

CITY OF BRANSON, MISSOURI
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

RULE NUMBER 16 REFERENCING ARTICLE 24 OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANUAL
AMENDED 7-10-2012

A RULE PERTAINING TO **INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY**

Section 1. General

Social Media is defined as any form of online communication in which individuals shift fluidly and flexibly between the role of audience and author. To do this, they use social software that enables anyone without knowledge of coding, to post, comment on, share conversations, and to form communities around shared work-related or personal interests. Examples (not all inclusive) of such media are: You Tube, My Space, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

The chats, social media groups, e-mail of the Internet, and text messaging, give each individual Internet user an immense and unprecedented ability to propagate City messages. Because of that power, we must take special care to maintain the clarity, consistency and integrity of the City's image and posture. Anything any one employee writes in the course of acting for the City on the Internet can be taken as representing the City's posture.

The City of Branson has decided to provide access to the Internet and business-related Social Media groups (under controlled conditions) for certain employees based upon decisions made at the Department Director level. The facilities to provide that access represent a considerable commitment of City resources for telecommunications, networking, software, storage, etc. This Internet and Social Media Policy is designed to help you understand the City's expectations for the use of those resources, and to help you use those resources wisely. As already noted, each employee is not automatically granted Internet access, whether it be e-mail, web-browsing, social media groups, etc. It is up to each Department Director to determine the need and level, if any, of Internet and Social media access for each individual under their supervision.

Section 2. Purpose

The Internet for this organization is a business tool provided to you at significant cost, and the City is aware that business related Social Media groups may be useful in the work environment; however, employees need to be aware of professional responsibilities when using the sites. That means we expect you to use your Internet access for business-related purposes only, i.e. to communicate with citizens and suppliers, to research relevant topics and obtain useful business information, etc. Beyond that, we expect you to conduct yourself honestly and appropriately on the Internet and in any Social Media group, and respect the copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, privacy and prerogatives of others, just as you would in any business dealing. To be absolutely clear on this point, all existing City policies apply to your conduct on the Internet and in any business-related Social Media group, especially (but not exclusively) those that deal

with intellectual property protection, privacy, misuse of City resources, any form of harassment or discrimination, information and data security, and confidentiality.

Unnecessary or unauthorized Internet usage also causes network and server congestion, slows other users, takes away from work time, and ties up printers and other shared resources. Unlawful Internet and other inappropriate usage may also garner negative publicity for the City and expose the City to significant legal liabilities.

Section 3. Policy

A. Provisions

- (1) The City has software and systems in place that monitor and record all Internet usage. We want you to be aware that our security systems are capable of recording (for each and every user) each World Wide Web site visit, each chat and text, social media group, or e-mail message, and each file transfer into and out of our internal networks, and we reserve the right to do so at any time. ***No employee should have any expectation of privacy as to his/her City Internet and Social Media usage.*** IT will review Internet activity and analyze usage patterns, and may choose to utilize this data to assure that City Internet resources are devoted to maintaining the highest levels of productivity.
- (2) We reserve the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of our network in order to assure compliance with this and all City policies.
- (3) The display of any kind of sexually explicit image or document on any City system or property is considered a violation of our policy on harassment. In addition, sexually explicit material may not be accessed, archived, stored, distributed, edited or recorded (unless during an investigation) using our network or computing resources.
- (4) The City's Internet facilities and computing resources must not be used knowingly to violate the laws and regulations of the U.S. or any other nation, or the laws and regulations of any state, city, province or other local jurisdiction. Use of any City resource for illegal activity is grounds for immediate dismissal, and we will cooperate with law enforcement in the investigation of such use.
- (5) No employee may use City resources knowingly to download or distribute pirated software or data.

- (6) No employee may use City resources to deliberately propagate any Internet virus, worm, Trojan Horse, or trap-door program code.
- (7) No employee may use City resources to disable or overload any computer system or network, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.
- (8) Only those employees or officials who are duly authorized to speak to the media, to analysts, or in public gatherings on behalf of the City may speak/write in the name of the City to any newsgroup or chat room, or grant such authority to newsgroups or chat room participants. Other employees may participate in newsgroups or chats in the course of business when relevant to their duties, but they do so as individuals speaking only for themselves. Where an individual participant is identified as an employee or agent of the City, the employee must refrain from any unauthorized political advocacy, and must refrain from the unauthorized endorsement or appearance of endorsement by the City of any product or service not sold or serviced by the City of its departments.
- (9) The City retains the copyright and ownership to any material posted to any forum, social media group, chat, or World Wide Web page by any employee in the course of his/her duties.
- (10) Employees are reminded that texts, chats and newsgroups are public forums where it is inappropriate to reveal confidential City or citizen information. Employees releasing protected information via a text, newsgroup or chat, whether or not the release is inadvertent, will be subject to disciplinary action.
- (11) No employee shall make or share any communication that engages in harassment, contributes to an unlawful hostile work environment, or is otherwise threatening, libelous or defamatory.

Section 4. Security

While our direct connection to the Internet offers many potential benefits, it can also open the door to some significant risks to our data and systems if we do not follow appropriate security discipline. An Internet user can be held accountable for any breaches of security or confidentiality.

- A. The City has installed a variety of firewalls, proxies, Internet address screening programs and other security systems to assure the safety and security of the City's networks. Any employee who attempts to disable, defeat or circumvent any City security system will be subject to immediate dismissal.

- B. Only those Internet services and functions with documented business purposes for the City will be enabled at the Internet firewall. Authorized access to the Internet does not negate any part of this policy.
- C. Guard your passwords with care.

Section 5. Disciplinary Action

Appropriate disciplinary actions are referenced herein, and otherwise established under the relevant provisions of Rule #4 of the Human Resources Handbook.