



Township of Southgate

Social Media Policy

I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Township of Southgate to encourage clear and effective communication with all citizens using a variety of accepted tools including social media. Municipal use of social media must, like all other forms of communication, meet tests of credibility, privacy, authority and accountability.

II. Definitions

- **"Social media"** means the online technologies and practices that are used to share information and opinions and build relationships. It can involve a variety of formats, including text, pictures, video, audio and real-time dialogues. It includes, but is not exclusive to, social networks, discussion forums and blogs.
- **"Moderated"** means technical and monitoring measures that prevent or ensure the timely removal of any defamatory or objectionable submissions.
- **"Reasonable communications practices"** include practices that help assess appropriateness of information and possible alternatives in relation to potential audience, public service needs, and other factors associated with a communication plan prepared by Southgate staff.

III. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- encourage the safe, creative and effective use of social media by Southgate employees
- enable social media use in communicating general Southgate information.
- ensure the use of social media by Southgate employees complies with all applicable laws and all Southgate policies and procedures, including those related to protection of privacy, capture and retention of records, security, respectful workplaces, employee code of conduct, conflict of interest and internet/e-mail use.

IV. Policy Application

This policy applies to all social media communication by Southgate employees on Southgate social media sites.

V. Policy Directives

- Southgate employees using any social media are governed by the employee Code of Conduct and all Southgate policies and procedures affecting protection of privacy and accessible customer service.
- Blogs, discussion forums or other social media initiated and/or created by and within the control of Southgate must be moderated.
- Southgate hosted social media services shall include the Digital Media Customer Use Policy for users.

- Use of Social media may be used for public notice in conjunction with other forms of notice as per Southgate’s Public Notice Policy # 15 under heading **C. POLICY STATEMENT / GUIDELINES** which states: “Additional methods of giving notice may be undertaken at the discretion of the Clerk”.

VI. Accountability

- Southgate employees are responsible for:
 - understanding and following all policies affecting use of social media, including but not exclusive to the Code of Conduct policies and procedures, and all Township of Southgate policies and procedures affecting protection of privacy, etc.
- Senior management is responsible for:
 - ensuring that all employees are advised of this policy;
 - ensuring that social media services initiated and/or created by and within the control of Southgate are moderated;
 - ensuring that the Digital Media Customer Use Policy is posted, whenever possible, for all Southgate operated social media initiatives;
 - ensuring that appropriate policies are implemented for all Southgate operated social media initiatives.
- The Council of the Township of Southgate is responsible for:
 - determining that each new social media venture initiated or created by Southgate has plans that are based on reasonable communications practices and include technical and monitoring measures which prevent any misuse or defamatory /objectionable submissions.
- The Clerk’s Department (or delegate) is responsible for:
 - creating the criteria required for moderation of social media;
 - updating communication on social media sites;
 - providing accessible forms of documents found on social media as per the Accessible Customer Service Policy.

VII. Monitoring

The Township of Southgate will monitor and update this policy when necessary.

VIII. References

Township of Southgate Policies:

7: PIPEDA

9: Council Code of Conduct

#10: Employee Code of Conduct

#15: Public Notice

#27: Accessible Customer Service

#47: Digital Media Customer Use Policy