

Town of Guilford
223 Marble Road
Guilford, NY 13780

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy: It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to establish guidelines for the use of social media by all municipal employees, volunteers, consultants, service providers and contractors performing business on behalf of municipal employees.

Procedure:

To prohibit the inappropriate use of electronic communication systems, media imaging systems, networks, devices, and equipment and dissemination of inappropriate information, images, recordings, photographs or other materials by town personnel. This includes the use of social media. Social media is broadly defined as internet-based communications technology that provides immediacy, interactivity and the sharing of information across multiple platforms.

The Town of Guilford allows the use of social media, where appropriate, to further the goals and missions of the town. However, the Town of Guilford has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the town through social media. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media by Town of Guilford employees.

I. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all municipal employees and approved volunteers, consultants, service providers and contractors performing business on behalf of Town of Guilford.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that all individuals identified in paragraph II abide by the policy set forth herein when using town information systems, which are defined as: computers and the services of both internal and external databases and information exchange networks, the internet, email, voice mail, mobile data terminals, facsimile machines, mobile telephones, laptop computers and social media (“Information Systems”).

Communications sent by email may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act or in litigation. No employee shall have any expectation of privacy with regard to any information transmitted or stored on the Town of Guilford’s Information Systems.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Transmission of electronic messages and information on communications media provided for employees of the municipality shall be treated with the same degree of propriety, professionalism, and confidentiality as official written correspondence or public records.
- B. The Town of Guilford encourages authorized and trained personnel with access to municipal Information Systems to utilize these devices whenever necessary. However, all Information Systems are the property of the Town of Guilford and use of any of these Information Systems is a privilege that is subject to revocation. Information Systems are intended for use in conducting official municipal business with limited exceptions noted in this policy.
- C. Employees are advised that they do not maintain any right to privacy or ownership in Information Systems equipment or its contents or to include or install personally owned software.
- D. The Town of Guilford's administration reserves the right to access any of the records within the Information Systems at any time and to retain or dispose of those records as it deems necessary and appropriate, and may require employees to provide passwords to files that have been encrypted or password protected.
- E. The Town of Guilford reserves the right to access, for quality control purposes and/or for violations of this policy, date, electronic and voice transmissions of employees conducting business in the municipality.
- F. Personal and/or private use of Town of Guilford Information Systems to access social media sites is prohibited.
- G. Accessing or transmitting materials from Town of Guilford Information Systems that involve the use of obscene language, images, jokes, sexually explicit materials, or messages that disparage or threaten the municipality, any person, group, or classification of individuals is prohibited regardless of whether the recipient has consented to or requested such materials.

[This section applies to Law Enforcement Agencies if applicable]

Exception: Employees involved in criminal investigations, during the performance of their official duties, may be requested to receive, copy, download, or transmit sexually explicit or other materials normally not allowed. Anyone requiring such authorization will request, in writing, permission from the Employee's supervisor prior to beginning to receive, copy, download or transmit this material.

- H. Confidential, proprietary or sensitive information may be disseminated or made available through shared directories or networked systems only to individuals with a need and a right to know and when there is sufficient assurance that appropriate security of such information will be maintained. The dissemination of confidential, proprietary or sensitive information, including photographs, on social media sites or personal web pages is prohibited.
- I. Employees shall not post photographs of their co-workers on their personal social media sites.

- J. No employee shall access or allow others to access any file or database of the municipality unless that person has a need and a right to such information. Personal identification and access codes shall not be revealed to any unauthorized source.
- K. Employees are not to open email messages unless they are certain of the trustworthiness of the source.
- L. Employees may not utilize email messages as a secure and confidential means of communication since subsequent direction of the message cannot be controlled.
- M. Employees may not knowingly accept messages with inappropriate content as described in the policy and will immediately report it to their supervisor and then completely delete any such message inadvertently received when directed to do so.
- N. Creating a web site or social media page that has any appearance of officially representing the Town of Guilford is prohibited without the express written approval of the Municipal Board or designee. Any information added to the official municipal web page(s) or site(s) must have the written approval of the Town of Guilford Board prior to being accessible by the general public.
- O. Using images of any official municipal logo, patch, badge or sign on personal web pages is prohibited without the express written approval of the Guilford Town Board.
- P. Employees shall not utilize Information Systems to spoof, masquerade or assume any identity or credentials of another individual.
- Q. The use of social media shall conform to all Town of Guilford policies prohibiting discrimination, retaliation and harassment of co-workers.
- R. Employees shall not identify themselves or any co-worker specifically, or otherwise infer in any way that they are an employee of the Town of Guilford or any personal social media site, unless explicitly granted permission by the Town of Guilford Board.

III. DISCIPLINE

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.