

Rutherford County Government **Social Media Policy**

This is the official policy for social media at Rutherford County Government (the “Social Media Policy”). This policy applies to every *employee, intern, or volunteer* (the “Employee”), whether part-time or full-time, currently employed by the County in any capacity who posts any material whether written, audio, video or otherwise via any medium on the County’s behalf. A holder of a constitutional position or an employee who within their job description or official capacity is assigned or allowed to develop and/or maintain the social media venue for their office or department is the “County-authorized employee or representative”.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

This policy shall be applied only to the extent permitted by and in a manner consistent with the United States and Tennessee Constitutions. Only County-authorized employees shall speak on behalf of the County. County-authorized employees are expected to protect the privacy and non-public information of the County and its’ employees.

All County social media sites representing that they are a site of the County must be created pursuant to this policy and be approved by the appropriate Constitutional Officer, department head or other designee. The County’s primary and predominant Internet presence shall remain www.rutherfordcountyttn.gov and no other medium shall characterize itself as being the County’s primary or home Internet site.

Before any County social media medium is created utilizing County resources, the department head shall submit a written request to the County Mayor and the Director of Information Technology. The County Mayor and the Director of Information Technology must be in agreement with request filed by a department and then file it within the Office of Information Technology and the Human Resources Department. The request shall:

- (1) Specify the reasons for the request;
- (2) Describe the type of information to be provided; and
- (3) Identify and name the person(s) within the department who will be responsible for the management of the content and upkeep of the social media medium created or maintained pursuant to the request.

It is respectfully requested that the Constitutional Officer notify the Director of Information Technology with the name of the person(s) within their office who will be responsible for the management of the content and upkeep of the social media medium created or maintained for their Office.

In addition to this policy, all County social media mediums shall comply with all applicable County policies and state laws dealing with County publications.

A County social media medium shall contain a clear and conspicuous statement that its purpose is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the County and its citizens and that all postings are subject to review by the County. The County reserves the right to immediately remove any content that violates the spirit of this Policy. Posting of content prohibited under this policy may subject the poster to civil and/or criminal penalties under federal and/or state law and termination of employment.

Employees shall not use County resources to conduct personal blogging or personal social networking activities.

If contacted by the media about a post that relates to County business, employees shall discuss with their Constitutional Officer or department head prior to responding.

The use of a County email address, job title, uniform, official County name, seal, or logo shall be deemed an attempt to represent the County in an official capacity. Communications leading an average person to conclude that a posting was made in an official capacity shall also be deemed an attempt to represent the County in an official capacity.

Postings made in an official capacity shall be subject to the Tennessee Public Records Act, including any official postings on a non-County social media site.

OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Commissioners of the County shall be aware that use of a social media site to discuss or deliberate any matter with another Rutherford County Commissioner could reasonably be deemed to be in violation of the Open Meetings Act, T.C.A. 8.- 44-101 et.seq., commonly known as "the Sunshine Law".

MONITORING

The Rutherford County Employee Handbook defines the technology expectations and rules in more detail. Postings are public records and can be reviewed by anyone via an "Open Records Request". The County uses tools and software to monitor participation in social media forums while using County resources. Employees are cautioned that they should have no expectation of privacy while using the County equipment, facilities, or networks for any purpose, including authorized social media while at work or on County equipment. The County reserves the right to use content management tools to monitor, review, block, or remove content posted using County technology or equipment.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

The County requests and strongly urges employees to report any violations or perceived violations to their Constitutional Officer, Department Head, the Office of Information Technology, the Director of Human Resources, and/or the abuse and fraud hotline.

DISCIPLINE FOR VIOLATIONS

The County investigates and responds to all reports of violations of the Social Media Policy and other related policies. Violation of the County's Social Media Policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination (without prior warning, written or verbal). Discipline or termination will be determined based on the nature and factors of the infraction. The County reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in prohibited or unlawful conduct.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received a copy, either physically or electronically, of the Rutherford County Social Media Policy. I have read and understand the policy so that I know my rights and responsibilities as an employee, intern, or volunteer of Rutherford County Government. I also understand that I am expected to follow the policy and may contact the Office of Information Technology or Human Resources Department if I need additional information about this or any other policy or procedure of Rutherford County Government. I understand that the County has the right to modify, delete, or improve any of the policies or guidelines at any time with or without notice. It is understood that future changes in policies and guidelines will supersede or eliminate those found in this policy and guidelines and that employees will be notified of such changes through normal communication channels. I understand that the changes will apply to me regardless of whether I receive actual notice. All information contained in the policies is subject to applicable State, Federal, and Local laws, rules, and regulations. I understand that to the extent that any such laws may conflict with any provision of the policies, such laws, rules, and regulations will control.

I acknowledge that none of the County’s policies may be construed to create a contract of employment or any other legal obligation, express or implied, and that any policy may be amended, revised, supplemented, rescinded or otherwise altered, in whole or in part, at any time, at the sole and absolute discretion of Rutherford County.

Employee Signature

Date

Employee Printed Name

Office or Department