a Town e-mail address and communicating in an official capacity constitutes conducting Town business.
2. Town employees shall request to establish a social networking site from the Department Head, the Public Information Officer and the IT Department if the employee intends to use the site to conduct Town business.
3. Departments have the option of allowing employees to participate in existing social media sites as part of their job duties. Employees must get approval to participate in other social media sites as representatives of the Town from the Department Head and the Town Manager. Employees participating in other social media sites must adhere to the

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- guidelines established within this regulation.
4. Protect personal information, the privacy of residents and the information the Town holds. Follow all privacy protections laws, i.e. HIPPA, and protect sensitive and confidential Town information.
  5. Follow all copyright laws, public record laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and any other laws that might apply to the Town or functional area.
  6. Do not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, residents, co-workers or other stakeholders without their approval.
  7. The employee must make it clear that the opinions expressed on social media sites are their own and are not speaking on behalf of the Town of Vienna. If content is published on any website outside of the Town of Vienna and is related to the work the employee performs or subjects associated with the Town, employees must use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the Town's position or opinions."
  8. Do not use ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Town's workplace. Avoid comments or topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
  9. If an employee identifies themselves as a Town employee, ensure that profiles and related content are consistent with how the employee intends to present themselves to colleagues, citizens and other stakeholders.
  10. Correct mistakes, and do not alter previous posts without indicating a change has been made. Frame any comments or opposing views in a positive manner.
  11. Add value to the Town of Vienna through your interaction. Provide worthwhile information and perspective.

**IV. FACEBOOK POSTING POLICY**

**Posting Policy**

Welcome to the official Town of Vienna, Virginia Facebook page.

The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in the Town of Vienna. Fans of the Town of Vienna are encouraged to submit questions, comments and concerns, but please note that this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum.

Here is our Posting Policy for participation to encourage civil discourse:

- No personal attacks or threats against other users or individuals; no libelous, harassing or abusive statements; no submission of personal information or likenesses of other persons without their consent.
- No attacks on individuals or groups based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or

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- No commercial product promotions or off-topic messages; no spam, links to other sites, chain letters, pyramid schemes or fraudulent or deceptive messages; no false claims of affiliation with any third party.
- No posting of information affiliated with or promoting political campaigns.
- No posting of copyright infringing material, or any material whose posting on our site could result in infringement of any third party intellectual property or privacy of publicity rights.
- Site administrators will have the final say in interpreting these rules.

Once posted, the Town reserves the right to reject, delete, disable or remove any content that we determine, in our sole discretion, (a) does not comply with our Posting Policy; (b) might violate any law, infringe upon any rights of third parties, or subject us to liability for any reason; (c) might adversely affect our public image, reputation or good will; or (d) should be taken down for any other reason.

Disclaimer: Please note that public comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinion and position of the Town of Vienna government or its officers and employees. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact Public Information at [pio@viennava.gov](mailto:pio@viennava.gov).

**V. DEFINITIONS**


1. **Social Media:** content created by individuals using accessible and scalable technologies through the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs, Myspace, Foursquare, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, etc.
2. **E-Discovery Laws:** (Electronic Discovery) the obligation of parties to a lawsuit to exchange documents that exist only in electronic form. Effective January 1, 2009, the Virginia Supreme Court amended the Virginia Rules of Civil Procedure to address electronically stored information.
3. **Virginia Public Records Act:** administered by the Library of Virginia, ensures that procedures used to manage and preserve public records, including electronic documents, are uniform throughout the commonwealth.
4. **Site Administrator/Moderator:** an authorized Town of Vienna official that creates and

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is responsible for posted articles and information on Town approved social media sites.  
*(Public Information Officer or department designee.)*

5. **Comment:** a response to a Town of Vienna article or social media content submitted by a commenter.
6. **Commenter:** a Town of Vienna official or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular Town of Vienna article or social media content.

<i>Signature of Town Manager:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
	August 16, 2010