

**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA  
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY (DRAFT)  
SOCIAL MEDIA & NETWORKING**

The goals of City of Miami Beach sponsored social networking sites are:

- To increase public awareness of the City's programs, policies and services.
- To promote the value and importance of the City's programs, policies and services among government officials, civic leaders and the general public.
- To maintain open, professional and responsive communications with members of the public and the news media.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of the City's social networking sites and technologies. Publicly posted information will be professional and reflect positively on the City of Miami Beach, its employees, volunteers, programs, policies and services. Employees will check facts, cite sources, present balanced views, acknowledge and correct errors and check spelling and grammar before publishing any posts. Further, employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis or any other form of user-generated media.

**Ownership**

All social media communications messages composed, sent or received on the City's IT equipment or used in official City business or representing the City of Miami Beach are the property of the City of Miami Beach and subject to public records. The City of Miami Beach reserves the right not to publish any posting, or to later remove it.

**Overview**

Social media is intended to be used for informational purposes only. If the user wishes to contact City Commission or Administration or to request City services, they should visit the City's official website: [www.miamibeachfl.gov](http://www.miamibeachfl.gov).

The City of Miami Beach social media accounts and pages are maintained and moderated by the Office of Communications to ensure that posted comments are constructive and suitable for all readers while respecting a range of opinions and points of view.

Anyone posting comments contrary to this Terms of Use policy may be prohibited from future participation. The City of Miami Beach reserves the right to update these Terms of Use. By participating on this page, users agree to send and receive messages that are both proper and related to the posting, discussion or forum topic. The following actions are unacceptable practices:

Defaming, harassing, threatening, or otherwise violating the legal rights of others, including their privacy (see below); Misrepresenting one's person, background, or character; Posting any defamatory, infringing, obscene, false, or unlawful material; Selling, advertising, or exchanging any goods or services unless expressly allowed; Posting any copyrighted material owned by a third party.

Also, users post and comment to any official site of the City of Miami Beach, Florida forum at their own risk. While championing proper use of such forums, the City of Miami Beach cannot guarantee that violations of the above code will not occur.

Under Florida law, this is a public record. If you do not want your name or posting released in response to a public-records request, do not post to this page.

### **Management of Social Web Applications**

The City of Miami Beach's Office of Communications is responsible for overall social media administration, including, but not limited to, blogs, wikis, video sharing, business pages and social networking sites. Communications will:

- Maintain the site, including the look and feel and pages for the comment policy, descriptions, etc.
- Review each post. This will primarily be for policy and legal issues; other editing will be light, essentially only to correct spelling or grammatical errors.
- Coordinate review with the city attorney's office for legal issues.
- Upload posts (repeat bloggers/posters may be authorized to post themselves).
- Moderate comments (see Moderating Public Comments).

All department and city service-related social media sites, with the exception of Police and Fire, must be approved before an account may be set-up.

Each site should have wording that indicates who the owner of the site is and an email link back to the individual who maintains it. The name of the City should be on the site.

### **External Links**

To meet its purpose, the City's Social Networking Sites may contain links to other social networking sites or websites that are not owned, regularly reviewed or controlled by the City. The City's Social Networking Sites do not provide links to external sites that are strictly political or religious in nature. The provision of direct links should not be construed as an endorsement or sponsorship of these external sites, their content or their hosts. The City specifically disavows legal responsibility for what a user may find on another site, whether or not operated by the City. The views and opinions of the authors of documents published on or linked to the City's Social Networking Sites do not necessarily state or reflect the opinion, policy or position of the City.

The City of Miami Beach is not responsible for the content, quality, accuracy or completeness of any offsite materials referenced by or linked through the City's Social Networking Sites. By using the City's social networking sites, the user acknowledges and accepts the risk of injury or damage from viewing, hearing, downloading or storing such materials rests entirely with the user and that the City is not responsible for any materials stored on other social networking sites or websites, nor is it liable for any inaccurate, defamatory, offensive or illegal materials found on other social networking sites or websites.

The City does not endorse any content, viewpoint, products or services linked from its social networking sites and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information. The City does not warrant the accuracy or reliability of or endorse any products or service providers listed or linked to its site.

### **External Links**

Links to other social networking sites or websites are approved if they meet the following criteria:

- They are state, regional, local or federal government agencies, special purpose districts, hospitals, scientific or cultural organizations serving the Miami Beach community and public educational institutions.
- They are human service organizations that receive direct support from the City of Miami Beach.

- They are community festivals and events that are open to the general public and that are sponsored or co-sponsored by the City.
- Providers of search engines from the City of Miami Beach websites.
- No links are allowed to sites containing inappropriate material or to information irrelevant to the City's mission or services.
- The City's review team, consisting of the assistant city manager, IT director, public information officer and special projects coordinator, have the authority to approve external links.
- The City's review team is authorized to order removal of material that is noncompliant with these guidelines from the City's social network sites.

Links shall not be made to sites that are associated with, sponsored by or serve a candidate for elected office or any political part or organization supporting or seeking to defeat any candidate for elective office or ballot proposal.

### **Privacy & Security**

The City has the right to monitor employees' social media use on City equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users do not and should have no expectation of privacy. Social media is not a secure means of communication

When using social networking sites technologies, City employees will:

- Identify themselves by name and as an employee of the City of Miami Beach.
- Use appropriate language and refrain from ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the City's workplace.
- Demonstrate proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.
- Be aware that what is written will not only reflect on the writer, but also on the elected officials of the City of Miami Beach and other City employees.
- Not provide confidential information about cases or clients, including names, or use such material as part of any content added to a site.
- Not comment on business partners or their competitors' practices or services or use such as part of content added to a site.
- Not provide others with confidential or proprietary information that would compromise negotiations or including such as part of content added to a site without permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the City of Miami Beach.
- Be aware that all content added to a site *may* be subject to Florida's public records & open meetings laws and discovery in legal cases.
- Insure that any content published to any website outside of the City of Miami Beach that is related to an employee's work or subjects associated with the City of Miami Beach will include the following disclaimer: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the City of Miami Beach's positions, strategies or opinions."

### **Hosting**

Currently, the City of Miami Beach uses YouTube for video sharing, Flickr for photographs, Scribd for publications, and Twitter and Facebook for status updates. As the need and technologies evolve, other hosting sites may be used.

### **Moderating Public Comments**

Where moderation of comments is an available option, comments from the public will be moderated by the City of Miami Beach Office of Communications and/or the City Manager's Office before posting in compliance with the City's comment policy.

In general, comments that are abusive, obscene, defamatory, in violation of copyright, trademark right, or other intellectual property right of any third party, or otherwise inappropriate or incorrect will not be posted.

Where moderation prior to posting is not an option, sites will be regularly monitored by the Office of Communications and/or the City Manager's Office.

### **Other Considerations**

Postings must not violate any federal, state or municipal laws. For example, they may not:

- Reveal information about ongoing investigations
- Discuss deliberative materials
- Violate the regulatory process
- Circumvent Public Records & Open Meetings Laws
- Violate privacy or copyright
- Violate other legal issues that may not apply

Postings must not contradict or encourage misuse of City of Miami Beach directions, guidance or other official information.