

**Purpose:** The methods by which people can communicate continue to evolve through various social media applications, smart phones, web based options, and other electronic technology. The Town of Pembroke recognizes the many opportunities for communication through these tools to the public. The Town encourages the responsible use by its employees, agents, elected and appointed officials, consultants, volunteers and any person conducting business with or on behalf of the Town of Pembroke social media channels of communication and of private social media channels of communication. Therefore this Guideline is applicable to all people listed in the preceding sentence. The use of these tools create new responsibilities for Town employees, Boards, and Commissions. The purpose of this Guideline is to provide guidance to clarify the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate use of official Town of Pembroke and private social media accounts and services. Nothing in this Guideline is intended to restrict an individual's right to discuss, as a private citizen, matters of public concern on private social media sites. Nothing in this Guideline is intended to restrict an individual's right to engage in concerted activity with co-workers in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws.

**Definitions:** "Social Media" is:

1. Any website
2. Any Social Networking website (e.g. Twitter, Myspace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, YikYak)
3. Multimedia sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Picassa, Shutterfly)
4. Blogs (e.g. Wikipedia, PBwiki, Wikispaces)
5. Forums and discussion boards (e.g. Google Groups, Yahoo! Groups, Yammer)
6. Personally managed websites, blogs, etc.
7. On-line polls and surveys (e.g. Survey Monkey, Doodle)
8. Any other web or application accessible site on which an individual user can post texts, media, etc.

Official Social Media is:

Any of the sites or services listed in the definition section of this Guideline and their affiliated accounts which were established by and through the Town of Pembroke and are maintained by the Town of Pembroke, its employees, officials, or board members

**Guidance:**

1. Official Social Media sites will be used solely for communicating information about projects and services offered by the Town. Examples include Town/Department announcements, official Town news, Emergency notifications, Town events and activities, or Board or Committee meetings or agendas. Town employees may not engage in private messaging over official Town social media accounts. Official Social Media cannot be used to post political information or viewpoints, religious information or viewpoints, commercial information, information pertaining to an employee's personal activities, matters, or interests, information which consists of content which is sexual, pornographic, or adult in character, or information which advocates or promotes the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
2. When posting to Social Media sites you should do so in a way that is not defamatory. Defamatory communications are those that cause harm to the reputation of another person or cause that person to be ridiculed, held in contempt, or lowered in the estimation of the community. Defamatory statements will not be tolerated. Defamatory statements are your own responsibility and the Town of Pembroke will not defend you from the consequences of your personal actions.
3. You may not misrepresent any non-Official Social Media site as a Town of Pembroke Official Social Media site. The use of the Town's name and/or of the Town Seal are prohibited unless approved by the Town Administrator or his/her designee. Misuse of the Town Seal is a criminal act punishable pursuant to M.G.L c. 268, s.35. You may not post information on a non-Official Social Media site which can be read as indicating that the information is being posted by you in your capacity as a Town employee or official, that it constitutes official information of the Town, or that it represents an official viewpoint of the Town. If in connection with a posting on a non-Official Social Media site you identify yourself as a Town employee or official or it is reasonable to conclude that readers will know that you are a Town employee or official, you must include a statement that your posting is not made on behalf of, and does not represent an official viewpoint of, the Town.
4. You may not use Social Media to post material which is illegal, which is in violation of federal or state laws regarding discrimination, or which constitutes criminal conduct. You may not use Social Media to post material which constitutes an unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or confidential information of the Town, information protected by the Town's attorney-client privilege, information constituting the Town's internal development of a policy, or personnel records or information regarding Town employees or the Town's non-public labor relations information..

5. Any reference requests received through any Social Media site for current or former employees must be directed to the Town Administrator's office. Comments which you post about current or former employees can have legal consequences and you should avoid making any such comments at any time which reasonably and foreseeably could have legal consequences.
6. Any posted content on Official Social Media sites that include pictures, photographs, likenesses, or images cannot under any circumstances depict children under the age of 18, and cannot include the complete names of anyone other than Town employees or officials. If you need to post an item that include pictures, photographs, likenesses, or images of another person(s), the individuals who are depicted must first sign a release form which expressly authorizes the Town of Pembroke to use such image and likeness online. If you do not obtain permission, the picture, photograph, likeness, or image must be blurred in such a manner that the person cannot be identified or recognized. If that is not possible, the material cannot be used at all.
7. You should keep in mind that content posted to Official Social Media sites may constitute public records within the meaning of the Massachusetts Public Records Law and may be obtained by members of the public upon request.
8. You must avoid communications in any posts or online communications which could create a hostile environment for, or where the person reasonably believes they are being harassed by, another Town employee. You must ensure that your postings are consistent with other Town Policies, including but not limited to, those concerning Sexual Harassment, Workplace Bullying and Offensive Conduct, Workplace Conduct Policy, and Code of Ethics.

**Official Social Media Accounts:**

1. Official Social Media accounts of any type may only be initiated, established, and/or authorized by the Town Administrator or his designee.
2. Once authorized, any and all Town Departments and Divisions can establish a social media account. The accounts should be used to promote the department and its functions and in a manner which complies with the applicable requirements of this Guideline.
3. All Official Social Media account login information must be compiled and maintained by the Town Administrator's office.

**Monitoring:** The Town reserves the right to monitor content on all Official Social Media sites and to modify or remove any messages, posting, or images that it deems in its sole discretion and judgment to be abusive, defamatory, violation of copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property rights, or otherwise in violation.

Any post, comment, or remark that contains obscene or sexual language, personal attacks, insults, profane language, racist or discriminating language, or personal or private information will also be removed.

The Town reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action for any violation of this Guideline on any Official Social Media Site or non-Official Social Media site which comes to its attention.

**Procedure:** Failure to comply with this Guideline may lead to disciplinary action. Discipline can include, but is not necessarily limited to, a directive to cease the misrepresentation of official Town guideline or business, verbal or written warning, suspension, and/or further action.