



**CALVERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

<b>TITLE:</b>	1.10-Social Media Policy		
<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	Board of County Commissioners		
<b>RESPONSIBLE STAFF:</b>	Director of Communications & Media Relations		
<b>ISSUE DATE:</b>	2011	<b>REVISION DATE:</b>	2019
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	Establish CCG social media use to mitigate associated risks from use of this technology where possible.		
<b>APPLICABLE TO:</b>	All county government employees		
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	Resolution		

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>GUIDELINE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>POLICY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>PROCEDURE</b>
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**This document needs to be reviewed/updated:**

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Annually</b> <input type="checkbox"/> (Fiscal Year) <input type="checkbox"/> (Calendar Year)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other Interval:</b>	<b>Flag for review on:</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>As needed</b>		

**I. Purpose**

Calvert County Government (herein after “CCG”) augments traditional communication methods with the use of social media channels. CCG uses social media to officially and rapidly communicate matters of public interest to stakeholders, partners, the general public and the media, to enhance community relations and customer service. CCG uses social media tools to reach a broader audience. While the County’s website (www.calvertcountymd.gov) is the County’s primary Internet presence, the County recognizes that, when used appropriately, social media may be useful in furthering the goals of CCG and the missions of its departments.

**II. Policy**

The County has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the County on social media sites. This policy establishes CCG social media use to mitigate associated risks from use of this technology where possible. This policy applies to all employees, approved volunteers, consultants, service providers and contractors acting on behalf of a County agency or department. CCG social media sites may contain information that represents or appears to represent the County’s position on policy issues or other matters affecting County business.

The County has the right to monitor and restrict employees’ social media use on behalf of the County and will exercise this right as necessary. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when utilizing social media on behalf of the County. Social media is not a secure means of communication and shall not be used for any communication other than disclosures of public information, as that phrase is used pursuant to the Maryland Public Information Act, Maryland Annotated Code, State Government Article, §10-612, et seq.

Official CCG presences on social media sites or services are considered extensions of the County's information networks and are governed by the responsibilities set forth in this and related policies and procedures (Technology Security).

### III. Definitions

- **Social Media.** Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and other similar platforms or applications.
- **Copyright.** A form of intellectual property law protecting original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works. A copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems or methods of operation – only the way these objects may be expressed.
- **Official use.** Official use of social media is defined as use of social media as an authorized component of an employee's job duties.
- **Designated users.** Individuals authorized to post or monitor information on behalf of County government.
- **Professional use at work.** Employee's use of social media only for approved business.
- **Personal use of social media at or outside of work.** Personal use of social media is defined as social media use on an account registered to an individual and their personal (non-County) email address that is not for County business purposes. Personal use of social media is not allowed on County work time, equipment or resources.

### IV. Acceptable Use

When using social media, designated Calvert County employees will act in a professional and ethical manner by:

1. Posting public information that is professional and reflects positively on the County; and
2. Promoting the value and importance of County services; and
3. Providing factual data, sources and balanced views while acknowledging and correcting errors and using proper grammar and style; and
4. Being aware that all content is subject to open records law; and
5. Ensuring social media use is for official County communication, in accordance with organizational goals and objectives;
6. Ensuring communication through social media outlets remains professional in nature and is conducted in accordance with the County's communications policy, practices and expectations; and
7. Avoiding use of social media sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, engage in private business activities or to set the appearance of preference.

### V. Unacceptable Use

Any person representing the County when using social media may be subject to disciplinary action, including, without limitation, suspension or termination, for:

1. Providing information regarding pending business decisions that would compromise negotiations;
2. Providing confidential information about cases or clients, including names;
3. Providing information not subject to disclosure pursuant to the Maryland Public Information Act, Maryland Annotated Code, *State Government Article*, §10-612, *et seq.*;
4. Providing information different in form or content than approved for dissemination;

5. Promoting ***any*** business entity on a CCG social media page that does not directly involve County government operations (*excluding ribbon cuttings, ground breakings, business expansion and business announcements, that assist in the promotion of economic development*).
6. Failing to exercise good judgment or respect of the opinions of those who may comment on a social media site operating on behalf of the County.

## **VI. Emergency Operations**

In disaster or emergency situations, the Director, Department of Public Safety may assume control of all County social media sites to ensure that effective communications are managed appropriately.

## **VII. General Governance and Oversight**

The Department of Communications & Media Relations (CMR) maintains general oversight of all County social media sites. Persons and departments using social media technology prior to the implementation of the County's Social Media Use Policy shall achieve immediate policy compliance.

- a. There will be one official CCG page per social media outlet. All County departments will have access to post relevant CCG specific information. As new channels become available, amendments may be made.
- b. Effective the date of this policy the departments authorized (grandfathered) separate social media pages are grandfathered and include:
  - a) Parks & Recreation (*Facebook, Instagram*)
  - b) Public Safety (*Facebook, Instagram, Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter only*)
  - c) Economic Development (*Facebook; LinkedIn, business retention and business development; Facebook, Instagram, tourism*)
- c. Any requests outside of CCG to post information on the official CCG page(s) require approval from the County Administrator and CMR Director.
- d. All social media posts will be done through the CCG social media Content Management System (CMS) platform, approved by relevant department heads and undergo editorial review by CMR prior to posting.
- e. Those departments that have a demonstrated need will be authorized to have a separate social media presence with the approval of the CMR Director, County Administrator and Board of County Commissioners.
- f. Additional social media pages may be created for project-specific audiences (example: Public Works construction of a new road) upon County Administrator approval and recommendation from the requesting Department Director and CMR Director.
- g. Department heads are responsible for determining who is authorized to request social media messaging on behalf of the agency/department, and for designating appropriate access levels.
- h. Department use of social media technology shall conform to the policies, protocols and procedures contained, or referenced, herein.
- i. Social media sites shall be created and maintained in accordance with County social network usage standards and with identifiable and branded characteristics of an official County site.
- j. County social media sites shall be monitored regularly and prompt corrective action shall be taken as necessary.
- k. Social media accounts and pages maintained by the County may be used only to promote the interests of or the services, programs and/or events provided or sponsored by the County and County departments. Official social media accounts of the County may not be used to promote the interests or services, programs and or/events provided or sponsored by any non-County, non-County affiliated or commercial entity.

1. Employee responsibilities on social media:
  1. When using social media as part of their official duties, and/or when representing oneself in social media settings as a CCG representative, employees must comply with applicable CCG policies governing employee behavior and acceptable use of electronic information resources.
  2. Employees **may not** utilize social media resources to represent the County **at any time** unless authorized to do so.
  3. Employees **may not** utilize social media at any time (*during business hours*) unless authorized to do so.
  4. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action of the social media policy if violated.
  5. Employees authorized to represent the County via social media outlets must conduct themselves in accordance with all County policies.
  6. Protect and respect privacy and permissions.
  7. Strive for accuracy, transparency and openness in social media communications.

### **VIII. Authorized Users**

- a. Designated CMR employees will edit and review information prior to public posting to ensure compliance with County policies.
- b. The Director of Public Safety and Director of Parks & Recreation can update content during emergency situations.
- c. Departments that desire to transmit information via County social media channels will have access to request posts through the Content Management System (CMS). Departments without CMS access may request social media posts by contacting CMR.

### **IX. Authorized County Social Media Sites**

The following social media sites may be utilized on behalf of the County as an approved means of communication of the County:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube (video)
- Vimeo (video)

### **X. Employee Access to CCG Social Media Networks**

- a. Access to social media networks on behalf CCG is limited to individuals performing official County business and as otherwise may be permitted pursuant to the County's Personnel Code 86.
- b. CCG social media network access shall be limited only to those with a clear business purpose to do so.
- c. Authorized users shall be provided a copy of the County's social media policy and are required to acknowledge their understanding and acceptance of the policy.

### **XI. Non-Employee Access to CCG Social Media Networks**

- a. CCG social media sites may only be administered by authorized CCG employees.
- b. External vendors and contractors may assist with developing specialized content, but they may not administer a social media page on behalf of CCG.
- c. All content prepared by external contractors will follow the same process of review and approval by CMR to ensure that content is current, the message conveyed is consistent with

the County's message, "brand" and any applicable policies and procedures, and that the message promotes services, programs and/or other events provided by CCG.

## **XII. Social Media Content**

- a. All CCG social media sites will post consistent rules.
- b. CMR is responsible for monitoring postings, and taking appropriate action when necessary, to protect general site visitors from inappropriate or technically harmful information and links.
- c. Information shared through social media channels shall fully comply with County Communications Policies and Procedures and shall not disclose confidential or proprietary information.
- d. Comments made on social media sites and tools are to be treated as public comment under open meeting laws. No representative of the County may respond, on social media, to any public comment placed unless authorized to do so.
- e. Public comment may not be removed except as allowed or required by law.
- f. Sharing or posting content owned by others shall be performed in accordance with copyright, fair use and established laws pertaining to materials owned by others. This includes, but is not limited to, quotes, images, documents, links, etc.
- g. Social media content may sometimes include photographs, audio or video. Content submitters are responsible for ensuring that social media content posted on the site is not infringing on the intellectual property rights of others.
- h. Content submitters will not request to share any restricted-use or copyrighted photos.
- i. It is not intended to use social media sites in a way that guarantees the right to protected free speech.
- j. Sites that allow public comment shall inform visitors of the intended purpose of the site and provide a clear statement of the discussion topic introduced for public comment. This will ensure the public is aware of the limited nature of the discussion and that inappropriate posts are subject to removal, including but not limited to the following types of postings regardless of format (text, video, images, links, documents, etc.):
  1. Comments not topically related;
  2. Profane language or content;
  3. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of age, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry or national origin, religion, race, color, genetic information, actual or perceived disability, or gender-related identity or expression.
  4. Solicitations of commerce;
  5. Political statements or endorsements;
  6. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  7. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- k. The County Attorney reviews specific disclaimers for each authorized site. The County Attorney may also be consulted to determine whether to remove comments that violate this policy. CMR, will hide or delete any material in violation of this policy, or to block a user from a site, and will notify the County Attorney.

## **XIII. Procedure**

CMR encourages departments to pre-plan promotional posts so information can be pre-loaded and scheduled. It is not required, but will make management of your information more efficient on both ends.

### **CMS Access (non-emergency):**

- a. Do not submit requests that are not considered public information. The discussion of sensitive, proprietary, or classified information is strictly prohibited.
- b. Departments enter requests directly into the CMS for editing and review. If uncomfortable placing a work order request, departments can reach out to CMR on x2487.
- c. Departments without CMS access should enter requests into the CMR work order system Zendesk.
- d. Customers should request a due date.
- e. Editorial review will be conducted by CMR. Suggested changes will be sent back the requesting department.
- f. Department head approval is required for all non-emergency social media posts.

### **CMS Access (emergency):**

- a. Emergency events are designated by the Director of Public Safety. When an emergency is designated, CMR will notify department heads that social media sites will be reserved for emergency messaging.
- b. Public Safety and Parks & Recreation are the only departments authorized to post in times of an emergency or when emergency access is warranted. These departments have the ability to bypass editorial review in emergency situations.
- c. All other departments can reach out to CMR on x2487.

### **Branding**

- a. All social media profile images must comply with any applicable CCG branding standards.
- b. Photographs used on a County social media page to showcase the services, programs and/or events provided or sponsored by the County, not taken by the County, may be given credit in the text section associated with the photograph and may not be watermarked in any way that would promote the non-County entity.

### **Posting Guidelines for Individual Social Media Sites:**

#### **Calvert County Government (CCG) Official Pages.**

1. Information is limited to County government-specific information unless otherwise directed by the County Administrator.
2. Events should be County-government specific on the official Government site.
3. Reposting of new articles on the CCG site will not be permitted to avoid the perception that we are favoring one publication over another.
4. Reposting of tourism-related articles are allowed on the Tourism Facebook page for promotional purposes.

#### **Tourism Social Media Pages (Facebook, Instagram):**

- Information is limited to CCG Tourism information.
- Partner information may be posted, but must be related to events, news highlights and special announcements. (*For example: feature article about a County town, site or attraction, statistical information, promotion of tourism-related Economic Development Programs, etc.*)
- Events may be posted but must be specific to a Calvert County only.

#### **Parks & Recreation Social Media Pages (Facebook, Instagram):**

- Information is limited to CCG Parks & Recreation information.
- Activities may be posted but must be specific to a Calvert County only.

- In emergencies, the Director of Parks & Recreation may post without editorial review.

**Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter Social Media Pages (Facebook, Instagram):**

- Information is limited to Animal Shelter operations.
- Partner information may be posted, but must be related to events, news highlights and special announcements. (*For example: feature article about volunteers and the recognized non-profits working on behalf of the shelter, etc.*)
- Events may be posted but must be specific to the shelter or shelter-related fundraising events only.

**XIV. Constituent Response**

CMR will periodically request responses or clarifications from Departments when questions are asked on social media. When providing input, please be timely, factual and succinct.