

**MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL  
OAKLAND, MARYLAND**

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF OAKLAND ADOPTING  
A POLICY REGULATING SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Town Council of Oakland recognizes the value, importance and use of Social Media and recognize the need to have a policy to regulating Social Media,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and Town Council of Oakland do hereby adopt the following policy for Social Media:

**THE TOWN OF OAKLAND, MARYLAND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

The content of Town of Oakland, Maryland 's social media sites shall only pertain to Town of Oakland, Maryland -related, Town of Oakland, Maryland -sponsored, or Town of Oakland, Maryland -endorsed programs, services, and events. Content includes, but is not limited to, information, photographs, videos, and hyperlinks.

**INTERNAL POLICY**

**Purpose:**

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for the Town of Oakland, Maryland ("Oakland). To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Oakland departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. Oakland encourages the use of social media to further the goals of Oakland and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

The Town of Oakland has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on its behalf on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

**Acceptable Use**

**1. Personal Use**

All Oakland employees may have personal social networking, Web 2.0, and social media sites. These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. Following this principle helps ensure a distinction between sharing personal and Oakland views.

Oakland employees must never use their Oakland work e-mail account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking, Web 2.0, or social media site, unless authorized otherwise.

The following guidance is for Oakland employees who decide to have a personal social media, Web 2.0 or social networking site or who decide to comment on posts about official Oakland business:

- state your name and, if relevant, role, when discussing Oakland business; and
- use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and don’t reflect or represent the opinions of the town for which I work.”

## **2. Professional Use**

All official town-related communication through social media, Web 2.0, town websites, and social networking outlets should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with Oakland’s Employee Handbook, practices, and expectations. Employees must not use official town social media, Web 2.0, Oakland websites, or social networking sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities.

Oakland employees should be mindful that inappropriate usage of official town social media, Web 2.0, Oakland websites, and social networking sites can be grounds for disciplinary action. If social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites are used for official agency business, the entire agency site, regardless of any personal views, is subject to best practices guidelines, and standards.

Only individuals authorized by Oakland may publish content to a town website or town social computing technologies.

### **Approval and Registration**

All Oakland social media sites shall be (1) approved by the TOWN BOARD; (2) published using approved social networking platform and tools; and (3) administered by the TOWN BOARD or their designee.

### **Oversight and Enforcement**

Employees representing Oakland through social media outlets or participating in social media features on Oakland websites must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in Oakland social media sites, blogs, or other social media features. Furthermore, Oakland may enforce violations of this Social Media Policy through any proper disciplinary channel it deems necessary.

Information must be presented following professional standards for good grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity and accuracy, and avoid jargon, obscure terminology, or acronyms.

Oakland employees recognize that the content and messages they post on social media websites are public and may be cited as official Oakland statements. Social media should not be used to circumvent other Oakland communication policies, including news media policy requirements.

Oakland employees must not publish information on agency social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information,
- Copyright violations,

- Content 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,
- Vulgar, Offensive, threatening or harassing language,
- Defamatory statements, or any material contained in it, holds up an individual or groups of people to public ridicule, derision or embarrassment, or is libelous.
- Partisan political views, or
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM.

## **Records Retention**

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by Oakland and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to [applicable public records statute]. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (for example, digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.
- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e. ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.
- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.
- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g. PDF).
- Each employee who administers one or more social networking sites on behalf of the Agency has self-service, read-only access to search and produce relevant social media records to fulfill public information and legal discovery requests as needed.

## **EXTERNAL POLICY**

The following guidelines must be displayed to users on all social media sites or made available by hyperlink.

### **Moderation of Third Party Content**

1. This Oakland social media site serves as a **limited public forum** and all content published is subject to monitoring. Oakland reserves the right to restrict or remove any content deemed to violate this policy or any applicable law. User-generated posts will be rejected or removed (if possible) when the content:

- is off-subject or out of context;
- contains obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest;
- contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information;
- contains offensive terms that target protected classes;

- is vulgar, threatening, harassing or discriminatory;
- 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;
- incites or promotes violence or illegal activities;
- contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety;
- contains defamatory statements, or any material contained in it, holds up an individual or groups of people to public ridicule, derision or embarrassment, or is libelous.
- advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual; or
- promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates.

2. Whenever possible, users and visitors to Town of Oakland, Maryland social media sites shall be notified by the following message appearing on the Town of Oakland, Maryland social media site or by a hyperlink directing a user to the same regarding comments posted by the public:

“A comment posted by a member of the public on this page is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Town of Oakland, Maryland, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town of Oakland, Maryland.”

3. No social media users shall create a Page or Facebook profile assuming to be or speak for the Town of Oakland, Maryland for whom the user is not authorized to do so.

**Public Records Law**

Oakland social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to agency business, including communication posted by Oakland and communication received from citizens, is a public record. The Department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for social media content.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the Mayor and Town Council of Oakland hereby authorize this resolution and policy to become effective immediately upon adoption.

**READ AND PASSED THIS** 4<sup>th</sup> **DAY OF** January, 2021.

**ATTEST:**

Gwen M. Evans

**APPROVED:**

Jay Meyer  
Mayor of Oakland