POLICY

Department **Communications**	Policy No. **AD(43)**	**Page 1 of 3**
Policy Title **Corporate Social Media Policy**	Date: **October 22, 2026**	Resolution No. **C/511/26**

Policy Statement:

Lacombe County recognizes that social media plays a vital role in communicating with residents, businesses, visitors, and other stakeholders. The County supports the effective and responsible use of social media as a tool for sharing information, promoting programs and services, and fostering public awareness and engagement.

This policy establishes the standards and responsibilities for the administration and use of official County social media accounts, ensuring communications are consistent, professional, transparent, and aligned with the County's goals and values.

Guidelines/Procedures:

Lacombe County supports the use of social media for informational and promotional purposes. County departments, facilities, and programs are permitted to have an official presence on social media sites, provided that careful consideration has been given to how communication objectives will be met, the risks and implications of using social media are understood, and the County Manager and Communications Coordinator have approved the initiative.

Employee Use of Social Media as an authorized spokesperson

When dealing with any type of media, a Lacombe County employee will be deemed a spokesperson for a particular project or situation. In most cases, these individuals will be project or department heads, or will be named in collaboration with administration. Prior to engaging the public through Social Media, these individuals should have training or a solid understanding of how best to represent the County online. This includes ensuring that only official Lacombe County positions are being conveyed, and not an individual’s personal views.

When commenting on any type of media, it’s important for employees to protect Lacombe County's reputation. Every effort must be made to ensure that comments on matters of County policy are appropriate to their employee role and remain politically neutral (in most cases).

Employee Use of Social Media as a private citizen

As private citizens, County employees have the same rights of free speech as any other citizen; however, they are reminded that they are bound by all confidentiality terms for employees.

When acting as a private citizen, a County employee must make a reasonable effort to make it clear their contribution to social media is as a private citizen and not as a representative of the County.

Lacombe County employees will be held responsible for what they write or post on County run pages. Inflammatory comments, disparaging remarks, or negative/inappropriate language or posts may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Employee Use of Social Media at work

While at work, it's important that the use of social media is not affecting productivity. Any abuse of the use of social media during working hours could result in disciplinary action and may result in the blocking of access to these sites from workstations.

Issues and risks to consider

Issues and risks that need to be considered include public relations and operational risks, Information Technology, records management security, FOIP, privacy, and legal (copyright, intellectual property rights, liability, and others).

Public relations and operational risks:

When using social media to communicate, departments must consider:

- How the communications plan aligns with Lacombe County policies and strategic priorities.
- The County's reputation.
- If the social media reaches the target or intended audience.
- Whether the terms of use of social media achieve the department's goals.
- If the content is appropriate to post on the social media site.
- That Lacombe County images, video, and other content posted to social media sites can and, likely will be, downloaded and re-used in other ways on other sites, altered or re-posted to same or other sites. The County will ensure this risk is acceptable for all content posted to these sites.
- That residents and visitors have the means to readily and easily access necessary and important information regarding County programs, sites, facilities, services and policies, without a need to register as a user of a social media site.
- Using good judgment when posting photos from County events.
- Respect copyrights. Don't post text, images or video created by someone else without proper attribution and/or authorization.

Monitoring County Social Media sites

The County shall post, monitor, respond, contribute to, or seek to influence social media conversations in a manner that is identifiable as being made by, or on behalf of, the County by authorized spokespeople in the following manner:

- Authorized spokespeople must ensure all content posted on County social media sites is consistent with the communications plan, and is "unrestricted" information that has been approved to be released to the public.
- All County social media sites must be monitored regularly and messages answered in a timely fashion.
- Review all user-created content either before it's posted to the site, or as soon as possible after it's posted.
- Wherever possible, leave all user-created content (UCC) unmodified, including those of complaints and criticism. Where the UCC is hateful, derogatory, abusive, or jeopardizes the privacy of others, the comment may be deleted or altered to fix the abuse. In cases where a response is required, it should always identify that the content was modified or deleted, explain why it was modified or deleted, and cite the complaint, criticism, or comment underlying the abuse, and respond accordingly.

- Apply established and posted or linked County rules of engagement or participation standards, with respect to abusive, hateful, defamatory, anonymous and other inappropriate comments or content, including information that jeopardizes the privacy of others.
- Anyone who violates Lacombe County's Social Media Guidelines will be given a warning. If further issues arise, they will be blocked from our social media platforms.
- The Communications Coordinator must be included as a page administrator on all County-run social media to allow for emergency messaging if required.

Legal liability, copyright, and intellectual property

Any content placed on County social media sites should be County-owned or, if licensed to the County, should contain provisions which would allow the County to provide worldwide, fee-free, non-exclusive licenses to third parties in perpetuity.

Artists or named personnel whose works may be posted on County social media sites should be informed of this possibility.

Access to Information Act (ATIA)/Protection of Privacy Act (POPA)

The County must consider a number of privacy issues when participating on social media sites.

- The County will use available web tools or services to obtain non-identifying anonymous, aggregate or statistical information concerning its programs, services or marketing efforts from social media sites.
- While the County may scan or monitor published information available on social media sites, it will not seek to obtain or collect an identifiable individual's personal views, actions, or comments or take steps to identify the specific author or contributor of unpublished information or content unless authorized and permitted by law to do so.
- If any official County content includes personal information, the use and disclosure of that personal information must be permitted under the POPA Act.
- The County will not collect personal information about individuals who are registered with these sites unless it is authorized under the POPA Act.
- In the social media realm, personal information includes an individual's name, email address or username if it includes the individual's name, a portion of their name, or otherwise identifies them.
- The County will not use social media as a means of collecting personal information.
- All records concerning County content posted to, or obtained from, any social media page/site are subject to the access to information provisions of the ATIA Act.

Approved: March 28, 2019
Revised: October 22, 2026