

**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT:

NUMBER:

DATE OF COURT MEETING:

1/27/2026

ITEM:

Approval requested for the following:

- a. Brazos County Social Media Use Policy, Best Practices, and Standard Operating Procedures
- b. Section 3.10 Personal Use of Social Media

TO:

Commissioners Court

DATE:

01/09/2026

FISCAL IMPACT:

False

BUDGETED:

False

DOLLAR AMOUNT:

\$0.00

NOTES/EXCEPTIONS:

a. The purpose of the **Brazos County Social Media Use Policy** is to establish clear requirements and standards for best practices when operating on any social media platform for the benefit of the County or individual elected offices. The Commissioners Court is responsible for establishing the views and positions of the County on matters of Public Concern. This Policy is being developed and managed on behalf of the Brazos County Commissioners Court and is required to be followed by all Brazos County Departments and Employees or their designees, who create or contribute to blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, websites, or any other kind of social media or public digital communications on behalf of the County and under Commissioners Court Authority. Elected Offices of Brazos County are highly encouraged to follow this policy.

b. Section 3.10 Personal Use of Social Media

The purpose of this additional Policy in regards to an employee's "Personal Use" of social media is to establish expectations and consequences for employees on how they use their social media accounts in relation to County.

ATTACHMENTS:

File Name

Social-Media-Policy-1-9-2026.pdf

Description

Social Media Policy

Type

Cover Memo

PERSONAL_USE_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA.docx - Personal Use of Social Media
_with_updates.pdf

Cover Memo

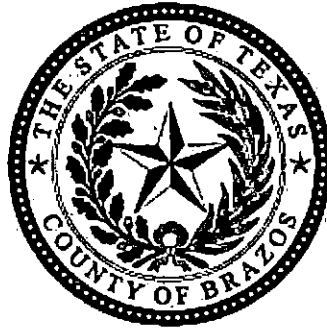
APPROVED



1/27/26

Duane Peters
County Judge

Date



BRAZOS COUNTY, TEXAS

Social Media Policy

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PURPOSE

Social Media has become one of the primary tools and platforms for information to be quickly and efficiently shared and conveyed to employees, businesses, constituents, and to the public in general. To meet the needs of how the County, its employees, and officials utilize social media, and due to the constantly evolving nature of social media, it is the intent of the Commissioners Court to routinely re-evaluate this policy and included procedures to keep pace with these changes.

Brazos County Offices and Departments may choose to utilize social media and social network sites to enhance communications with constituents and various stakeholder organizations in support of County goals and objectives. County Officials and County Departments may publish content, facilitate discussions, and communicate information through various media related to conducting County business. Social media facilitates discussion of County issues, operations, and services by providing members of the public with the opportunity to participate in many ways using the Internet.

The purpose of this Policy is to establish clear requirements and standards for best practices when operating on any social media platform for the benefit of the County or individual elected offices. The Commissioners Court is responsible for establishing the views and positions of the County on matters of Public Concern. This Policy is being developed and managed on behalf of the Brazos County Commissioners Court and is required to be followed by all Brazos County Departments and Employees or their designees, who create or contribute to blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, websites, or any other kind of social media or public digital communications on behalf of the County and under Commissioners Court Authority. Elected Offices of Brazos County are highly encouraged to follow this policy.

For policies and guidance on the personal use of social media, please refer to the Brazos County Employee Handbook addendum on Personal Social Media use.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY DEFINITIONS

1. **Social Media, Social Networking, Social Media Platforms:** Terms that can be used interchangeably to refer to social Internet sites, apps, platforms, or websites where information is created, exchanged, or provided by or to third parties and individuals. Examples of social media include but are not limited to:
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Facebook Messenger
 - c. Threads
 - d. Twitter/X
 - e. Instagram
 - f. YouTube
 - g. NextDoor
 - h. LinkedIn
 - i. Pinterest
 - j. TikTok
 - k. Flickr
 - l. Truth Social
 - m. BlueSky
 - n. online forums (e.g. TexAgs)
 - o. blogs of all types.
2. **Post:** Any writing, image, video, download, audio file, or hyperlink to other websites, or media that is downloaded, referenced, inserted, or placed upon any Brazos County social media site by a Brazos County author.
3. **Author:** An authorized Brazos County employee, elected official, or their designee, who creates and is responsible for posting information on Brazos County social media sites.
4. **Comment:** A response to a Brazos County post on social media submitted by a commenter.
5. **Commenter:** A Brazos County employee, elected official, or their designee, or member of the public, who submits a comment in response to the content of a Brazos County post on social media.
6. **Confidential Information and Privileged Information:** Information that is confidential by law or privileged and not available to the public. It can also include information about customers, business partners, or others that has been disclosed

to the County under obligations of confidentiality. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. All exceptions, mandatory or discretionary, under the Texas Public Information Act
 - b. Medical Records
 - c. Dates of Birth, Social Security Numbers and in some cases personal addresses
 - d. Lawsuits and other legal proceedings and
 - e. Proprietary information related to specific vendors and their processes or software
7. **County Technical Resources:** Includes County-issued mobile phones, desktop and portable computer systems, fax machines, Internet access, including WIFI and wireless local area networking (WLAN), voice mail, electronic mail (email) and Intranet.
8. **Link:** Also known as a website link or a hyperlink, is a clickable element on a webpage that connects to another web resource via a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) or web address.
9. **Moderator:** An authorized Brazos County employee, elected official, or their designee, who reviews content, posts, and comments appearing on Brazos County social media for compliance with this social media policy.
10. **Administrator:** The Digital Services Officer, Public Communications Officer, or an approved designee of a department or office, who may authorize the hiding of content or comments that violate the provisions of this social media policy. (Note: No content or comments should ever be “removed” or “deleted.”)
11. **Designee:** Any department employee designated by the requesting Department Head.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. All Brazos County Department social media sites shall be:
 - a. Approved by the County Judge and the requesting Department Head
 - b. Elected Officials may create their own official social media presences and are highly encouraged, but not required, to follow this policy
 - c. Published using social media management tools approved by the IT Department or published directly on an approved social media platform
(Please see **Appendix A** for approved Platforms and Tools)

- d. Administered by the Public Communications Officer and/or the Digital Services Officer
- 2. The Digital Services Officer, Public Communications Officer, and Information Technology will provide the framework and guidance for the County's Social Media Presence. These roles will:
 - a. Serve as silent administrators for all accounts
 - b. Develop minimum security standards for using each social media site and assist Account Administrators in responding to a security breach
 - c. Assist the County Judge and County Emergency Management during an emergency or disaster
 - d. Provide feedback and continuous training
 - e. Provide assistance when social media sites adopt new guidelines and/or terms of service
 - f. Strategize social media messaging and presence of County-wide accounts
 - g. Assist in publishing messages and/or content to select social media accounts as requested
- 3. Departments must provide the Public Communications Officer and/or the Digital Services Officer with a list of authorized authors and designees at the time a new social media account is created, and update that list Quarterly (on or about January 2nd, April 1st, July 1st and October 1st).
- 4. Before a department designee can be appointed and post on behalf of the County, the designee must:
 - a. Have complete understanding of this policy
 - b. Have appropriate content and technical experience
 - c. Undergo County-required social media Author and Moderator training
- 5. Account Administrators/Designees for Elected Officials are not subject to item 4c above for social media activity related to information or postings related to their specific office.
- 6. All Brazos County social media sites and posts shall adhere to all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. County social media sites and posts shall also adhere to all applicable County policies, including all Information Technology

and Records Management County policies.

7. Texas Public Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with these laws. The County IT Department must approve any management or archiving platform used for this compliance. **(Please see Appendix A for approved platforms.)**
8. All social media sites under the Authority of Commissioners Court shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by Brazos County and shall have Brazos County contact information prominently displayed as well as a disclaimer that says:

"All other County Sites not under the Authority of the Brazos County Commissioners Court do not necessary represent the views of Brazos County".

9. The Brazos County Records Retention manager shall be responsible for ensuring that all County social media platforms are actively and appropriately archived for records retention purposes. When social media accounts are not being archived, for any reason, the Records Retention manager shall notify the Public Communications Officer and the Department Head over the social media accounts in question and inform them of the issue. The Public Communications Officer and the Department Head shall then take measures to fix the archiving issue.
10. All social media or social networking sites and posts shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted are subject to public disclosure.
11. Each Brazos County social media site shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose of the site, including the intended subject matter covered on the site. Where possible, social media sites should link back to the official Brazos County website for forms, documents, and other information.
12. Brazos County respects individuals First Amendment Rights to Freedom of Speech and Elected Officials and Department Heads are strictly prohibited from blocking, banning, deleting, or restricting users' ability to comment and interreact. No post or comment will ever be deleted, but Brazos County reserves the right to hide any post or comment deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

13. Brazos County social media posts and comments containing any of the following types of content shall be referred to the Administrator who authorizes the hiding of said content from public view:

- a. Comments not topically related to the post being commented upon
- b. Obscene or profane language
- c. Sexual content or links to sexual content
- d. Content that threatens or defames any person or organization

NOTE: Comments that are threatening in nature will be forwarded as appropriate to law enforcement

- e. 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
- f. Content that violates the legal ownership interest of another party
- g. Content that supports or opposes political candidates or ballot initiatives
- h. Content that promotes illegal activity
- i. Content that promotes commercial services or products
- j. Content that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems

If any content or comments are hidden, or if any additional guidance is needed, the County Judge's Office and/or the County General Counsel's office should be notified immediately.

14. Privileged and Confidential Information shall be protected from public disclosure on social media sites.

15. To keep content in compliance with County record-retention policies, no post or comment should ever be removed or deleted. Additionally, the Administrator should create and retain documentation detailing why the post or comment was hidden.

16. Some social media platforms are banned for official use by federal, state, and/or local governments (e.g. **TikTok**, **Rednote**, **Lemon8**). As such, Brazos County social media should never post, share, or repost to its official platforms any content originally posted on a social media platform subject to said bans. (Examples of this might include sharing or embedding a TikTok video from a member of the public on an official County Facebook page.)
17. All Brazos County social media authors, moderators, and administrators shall make every effort to use County desktop computers and the County computer network for the posting, moderation, and administration of social media content, when possible. The use of County-issued mobile devices or personal Internet connections is permitted for posting content to any County social media site when needed. Use of personal mobile devices for posting content to any County social media site is also permitted but should be used only as a last resort in the absence of County-issued hardware.
18. All Brazos County social media authors, moderators, and administrators shall be trained regarding the terms of this Brazos County Social Media Policy, including their responsibilities to review content and ensure compliance with this policy.
19. All Brazos County social media authors, moderators, and administrators shall undergo annual training each budget year on the use of social media. If a department user fails to attend this formalized training, the department user's permissions will be revoked. If all users from a department fail to attend the formal training, the social media accounts for the department may be deactivated. The content of the training will be conducted by the Digital Services Officer and Public Communications Officer and should include, when possible, information about social media related to the latest trends, new social media platforms, legal precedents and updated rulings on cases affecting usage of social media in government, changes in social media platforms regarding terms of use and privacy, records retention policies, and best practices for social media usage in government. Additional training is also recommended through the form of online tutorials, webinars, in-person conferences, etc.
20. County Social Media Sites must not use copyrighted work or post privately owned third-party trademarks or logos in any way that attempts to, or gives the appearance

of, trying to capitalize on their fame, reputation, in connection with any negative or derogatory posts, or in any manner that would be seen as promoting or potentially creating revenue for the third party.

Trademarks and logos belonging to other Political Subdivisions, Public Universities and Non-Profit Organizations that Brazos County has entered formal relationships with, may be used for the limited purpose of providing mutually agreed information within the County's Social Media Sites or the sharing of stories. If any doubt exists that a logo or seal should or can be used, obtain explicit written permission and/or consult with the County's General Counsel Office.

If the Digital Services Officer and/or Public Communications Officer receive a complaint from the owner of a trademark or logo, he or she should **IMMEDIATELY** have the trademark or logo hidden.

21. Employees representing Brazos County government via social media must always conduct themselves in accordance with all Brazos County Personnel Policies. For any questions about these provisions or any matter related to social media, please speak with your Department Head, the Digital Services Officer, the Public Communications Officer, or a County legal representative.
22. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Brazos County prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation into possible violations of this policy. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Guidance that applies to the personal use of social media also applies when acting in an official capacity for Brazos County, or when acting in other professional situations in which you are identified as an employee of Brazos County.

(For policies and guidance on the personal use of social media, please refer to the Brazos County Employee Handbook addendum on Personal Social Media use.)

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

- **Transparency:** Your honesty will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are posting about your work at Brazos County, use your real name, identify that you work for the County, and be clear about your role. Be the first to point out if you have a vested interest in something you are discussing.
- **Judiciousness:** Make sure your efforts to be transparent do not violate Brazos County's privacy, confidentiality, and any applicable legal guidelines for external communication. Get permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the County. All statements must be true and not misleading, and all claims must be substantiated and approved. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any party with whom the County may be in litigation. If you want to write about other government entities, make sure you know what you are talking about, and that you have any permission needed. Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and any restricted, confidential, and sensitive information. What is published is widely accessible, not easily retractable, and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.
- **Knowledgeableness:** Make sure you write and post about your areas of expertise, especially as related to the County and your assignments. If you are writing about a topic that the County is involved with, but you are not the County expert on the

topic, you should make this clear to your readers. Remember, you are personally responsible for your content.

- **Perception:** In social media platforms, the lines between public, private, and personal are blurred. By identifying yourself as a Brazos County official or employee, you create perceptions about your expertise and about the County to all stakeholders, and perceptions about you to your colleagues and managers. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with the County's values and professional standards.
- **Education:** Focus on providing services and on government innovation that benefits residents and stakeholders. Share with social media participants the things we are learning and doing and open two-way communications channels to learn from others. There is a lot of written content in the social media environment. The best way to get your posts read is to create content that people will value, and that will catch their eye while going through their feeds. Social communication from the County should help residents, partnerships, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, build their businesses, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand the County better, then it is adding value.
- **Leadership:** There can be a fine line between healthy debate and incendiary reaction. Do not defame others or the County. It is not necessary to respond to every criticism or negative comment. Frame what you write to invite differing points of view without inflaming others. Some topics, like politics, slide easily into sensitive territory. Be careful and considerate. Once the words are out there, you cannot get them back. Once an inflammatory discussion gets going, it is hard to stop.
- **Mistakes:** If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If you are posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post. Make it clear that you have done so. If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, do not post the statement. Take a minute to review these guidelines and try to figure out what is bothering you, then fix it. If you are still unsure, you might want to discuss it with the County's Public Communications Officer, your Department Head, or the County's General Counsel

Office. Ultimately, what you publish is yours, as is the responsibility, and any possible repercussions.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Purpose: To define the procedures for the use of social media for Brazos County purposes.

Scope: These procedures define the detailed steps required for all Brazos County employees for planning, approval, implementing, and supporting the use of any social media for County and Departmental communications. These procedures apply to all County employees. Failure to follow these procedures could lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Brazos County Personnel Policy Manual.

PROCEDURES

Step 1: Planning the Use of Social Media

1. The department proposing to use social media for communications purposes will submit a Social Media Plan as specified in Step 2: Social Media Use Approval, below. The plan will include the needs to be addressed by the new social media account and a cost estimate. Costs will include an estimate of required employee time to support the proposed social media on an annual basis.
2. Personal blogs are not permitted using County desktop computers or the County computer network. Personal blogs are “personality driven.” All blogs will be business blogs – that should be “content/issue driven.” Blogs may be internal or external. In the Social Media Plan, the type of blog must be clearly identified.

Step 2: Social Media Use Approval

1. The Social Media Plan must be approved by the requesting Department Head.

2. The approved Social Media Plan will be submitted to the Digital Services Officer for a design and technical review.
3. After the Digital Services Officer review is completed, the Plan will be submitted to the Public Communications Officer for communications review.
4. After the Digital Services Officer and Communications Officer reviews, the Plan will be submitted to the County Judge for final approval.
 - a. If the Plan is approved by the County Judge, it will be returned to the proposing department for implementation as specified in Step 3: Implementing the Use of Social Media, below.
 - b. If the Plan is not approved, it will be returned to the proposing department with a clear explanation of the rejection reasoning or of any needed additional information.
5. If a Plan is not approved by the County Judge, it may be updated with the additional information required and resubmitted as a new proposal, or it will be considered terminated.

Step 3: Implementing the Use of Social Media

1. Approved Social Media Plans will be implemented using the following branding specifications:
 - a. The use of appropriate branding is required on all Brazos County social media sites. All profiles and pages should be clearly identified as official Brazos County assets, using the official Brazos County logo as the identifying image. Contact the Digital Services Officer to obtain the official Brazos County logo in a format suitable for digital media.
 - b. Profiles and pages should be designed to emulate the County's website, if possible. When possible, design colors should be consistent with the official colors in use by the County.
(See Appendix A for the list of approved colors.)

- c. Questions about branding shall be clarified with the Public Communications Officer and the Digital Services Officer.
2. Content on all Brazos County social media platforms will be original. The reuse of created work from other social media sites is not permitted, unless it is cited appropriately, and the County has the appropriate usage rights prior to publishing.
 - a. Sharing information from other Brazos County social media sites and Brazos County partners is permissible.
3. When creating a social media account, only Department Heads with signatory authority, or their designees, are authorized to agree to terms and conditions with a social media provider.
4. Sites will be set up in accordance with the requirements and Terms of Service of the particular social media site. That includes sign-ons, usernames, etc. that will reflect the site is associated with Brazos County. Sites will not use personal sign-ons or personal-sounding usernames. As closely as possible, sites will use “Brazos County-Department of” or “Brazos County Office of the” (fill in appropriate site name) as the username.
 - a. According to the Facebook Terms of Service, “PIO” or “dummy” accounts are not permitted. All Brazos County Facebook managers must connect through their personal Facebook account. No Brazos County Facebook Page will have only one account with “full control” permissions. Each Brazos County Facebook Page will have at minimum, two user accounts who have “full control” permissions on the Page – a department social media moderator and the Public Communications Officer.
5. Passwords for social media sites/accounts must conform to the County’s Password Policy. **(Please see the Password Policy in the Brazos County Employee Handbook.)**
6. The Public Communications Officer will maintain a list of all social media accounts which have been approved for use by County departments and staff. This list will

include all authors, moderators, and administrators for each of these accounts and will be updated on a quarterly basis.

7. All Brazos County social media site login and password information will be shared with the Public Communications Officer and the IT Department and will be updated on a quarterly basis. The Public Communications Officer and/or Digital Services Officer must save the social media site login information and password in the County's approved Password Management system, currently PasswordState.
8. It is imperative that changes to social media site login and password information are shared as soon as they are updated. These accounts and credentials fall outside the scope of the IT Department's internal systems, and therefore, the IT Department is unable to take actions such as automatic password resets, or account creation and deletion. This is the primary reason that this information must be shared with multiple stakeholders, so that in a "disaster recovery" instance, there are multiple points of contact who can assist with the social media account. Without this redundancy, it is possible (or even likely) that a department could lose access to their social media account and never regain it.
 - a. **Facebook exemption:** Due to Facebook's unique process for updating official social media Pages (as mentioned in item 4a above), personal Facebook account usernames and passwords are exempt from being shared or stored in the County's approved Password Management system, currently PasswordState. However, this underscores the absolute necessity that every Brazos County Facebook Page have at minimum, two user accounts who have "full control" permissions on the Page – a department social media moderator and the Public Communications Officer.
9. Upon creation of a new social media site, the site must be connected to an archiving software system approved by the IT Department, currently PageFreezer. It shall be the responsibility of the designated social media moderator(s) to ensure that their departmental social media accounts are connected, and to troubleshoot any connection issues that may arise. (Examples might include having to reauthenticate the social media account with the archiving system when you change the social media account password.)

Supporting Social Media

1. The site/account/platforms must be maintained effectively. Employees designated to manage, post and use the department's social media site must provide adequate time on a cyclical basis that meets that site's requirements for responsiveness. Thus, a Facebook page would be updated daily while another site, such as YouTube, might be updated at regular intervals or as materials become available. Sites that are not updated on a regular basis should be deactivated.

- a. All County Social Media accounts must post at least once per week. Accounts that do not meet that standard may be deactivated at the Digital Services Officer's and/or Public Communications Officer's discretion.

2. User comments on County Social Media sites shall not be deleted or removed based on the views expressed. Additionally, comments will not be altered in any way. Please refer to the General Provisions, Items 12, 13, and 20 of the Brazos County Social Media Policy for detailed instructions on managing comments that violate Brazos County standards.

- a. Each site or platform should include a standard disclaimer referring to the County's rights and actions about comments. This disclaimer should read:

Comments posted to this page will be monitored. Brazos County, Texas, reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments including those that contain:

- i. ***Comments not topically related to the post being commented upon***
 - ii. ***Obscene or profane language***
 - iii. ***Sexual content or links to sexual content***
 - iv. ***Content that threatens or defames any person or organization***

NOTE: Comments that are threatening in nature will be forwarded as appropriate to law enforcement

- v. ***Content 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

- vi. Content that violates the legal ownership interest of another party***
- vii. Content that supports or opposes political candidates or ballot initiatives***
- viii. Content that promotes illegal activity***
- ix. Content that promotes commercial services or products***
- x. Content that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems***

3. Moderation: The objective of moderating content is two-fold:

- a. Reviewing posts on Brazos County social media sites to ensure that only suitable content is published.
- b. Reviewing comments made on Brazos County social media sites to ensure they are clear and appropriate to the content/subject matter in question.

Moderation should be used by a department to ensure that content is appropriate.

4. Etiquette:

- a. Before the first contribution or posting on any social media site, it is a good idea to observe the activity on the site for a while before posting to get a feel for the style of contributions, the nature of the content and any “unwritten” rules that other contributors might follow.
- b. Information on social media platforms may be published in the first or third person, with third person being recommended for standard use cases. If posting in the first person, “we” should be used to represent the organization, the pronoun “I” should not be used. Consider the tone and content of your post before making the decision to post in the first person. For example, a post that is purely informational should be written in the third person, whereas a call-to-action post, like signing up for a county program, could be a case for use of the first person. (e.g. “Come join us,” “We’re looking forward

to speaking with you,” etc.)

- c. **Add value:** When speaking on behalf of Brazos County, employee comments should add value to the County and interaction should provide worthwhile information and perspective. Linking to information on the Brazos County website and sharing content from official Brazos County social media accounts is encouraged.
 - d. **Keep calm:** Do not pick fights by escalating heated discussions but be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and/or correct any misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry. Leave it, calm down and return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner. Remember, this is business, not personal.
 - e. **Personal judgment:** If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then the chances are you should not do it. Remember, the information you publish will be visible to other web users for a long time, if not forever. If in doubt, discuss it with your Department Head, first. If there are still concerns, contact the Public Communications Officer or a County legal representative.
 - f. **Respect:** Do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would be unacceptable in the Brazos County workplace or prohibited in the Brazos County Social Media Policy or the County’s personnel policies. Always consider people’s privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory (e.g. politics and religion).
 - g. **Personal privacy:** Avoid publishing personal contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them. It is better to contact an individual outside the collaborative space if you wish to move the conversation to an in-person or private setting.
5. **Engagement:** To encourage engagement and increase transparency, it is Brazos County’s intent to leverage social media as a method of two-way communication. To that end, when appropriate resources are available, comment and forum features will be activated to allow users to make comments, ask questions, or request

services.

- a. When activated, comments and forums should be reviewed twice a day, before noon and before 5 p.m.
 - b. Employees who are approved social media moderators will assess the content of each post or comment to determine if it meets the standards described in this Social Media Policy, or if it requires a response from the County.
 - c. When a response to a comment is appropriate, social media moderators should reply in a timely manner. If an answer is not immediately known, employees should work as quickly as possible to find the answer and post a response.
 - d. When disagreeing with others' opinions or providing comments, be sure the comments are meaningful, respectful, factual and relevant to the topic.
 - e. Posts or comments requiring a service request should be submitted to the appropriate department.
6. Brazos County social media sites will link to other Brazos County sites and/or sites approved by a Department Head or their designee. All Brazos County social media sites will be linked from the County's main website for easy access by users.
7. Group Ownership: Departments must identify specific users who control/maintain social media sites with group ownership in a list provided to the Public Communications Officer on a quarterly basis. This will include identification of individuals (username and password) with permission to use the site. When multiple individuals can post to the same site, they must identify themselves unless exempted by departmental procedures.
8. Individual departments that would like to add further guidance or regulations beyond what is in the Standard Operating Procedures of this Social Media Policy may create a departmental social media usage procedures addendum, and submit

it for approval by the same process used for submitting a Social Media Plan described in Steps 1 and 2 of these procedures.

Responsibilities for Social Media

1. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to ensure that employees are aware of these guidelines for creating and maintaining social media sites. Carrying out the procedures outlined is the responsibility of those employees designated by department management.
2. The Brazos County Public Communications Officer and/or the Digital Services Officer may notify Department Heads when portions of the Standard Operating Procedures of the Social Media Policy are not followed, including violation of the policy, unprofessional use of the resource, lack of use or disinterest by the public, or a department's failure to maintain the site.
3. The Public Communications Officer and/or the Digital Services Officer will conduct periodic reviews with individual department social media managers and stakeholders regarding metrics, usage, and standards of Brazos County social media sites. Additionally, those departments are encouraged to perform their own analytics to measure the effectiveness of their social media communication and community engagement, and to discuss those findings with the Public Communications Officer and/or the Digital Services Officer during said reviews.

APPENDIX A

Approved Social Media Platforms

- Facebook
- X / Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- NextDoor
- Pinterest (can't be archived in PageFreezer)

Approved Social Media Management Tools

- Meltwater (currently in use)

Approved Social Media Archiving Platforms

- PageFreezer (currently in use)
- ArchiveSocial
- Smarsh (currently in limited use)

Brazos County primary social colors with HEX value

- BC-Black: #000000
- BC-White: #FFFFFF
- BC-Red: #992A28
- BC-Maroon: #500000
- BC-Gray: #707070

Notes on usage:

- BC-Black should be used for all text whenever possible.
- BC-White can be used for text on dark background – BC-Red, Maroon, or Gray.
- Never use BC-Red, BC-Maroon, or BC-Gray for text on social media.

SECTION 3.10 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

For purposes of this policy “social media” includes, but is not limited to, online forums, blogs, and social networking platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter/X, TikTok, Instagram, Nextdoor, etc.

Brazos County recognizes the value of social media as a communication and networking tool for employees. However, employee use of social media may become a problem if it interferes with the employee’s work and/or position in the county; is used to harass supervisors, co-workers, customers or vendors; creates a hostile work environment; or harms the goodwill and reputation, or public trust of Brazos County among the community at large.

Brazos County encourages employees to use social media within the parameters of the following guidelines and in a way that does not produce the adverse consequences mentioned above.

Where no policy or guideline exists, employees are expected to use their best judgment and take the most prudent action possible. If you are uncertain about the appropriateness of a social media posting, check with your manager or supervisor.

- If your posts on social media mention Brazos County make clear that you are an employee of Brazos County and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of Brazos County.
- Do not mention Brazos County supervisors, employees, customers or vendors without their express consent.
- Do not pick fights. If you see a misrepresentation about Brazos County, respond respectfully with factual information, not inflammatory comments.
- Remember, you are responsible for what you write or present on social media. You can be sued by other employees, supervisors, customers or vendors, and any individual that views your social media posts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. Employees can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for what they post on social media platforms, even if the employee did not use a county computer or if the post did not occur during work hours or on county property.
- Employees may not use Brazos County computer equipment for non-work related activities without written permission. Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work. Brazos County monitors its computers to ensure compliance with this restriction.
- You must comply with copyright laws and cite or reference sources accurately.
- All Brazos County policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment and code of conduct.
- Any confidential information that you obtained through your position at Brazos County must be kept confidential and should not be discussed through any social media forum.
- Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including the immediate termination of employment.