



## Town of Winthrop

### PERSONAL SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

#### ***Introduction:***

This Policy is intended to provide guidance with regard to the personal use of social networking sites during non-work hours and on equipment not belonging to the Town of Winthrop. Use of social networking sites during work hours or on equipment owned and/or maintained by the Town of Winthrop is strictly prohibited, and is governed by the Access and Use of Telecommunications Systems Policy.

**Nothing contained in this policy is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours or other terms and conditions of employment.**

#### ***Purpose:***

Because of the Town's substantial interest in maintaining a professional, collegial, confidential, and impartial workplace, it is imperative that all Town of Winthrop employees who engage in use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, or Bebo, abide by the terms of this Policy and any such additional related policies that may be issued by the Town of Winthrop. Employees are encouraged to remember that information posted on the internet can be easily traced back to its author, and should think before posting information to any online source. The list of social networking sites is not intended to be exhaustive, and shall be deemed to include any social networking sites in existence at the time this policy is reviewed by the employee, or created thereafter.

#### ***Guidelines for Personal Usage:***

The same principles and guidelines found in the Town's policies apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of coworkers or otherwise adversely affects Town residents, customers, suppliers, people seeking assistance from the Town or the Town's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees are encouraged to use professional judgment at all times with regard to personal use of social networking sites. Employees should not disclose confidential information, engage in any unlawful activity, or convey information that is disparaging, defamatory, malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating while using social networking sites. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or Town policy. Such statements

or comments occurring online and/or through use of social networking sites will not be tolerated.

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the Town of Winthrop fellow employees, residents, or persons seeking assistance from the Town of Winthrop.

Express only your personal opinions. Never represent that you are a spokesperson for the Town of Winthrop. If the Town or one of its residents is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that your views do not represent those of the Town, coworkers or residents. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the Town of Winthrop, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Town. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Town of Winthrop.”

***Guidelines for Business Usage:***

Only authorized employees (as identified by the Town Manager), may participate in social media as an official representative of the Town. Only authorized users can create social media accounts using a Town email address. Accounts registered to a Town email address belong to the Town. All communications on behalf of the Town should be written or displayed (video/photographic) in a professional and respectful manner, ensuring the communications do not violate a law or result in any harm, embarrassment, adverse publicity or potential liability for the Town, its residents, volunteers or employees. If authorized to comment for the Town, do not post or link to any defamatory or obscene language or material, harass or disparage another person or entity. You must comply with all Town policies when posting on behalf of the Town.

***Violations of Policy:***

Violation(s) of this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment. Violations may also result in referral to the appropriate authorities for civil or criminal prosecution. Employees shall report violations of this Policy to their supervisor, or in the case of department heads, directly to the Town Manager. Retaliation against another user for reporting a violation or violations of this Policy is strictly prohibited by the Town of Winthrop.

The Town Manager reserves the right to make limited exceptions to this policy.