



COUNTY OF CARROLL OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Administration Building
95 Water Village Road Box #1
Ossipee, New Hampshire 03864
Phone 603-539-7751 • Fax 603-539-4287



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| Policy Title: | Social Media Policy |
| Effective Date: | 08/01/2012 |
| Revision Date: | 06/29/2023 |
| Reference(s): | |

Purpose: This policy is intended to guide employee conduct as it relates to representations of employment through the numerous social networking venues. The purpose of this policy is to establish written guidelines concerning these venues and to ensure employees practice appropriate discretion in the use thereof, so as not to discredit or disrespect Carroll County or its departments or employees, including the Administration Offices, County Attorney's Office, Registry of Deeds, Jail and House of Corrections, Sheriff's Office, Communications Center, County Farm, or Mountain View Community (hereafter collectively referred to as "the County").

Policy: For the purpose of this policy, social networking sites are those that use internet services to allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within the system and includes comments posted on any of those sites. The type of network and its design varies from site to site. Examples of internet based social networking sites include, but are not limited to blogs, networking sites, photo sharing, video sharing, micro-blogging, podcasts, and Listservs. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

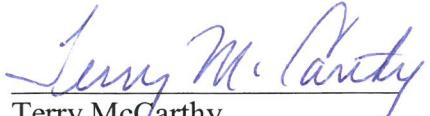
Procedure:

- A. Employees are prohibited from using social media while on work time or on the equipment provided by the County unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor. Employees should not use social media while operating a motor vehicle within the scope of employment with the County. Employees are not to use County-issued email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal interests or purposes.
- B. The County's Information Technology Electronic Communications Policy applies with respect to the use of social media. For example, if you access or use social media on a County electronic device or on a County-sponsored social media site, the data transmitted and retained on such devices and sites belong to the County. You should not expect any privacy related to it, and the County has the right to monitor, access, and review all such data and communications.
- C. Employees may identify themselves as employees of the County on social networking sites. However, the employee must be cognizant that if they do, their postings and actions may

be considered reflective of the County, and they must indicate that they are not authorized to speak on behalf of the County nor are their opinions reflective of the County's. Social media shall not be used to make any statement that is made or purports to be made on behalf of the County, except by individuals expressly authorized do so.

- D. Employees are encouraged to honor the privacy rights of other current and former employees by seeking their permission before writing about or displaying internal County happenings that could be considered a breach of their privacy and confidentiality. Employees at all times shall comply with the law in regard to copyright and plagiarism. Posting someone else's work without permission is prohibited (other than short quotes that comply with "fair use" exceptions). Other relevant laws that need to be complied with include those related to libel and defamation of character.
- E. Employees must recognize that they may be held legally liable for anything they write or present online. Employees can be disciplined for negative commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can otherwise create a hostile work environment. The County will not assume responsibility for the legal defense of any employee accused or found guilty of such conduct, or for damages that may be awarded if an employee is found guilty of such conduct.
- F. Any employee/s with direct or assumed supervisory authority over any other employee/s should exercise extreme caution when networking with other employees. Supervisors may be held personally responsible for offensive communication or photos that occur on social media sites between co-workers outside the workplace on personal equipment. Conduct outside the workplace that is related to, or interferes with another employee's ability to perform his/her job duties may be actionable. Even something as simple as "Liking" or "Disliking" someone or something creates a public record that is discoverable.
- G. Any photographs or video taken while at work that have/has a relationship to any work related incident, that are not otherwise already in the public domain, shall not be posted on social network sites. Furthermore, no photographs will be taken, printed, downloaded or distributed for any employee's personal use and/or beyond the scope of an employee's official capacity or duty assignment.
- H. Employees must take proper care not to purposely or inadvertently disclose any information that is confidential or sensitive. Employees without the authorization of the appropriate Department Head are prohibited from disclosing information or details including but not limited to:
 - 1) Criminal or traffic stops or investigations
 - 2) Administrative investigations or actions
 - 3) Official agency training, calls for service, vehicle crashes and/or other contacts with citizens
 - 4) Personnel issues, including disciplinary actions, transfers, etc.
- I. Employees are expected to use common sense in all communications, particularly on a website or social media networking site accessible to the public. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are subject to all provisions of this policy.



Terry McCarthy
Chairman



Matthew Plache
Vice-Chairman

Charles McGee
Clerk

Adopted: 6/29/2023