

# RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST

## POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

### COMMUNICATION / SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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#### **PURPOSE**

The Rural Municipality of Bifrost recognizes that information and communication technologies including social media have significantly impacted every facet of society including municipal government. The RM of Bifrost provides for the communication services and equipment necessary to promote the efficient conduct of its business.

The purpose of this policy is to provide helpful, practical advice to protect both employees and the municipality. Social media is about sharing and collaboration. In light of ever-evolving technologies and online social tools, frequent re-examination of guidelines will ensure the needs of both the employee and employer are met.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- 1) All communication services and equipment, including the messages transmitted or stored by them, are the sole property of the Municipality of Bifrost. Designated personnel may access and monitor employee communications and files as it considers appropriate.
- 2) Communication services and equipment include, among other things, mail, electronic mail (email), instant messaging, facsimiles, telephone systems, computers, computer networks, on-line services, internet connections, computer files, video equipment and tapes, tape recorders and recordings, pagers, cellular phones, voice mail, and bulletin boards.
- 3) All who are given access should treat professional social media space and communication like a professional workspace. If a particular type of behavior is inappropriate in the workplace, then that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media site. Employees have the responsibility to use municipal resources in a professional, ethical and lawful manner, and in accordance with this policy.
- 4) Employees should be aware that they are personally responsible for the content they publish on-line, whether in a blog, social computing site or any other form of user-generated media. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in online social networks. Employees have no right to privacy when they post on a public social networking site, *no matter where they connect from*. Employees should be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time – and that if it's on the site and can be read, it can be used as grounds for discipline. In general, what employees do on their own time is their business. However, activities in or outside of work that adversely affect their position with the municipality, the performance of others, or legitimate municipal business are a proper focus for company policy.
- 5) Avoid sharing municipal material in a personal space. Keep your personal on-line presence and your work on-line presence separate. Personal social media use, including off-hours, has the potential to result in disruption at the workplace, and can be in violation of Municipal policies, and law.
- 6) The Municipality reserves the right to request that certain subjects are avoided, withdraw certain posts, and remove inappropriate comments.
- 7) Employees should familiarize themselves with company policies (i.e. Employees Code of Conduct) and also note that company policies do extend to online behavior.

8) Employees should be aware of the dangers of social networking misuse including:

- a) Damage to the Municipality's reputation;
- b) Leak of confidential information (some topics are sensitive and should never be discussed, even if you're expressing your own opinion and using a disclaimer);
- c) Harassment (if an employee talks disparagingly about a co-worker, for example). Don't use ethnic slurs, discriminatory remarks, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any similar conduct that would not be appropriate in the workplace;
- d) Show proper consideration for others' privacy;
- e) Internet postings should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the company. This may include information regarding company systems, processes, products, technology, policies, procedures or other internal business-related communications;
- f) Employees should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on the company's behalf;
- g) If an employee comments on any aspect of the company's business they must clearly identify themselves as an employee and include a disclaimer. The disclaimer should be something like "the views expressed are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the RM of Bifrost";
- h) Never discuss business performance or other sensitive matters about business results or plans publicly;
- i) Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, etc., require approval when the employee is posting about the company;
- j) Internet postings should not include company logos or trademarks;
- k) Internet postings must respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure, and other applicable laws;
- l) Be thoughtful about the types of information that you share. This might include details about your work location or where you are working on a given day;
- m) "Don't forget your day job" – make sure that your online activities do not interfere with performing your job responsibilities. Some employees have legitimate, business-related reasons to make use of social media in the course of doing their jobs; others do not. It's not a good idea for anybody to be regularly updating, or otherwise spending significant amounts of time with social activity while on the job.

Date of Review/Revision:	
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