

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to permit the District and its employees to communicate with customers, media, constituents, and interested parties (“stakeholders”) in support of District goals with the use of social media. The use of social media will help address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way stakeholders communicate and obtain information online, allowing the District to reach a broader audience. The goal of the District’s use of social media is to create two-way communication – from the District to stakeholders and from stakeholders to the District. Social media is a term used to refer to activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content sharing. It allows people to connect and communicate through various means, including social media sites, RSS feeds, blogs, mashups, wikis, podcasts, and photo and video sharing sites.

The District has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is communicated on behalf of the District on social media sites. This Policy establishes procedures for the use of social media technology for the District, including:

- Defining appropriate social media tools and policies.
- Providing information about the appropriate use of the District’s social media sites.
- Implementing specific procedures for the upkeep and maintenance of each District social media site.

This Policy applies to all District officials and employees and is applicable to any social media that is created and used by the District, including internet technologies, as well as networking and other technology sites that are the property of an outside host or company.

**POLICY**

The District’s social media sites are to be used for limited subject matters and limited topics related to official District business only. Comments by members of the public on social media must directly relate to the subject matter or topic of the particular District social media or the comments may be removed pursuant to Section E, Posting Restrictions of this Policy.

A. General Provisions

Establishing and maintaining social media:

- a. The Office of the General Manager will be responsible for establishing, updating, and maintaining the District’s social media sites unless other departments are otherwise designated by the General Manager.
- b. The Office of the General Manager will oversee content on the District’s social media sites to:
  1. Ensure that content accurately reflects the policies and objectives of the District.

2. Ensure consistency in the informational content distributed by the various departments within the District.
  3. Allow the District to maintain a consistent tone in its customer communications.
  4. Ensure that constituent complaints/concerns/inquiries are addressed in a timely manner.
- c. The District's website will remain the District's primary internet presence.
1. Whenever practical, content posted to the District's social media sites should be first made available on the District's website.
  2. Whenever practical, content posted to the District's social media sites should contain hyperlinks directing users back to the District's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services.
- d. The most appropriate social networking use for the District will generally fall into three categories:
1. Disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible.
  2. Promoting District messages to a wider audience.
  3. Targeting a particular demographic group or area of interest.
- e. Use of the District's social media must further a specific purpose of the District as identified by the Board of Directors, District staff, or District policies or plans.
- f. Use of the District's social media will be utilized to allow for constituent feedback and dialogue regarding District related topics, when feasible.
- g. The Office of the General Manager or designee is responsible to maintain and manage the District's social media sites in accordance with this Policy and all other applicable laws and policies.
- h. The District's social media sites are subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to District business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record.
1. The Office of the General Manager is responsible for providing records that facilitate responding to requests for public records.
  2. The District's social media sites should clearly state that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure upon request.
  3. California law and relevant District records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content.
  4. Users and visitors to each District social media site shall be notified that the purpose of social media sites is to serve as a means of communication between the District and its customers, stakeholders and constituents. Any articles, posts, comments, images, or

links containing prohibited content shall be removed, as provided in Section E, Posting Restrictions, of this Policy.

5. Any content that violates this Policy and is subsequently removed must be retained by the Office of the General Manager and must include the time and date of the posting, the identity of the person who posted it, and the date and time the posting was removed.
6. Each District employee responsible for managing the District's social media must be familiar with the terms of this Policy, including the responsibility to review subject matter submitted for posting to ensure compliance with the Policy.

**B. Consistency with Related Policies**

All District social media must adhere to the following District policies and guidelines:

1. Use of Internet & Electronic Mail on District Computers – 4.1.2
2. Public Inspection of District Records – 1.4.1
3. Records Management Policy – 1.4.2
4. Prohibiting Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment – 2.2.7
5. Non-Routine Communications – 1.6.1
6. Employee Handbook

**C. Content Standards**

Every District social media site must, at minimum, adhere to the following content standards:

1. Include an introductory statement which clearly specifies its purpose and subject matter.
2. Clearly indicate that it is maintained by the Alameda County Water District, include the District logo and prominently display contact information for the District.
3. Include the following disclaimer:  
“The views of the individuals posting comments do not necessarily represent the views of the Alameda County Water District.”
4. Embedded hyperlinks to external sites must be identified, as such. Each social media site must include the following disclaimer:  
“The Alameda County Water District does not guarantee the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness or security of links to other websites or the subject matter of such sites.”

**D. Commenter Guidelines and Responsibilities**

These guidelines apply to all persons, including District employees, who comment on ACWD's social media sites:

1. All Commenters

- a. Enrollment of commenters must be accompanied by valid contact information, including a name and e-mail address. The District's social media validates e-mail

addresses based on login information and falsified e-mail addresses will not be allowed. To the extent the District has access and control over names, addresses and valid e-mail addresses provided, the District will keep the information confidential, unless disclosure is, (1) necessary or required to investigate any acts of misconduct; (2) pursuant to court order; or (3) pursuant to any applicable federal, state or local law.

- b. In the case of Internet technology that allows semi-anonymous posting, commenters may comment “semi-anonymously”; each commenter must provide valid contact information but if the commenter chooses to have his or her comment posted anonymously, he or she may do so.
- c. The District reserves the right to prohibit commenters who consistently violate this Policy from posting comments on the District’s social media.

2. District Employees and Officials

- a. District employees and officials are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, honesty and conduct in all activities in order to inspire public confidence and trust in the District.
- b. District directors, in order to assure compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, California’s open meeting law, must identify him/herself as such when posting a comment on the District’s social media. District directors must not post a comment if his/her posting could result in a majority of the Board of Directors discussing or deliberating on a topic within the subject matter jurisdiction of the District.
- c. If an employee posts any comment that violates this Policy, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.
- d. Every employee should use his/her best judgment in determining the amount of time spent reviewing and/or participating in social media. On duty participation that interferes with the employee’s ability to do the employee’s job may be limited and/or denied. Any participation that is not related to an employee’s job duties or that has not been made available for all District employees will not be considered official District business for that employee and should be done on the employee’s own time.
- e. Nothing in this Policy is intended to restrict or limit District employees’ right to free speech or rights to engage in protected concerted activity under applicable law.

E. Posting Restrictions

The District reserves the right to restrict or remove any subject matter that is in violation of this Policy or any applicable law or policy. If a District social media site allows comments from the public, ACWD will allow only comments that are topically related to the particular subject matter and within the purpose of the District social media site. The following subject matter, or links to the following subject matter, will not be allowed for posting on the Alameda County Water District’s social media:

- 1. Comments not topically related to the particular District subject matter being commented on;

**SUBJECT:** Policy for Use of District Social Media

Page 5 of 6

2. Obscene or profane language, content or subject matter;
3. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other factor prohibited by statute;
4. Subject matter that threatens violence or defames any person or organization;
5. Sexually explicit content or obscene content;
6. Solicitations of commerce;
7. Participating in or encouraging participation in illegal activity;
8. Information that compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems;
9. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, including, but not limited to, intellectual property rights, copyright, trade secrets, trademarks and publicity rights;
10. Information which promotes a political party, organization, and/or initiative.

The District disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any comments or posts that the District deems prohibited by these Posting Restrictions. The District will use reasonable efforts to remove comments and posts that are prohibited by these Posting Restrictions in an expeditious and timely manner. The District will inform users of the District's social media of this disclaimer by posting it on the District's social media sites.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**A. Requests for Use**

The Office of the General Manager or designee will maintain a list of social media tools which are approved by the District.

The Office of the General Manager or designee will maintain a list of the login and password information for each site.

**B. Monitoring**

The subject matter of each District social media site will be the responsibility of the Office of the General Manager.

1. Office of the General Manager staff must monitor all postings and comments.
2. Office of the General Manager staff is responsible for addressing posts/comments in a timely manner. Responses should be addressed within one business day of receipt during regular business hours.
3. The District's social media sites may not be monitored outside of regular business hours including weekends and holidays.
4. The Office of the General Manager or designee is responsible for reviewing subject matter on the District's social media site(s) for consistency with this Policy and any administrative

**SUBJECT:** Policy for Use of District Social Media

Page 6 of 6

guidelines developed by the District as long as the technology remains in use and the content is displayed.

5. The Office of the General Manager or designee will be responsible for the content, maintenance and monitoring of any social media site the District creates.
6. Should the Office of the General Manager or designee determine that the expertise of another department is needed in responding to a stakeholder post, a representative from that department shall draft a response and return it to the Office of the General Manager within one business day. It shall be the responsibility of the Office of the General Manager to then review, edit, and post the response.
7. The Office of the General Manager will accept requests from other departments regarding content and posts. The Office of the General Manager will determine if the content will be posted.
8. Office of the General Manager staff must review and evaluate all subject matter and comments posted each business day, including the linked subject matter and embedded hyperlinks.
9. Office of the General Manager staff will be responsible for monitoring and removing all comments that are in violation of the District's comment policy, as described under Posting Restrictions set forth in Section E of this Policy.

APPROVED:

/s/ WALTER L. WADLOW  
Walter L. Wadlow, General Manager