

POLICY

A-72

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District's (CSRD) social media policy establishes and outlines the principles for use of employees, volunteers and elected officials when engaging and posting on social media accounts.

POLICY STATEMENT

The policy serves to:

- Help manage the CSRD's online reputation;
- Ensure consistency and professionalism in how the CSRD conducts business online;
- Establish protocols for monitoring and maintaining those channels;
- Ensure appropriate records management related to online forums and the protection of privacy of the public who engage or interact with the CSRD via social media channels.

DEFINITION

Social media includes, but is not limited to: Facebook; Twitter; video-sharing applications such as YouTube; collaboration applications such as Wikipedia; professional network applications such as LinkedIn; photo-sharing applications such as Instagram; and online forums, message boards, discussion groups, blogs and wikis that are internal and external to the Regional District ("Social Media").

GOALS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

- The CSRD uses official social media channels to inform the community of information or events and to provide additional platforms for direct engagement with citizens. The CSRD's social media accounts are not intended to be used for political forums or information outside the CSRD's mandate or scope of service.

Additional goals for social media use include:

- Building the CSRD's platforms as a trusted source in the community;
- Disseminating time-sensitive information quickly;
- Creating a two-way dialogue with the community;
- Providing additional ways to gather community comments and perceptions regarding the CSRD and its initiatives;

- Making it easier for citizens to participate in local government;
- Correcting misinformation or mistakes;
- Driving traffic to the CSRD website for further information.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- All information posted to the CSRD's social media channels is considered public and permanent information, similar to information published on the CSRD website.
- All communication on behalf of the CSRD should adhere to the highest professional standards and apply in conjunction with any current or future CSRD policies or procedures around staff conduct and confidentiality. These include but are not limited to: Respectful Workplace (A-64), Bullying and Harassment (A-66), Code of Ethics (A-67), Code of Conduct (A-68) and Internet Access (PR-13).
- The creation of social media content will be guided by common sense and good judgment. It will be friendly, engaging and professional in tone and strive to use simple, clear language.
- CSRD staff will not actively monitor, moderate or engage in third-party pages or online forums, however, the CSRD may correct erroneous information posted directly to the CSRD's social media channels.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all corporate CSRD social media accounts, as well as the Shuswap Emergency Program and accounts administered by CSRD member fire departments.

This policy will apply to the CSRD partnering organizations, including Shuswap Economic Development, Shuswap Tourism and the Columbia Shuswap Film Commission, with the exception of provisions in this policy dealing with promotion of private businesses, contractors or commercial services. Due to the nature of their work, these organizations use marketing strategies, promotional campaigns and corporate partnerships as a means to promote business opportunities in the region. This differs from the mandate of other corporate CSRD sites, which is to remain neutral in tone for both political and business dealings.

All official CSRD social media accounts will clearly indicate they are maintained by the CSRD and will include appropriate contact information of the moderator of the account.

CSRD STAFF AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The policy applies to all CSRD employees and others who have been authorized by Deputy Manager of Corporate Administration to post information on corporate social media sites in an official capacity. It does not apply to personal use of social media conducted on personal equipment and on personal time.

The CSRD will authorize specific individuals to utilize social media in an official capacity to ensure that communications through social media channels are accurate, consistent and professional. The names and contact information of these individuals will be collected and maintained by the CSRD.

All social media sites should have more than one administrator and passwords need to be made available to CSRD administration. Those authorized individuals will be required to sign a notice stating they have read the terms of this policy and agree to abide by them.

When representing the CSRD on social media, employees are expected to communicate in a respectful and professional manner and in accordance with all CSRD policies.

Employees are not permitted to discuss personal or confidential information on social media sites, whether through public posts or private messages. Non-compliance may result in discipline.

CSRD DIRECTORS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media profiles, accounts or websites representing Members of the CSRD's Board of Directors are exempt from this policy.

Social media profiles, accounts or websites representing Members of the CSRD's Board of Directors will not act as official information media platforms on behalf of the CSRD. Any information to be communicated to the CSRD's social media users will come directly from authorized CSRD sources.

CSRD Directors can use their social media accounts as a secondary information source, once matters have been disseminated via the CSRD's official channels, including the website or official CSRD social media sites. Directors are welcome and encouraged to share or use other social media tools (for example: Liking, Mentioning or Retweeting) to add official CSRD social media communications to their platforms as a way of connecting with their constituents. If personal comments, follow-up posts or original posts are being made by directors pertaining to CSRD-related business, any content created related to these postings will include an "in my opinion" disclaimer.

CSRD Directors are to be aware that corporate CSRD social media use is intended to be politically neutral, and CSRD platforms should not be used to promote or endorse political candidates.

CREATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

The CSRD's Corporate Administration division is responsible for authorizing the creation of any new or additional CSRD social media accounts, tools or channels.

New requests must be submitted to the Corporate Administration Department's Communications Coordinator, and will be considered, in consultation with the Deputy Manager of Corporate Administration, on a case-by-case basis.

No employee is permitted to create or establish an account on a Social Media platform with the intent to represent CSRD without explicit, written permission.

APPROPRIATE USE

Those posting on the CSRD's social media channels, as well as users of the CSRD's social media sites, must abide by the following principles of appropriate use or may be subject to removal. The CSRD reserves the right to remove posted online content, comment or links which contain any of the following:

- Comments not relevant to the particular posting by CSRD authorized individuals;
- CSRD's confidential or proprietary information including intellectual property, lawsuits, legal proceedings and other legal information, financial information, operational information, business plans, prospects, management changes, labour relations, strategies, information about residents, members of the public, elected officials, and employees, and information that has not yet been made officially public by CSRD;
- Postings that contain obscene, pornographic, or sexual content or derogatory or offensive language;
- Slanderous or derogatory remarks, obscenities, profane language or sexual content;
- Content that endorses, promotes, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Promotion of commercial services or products other than sponsors, affiliations or business partnerships.
- Promotion of political candidates;
- Promotion of illegal activity;
- Spam or irrelevant external links;
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

MONITORING

Social media channels for the CSRD are periodically monitored during business hours 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday to Friday. They are not monitored 24/7 and are not an emergency helpline.

When a general inquiry is posted and the response is deemed useful information to CSRD constituents, responses should be posted back to the original comment thread. Further social media posts could be formulated to help provide information or raise awareness among the general public.

Should the CSRD receive a questionable post, the Communications Coordinator, in conjunction with Management, will determine the appropriate response. Staff shall not counter with an argumentative or defensive post. Anyone with posting authority should consult with the Communications Coordinator, Deputy Manager of Corporate Administration or the Chief Administrative Officer when becoming aware of a questionable post, so a proper response can be determined.

SHARING FROM OTHER SOURCES

Sharing from other sources can be an efficient, effective and accurate way of providing information through the CSRD social's media channels.

Cross posting from the CSR D's member sites (eg. Shuswap Emergency Program, Shuswap Tourism, Shuswap Economic Development, Columbia Shuswap Film Commission, CSR D Fire Department pages) should be encouraged where relevant and appropriate.

In other cases, sharing from outside sources can help provide accurate and consistent messaging, as well as disseminating information rapidly, if necessary. In this case, preferred sources should be used. These include:

- Another CSR D department site;
- A CSR D member municipality's social media channel or webpage;
- Another government agency or a government partnering agency (for example Recycle BC);
- Tourism organizations in CSR D area communities;
- PreparedBC for emergency preparedness information;
- Emergency Info BC for alerts or information;
- BC Wildfire Service for wildfire updates;
- Drive BC for road conditions;
- An established media outlet.

RECORDS

All CSR D social networking sites shall adhere to applicable Provincial, Federal, and local laws, regulations, and policies. The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* applies to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with this Act.

DECEMBER 7, 2018