

WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP

SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY

PURPOSE

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet, and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Whitemarsh Township may consider using social media tools to reach a broader Township audience. The Township encourages the use of social media to further Township goals and missions. It has an overriding interest and expectation, however, in ensuring that what is “communicated” on the Township’s behalf on social media sites, is also appropriate. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media and may be amended at any time by the Township.

GENERAL:

1. All Township social media sites posted by the Township will be subject to approval by the Township Manager or his/her designee.
2. The Township website (www.whitemarshwp.org) will remain the Township’s primary and predominant internet presence.
 - a. The best, most appropriate Township social media tools fall generally into two categories:
 - i. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (i.e., emergency information, cancellations, or reschedulings).
 - ii. As marketing/promotional channels that increase the Township’s ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
 - b. Whenever possible, content posted to Township social media sites will also be available on the Township’s website.
 - c. Wherever possible, content posted to the Township’s social media sites should contain links directing users back to the Township’s official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the Township.
3. As is the case for the Township website, the Township Manager or his/her designee will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites.
4. Wherever possible, all Township social media sites shall comply with all appropriate Township policies and standards. Any exceptions must be approved by the Township Manager.
5. Township social media sites are subject to the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Township business, including lists of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record, except to the extent that such content includes information that is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the Right to Know Law. Content related to Township business shall be maintained in an

accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a record request. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting may be subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Right to Know Law. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the Open Records Officer.

6. Pennsylvania law and applicable Township records-retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. Unless otherwise addressed in a specific social media “standards” document, records required to be maintained pursuant to an applicable Township records-retention schedule shall be preserved, for the required retention period, on a Township server in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible.
7. Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between Township departments and members of the public. Township social media site articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content are expressly prohibited:
 - a. Comments not topically related to the particular Township social media article being commented upon;
 - b. Comments in support of or opposition to political candidates, campaigns or ballot measures;
 - c. Profane language or content;
 - d. Content that is threatening, intimidating, hostile, offensive, or that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
 - e. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - f. Solicitations of commerce or for personal gain;
 - g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - h. Privileged information or information restricted by the Township;
 - i. Any content not otherwise specified herein that violates Federal, state or local laws;
 - j. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - k. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained in accordance with the applicable Township records-retention schedule, with proper memorialization of the time, date, and identity of the person posting such content, when available.

8. The Township reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.
9. The Township will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise-wide.

10. All new social media tools proposed for Township use shall be pre-approved by the Township Manager or his/her designee.
11. In administering the Township's social media sites, the Township Manager's office will maintain a list of social media tools which are approved for use by the Township, maintain a list of all Whitemarsh Township social media sites, including login and password information, and ensure, at all times, that the Township, if necessary, is able to immediately edit or remove content from social media sites.
12. Posting on social media sites of documents, software or other information protected by the copyright laws, without proper authorization by the copyright owner, is prohibited. Copyright protection applies to any document, photo, software, or information unless it is specifically marked as public, not copyrighted, or freeware. In the absence of any specific copyright markings, material or information should be considered copyright protected. The Township assumes no responsibility for reviewing, ascertaining or policing copyrighted material that may be posted on social media sites by employees or other persons.