



Social Media Policies | June 2018

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A PRIME COMMUNITY

meridian.mi.us

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Social Media Description

Social media commonly refers to the use of the Internet for websites and applications to share information, provide content and to participate in social networking. Social media refers to any web-based technology that enables and facilitates communication and/or networking through the Internet and/or cellular networks. Social media includes text, images, audio and video. Some examples of social media platforms but not limited to:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Twitter
- Blogging
- Vlogging
- YouTube
- Websites
- Email
- eNewsletters
- LinkedIn
- Forums
- Wikis

Use of Social Media by Charter Township of Meridian Employees

As with other aspects of the Internet, authorized employee social media use must be for the purposes of Township business and support the Charter Township of Meridian's vision and mission statements approved by the Meridian Township Board.

- Township Vision Statement: Our vision is to achieve and maintain a welcoming community with the highest quality of life for our residents. We believe the highest quality of life encompasses sustained or enhanced natural environment, health and safety, prosperity, cultural heritage and diversity
- Township Mission Statement: Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable prime community

Adherence to Township Personnel Policy

Use of social media shall be in accordance with the approved Meridian Township Personnel Policies, as approved by the Meridian Township Board in November, 2015. Questions regarding the Personnel Policies shall be addressed by the Human Resources Director.

The Township retains the rights to alter any employee's access to any social media platform at the workplace and to also republish or reuse any content posted on an official Township social media account in accordance with the Personnel Policies.

Personal use of social media by Township employees shall adhere to the provisions in Michigan's Internet Privacy Protection Act. Personal social media use shall be in accordance with the list of guidelines in the personnel policy.

The Township has the authority to monitor employee use of the Internet to ensure appropriate use.

Conditions of Use

When a condition of use for social media is identified, they must be presented to the Communications Director or designated employee who will determine the condition of use and develop a social media strategy. The Communications Director may authorize Official Township operated social sites and the posting of information or prepared materials such as text, documents, video files or streams to social networking sites by department interns/employees on behalf of the Township.

- Employees will only be given access to the account associated with their job description and at the discretion of their department director, Communications Director and/or the Township Manager
- Employees may post comments during work hours if they are directly related to accomplishing work goals, such as seeking sources for information and engagement as outlined in the Meridian Township Community Engagement Plan
- Employees given access to represent Meridian Township through social sites need to abide by brand standards as outlined in the Meridian Township Brand Standards Guideline
- Before the logo or trademark of a private social networking site is featured on official Township operated sites, the Communications Director and/or designee shall ensure that the use of the logo or trademark in question is consistent with the Township's Personnel Policy, purpose and copyright use
- Social media is a direct way to interact with the public. Questions, comments or inquiries needing an answer from the Township must be responded to within a timely manner
- Employees of the Communications Department may be required to identify themselves on their personal social profiles in the following way "Viewpoints are my own. Fanpage likes and follows of people in political office is not an endorsement"
- Employees of Meridian Township must identify themselves as Township employees if setting up and managing a group page related to Township business
- Maintain Transparency. The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred; be thoughtful about posting content and potential audiences and be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a Meridian Township employee or staff member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of the Township
- Correct Mistakes. If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post, however you must make it clear that you have done so
- Respect Others. Be constructive and respectful of comments and public opinion. Be respectful in responding and answering questions
- Be a Valued Member. If you join a social network, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Don't hijack the discussion and redirect by posting self/organizational promoting information. Self-promoting behavior is viewed negatively

Restrictions of Use

Social Media must not be used to transmit information or knowingly connect to sites for an unlawful or prohibited purpose, including, but not limited to, the following examples:

- Discrimination on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, sensory, mental, or physical disability, sexual orientation or veteran status
- Sexual harassment or sites containing sexual content
- Transmission of obscene materials
- Transmission of protected or private information
- Infringement on any copyright

- Expression of any campaign, political or religious beliefs
- Conduct of a personal, outside business or other financial benefit or gain

Privacy Issues Awareness

Operators of Official Township social media accounts shall not share any confidential Township information including, but not limited to, pending Township litigation or personnel matters in accordance with the Township Personnel Policy.

- Employees should have no expectation of privacy in the use of Internet resources
- Employees using social media should never disclose private or protected information
- Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish
- Where the Township posts information to a site or service offered or controlled by a third party, the employee posting the information and the employee authorizing the post should, to the extent possible, include or make reference to the site or service

Security Risks Associated with Social Media

The Internet is an unsecured publicly accessible network. Owners of social media sites commonly monitor usage activity and those activities may be disclosed to any number of parties.

Links and embedded files on social networking sites may contain malicious software or redirect users to inappropriate sites. As such, links and embedded files on social media sites should not be trusted.

The Charter Township of Meridian reserves the right to monitor Internet usage at such times and in such circumstances as appropriate.

All Township supplied technology and Township supplied work records belong to the Township and not to the employee/intern. The Township may routinely monitor the use of Township supplied technology. Inappropriate or illegal use or communications may be subject to disciplinary action leading up to and including termination of employment.

Internet Use Policy

The following guidelines have been established for using the Internet, Township provided cell phones and email in an appropriate, ethical and professional manner.

- All technology systems used by the Township (telephones, facsimile machines, photocopiers, computers, printers, voice mail, email systems and other technology) are for Township business purposes and are provided to further our goals and service to the public
- Employees/interns must use common sense and adhere to appropriate work behavior when using the Township's technology systems
- Any personal use of personal communication devices should be limited in duration and frequency, so that it does not interfere with the employee's/intern's work responsibility or adversely affect the productivity of the employee/intern or the employee's/intern's co-workers
- Internet, company provided equipment (e.g., cell phone, laptops, computers) and services may not be used for transmitting, retrieving or storing any communications of a defamatory, discriminatory, harassing or pornographic nature
- The following actions are forbidden; using disparaging, abusive, profane or offensive language; creating, viewing or displaying material that might adversely or negatively reflect upon the Township or be contrary to the Township's best interests and engage in any illegal activities,

including piracy, hacking, extortion, blackmail, copyright infringement and unauthorized access of any computers and Township provided equipment, such as cell phones and laptops

- Employees/interns may not copy, retrieve, modify or forward copyrighted materials, except with permission or as a single copy reference only
- Employees/interns should not open suspicious emails, pop-ups or downloads
- Employees/interns may not install hardware or software or engage in any other sort of file downloading or uploading without permission of the Township Manager or his or her designee. Contact the IT department with any questions or concerns to reduce the release of viruses or to contain viruses immediately
- Internal and external emails are considered to be public records and may be subject to discovery in the event of litigation and to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Be aware of this possibility when sending emails within and outside the Township

Copyright Use

Materials obtained from pages on social networking sites may or may not be the property of the page owner. Employees must not assume materials obtained from the Intranet are in the public domain and must follow the process outlined for obtaining copyright use.

When materials are posted on behalf of other entities, posted material must:

- Have obtained copyright releases for all such material from the creators or indemnification from the entity for which the material is to be posted
- Obtained releases for each image of a person who may have a potential claim to such a right or indemnification from the entity for which the material is to be posted

Photography

Those who agree to volunteer and/or participate in the HOMTV Internship Program acknowledge that photographs and/or videos of them may be taken by staff at any time. Furthermore, interns grant permission to use photographs and/or video of their likeness in any type of media or publication without compensation or reward.

(Adopted from the Capital Area Food Bank Notice of Filming and Photography)

Participants, volunteers and/or attendees of Meridian Township events entering a Meridian Township event or program, enter an area where photography, audio, and video recording may occur.

- By entering the event premises, you consent to interview(s), photography, audio recording, video recording and its/their release, publication, exhibition, or reproduction to be used for news, web casts, promotional purposes, telecasts, advertising, inclusion on websites, social media, or any other purpose by Meridian Township and its affiliates and representatives.
- Images, photos and/or videos may be used to promote similar Meridian Township events in the future, highlight the event and exhibit the capabilities of Meridian Township.
- **Participants, volunteers and attendees** release Meridian Township, its officers and employees, and each and all persons involved from any liability connected with the taking, recording, digitizing, or publication and use of interviews, photographs, computer images, video and/or or sound recordings.
- By entering the event premises, **participants, volunteers and attendees** waive all rights **participants, volunteers and attendees** may have to any claims for payment or royalties in connection with any use, exhibition, streaming, web casting, televising, or other publication of these

materials, regardless of the purpose or sponsoring of such use, exhibiting, broadcasting, web casting, or other publication irrespective of whether a fee for admission or sponsorship is charged.

- **Participants, volunteers and attendees** also waive any right to inspect or approve any photo, video, or audio recording taken by Meridian Township or the person or entity designated to do so by Meridian Township. You have been fully informed of your consent, waiver of liability, and release before entering the event.
- The Charter Township of Meridian reserves the right to use any photograph/video taken at any public space, township event or meeting, without the expressed written permission of those included within the photograph/video. The Charter Township of Meridian may use the photograph/video in publications or other media material produced, used, or contracted by the Charter Township of Meridian including but not limited to: brochures, invitations, books, newspapers, magazines, television, websites, social sites, etc.
- Any person desiring not to have his/her photo taken and used as above described must so notify the Communications Department communications@meridian.mi.us in writing prior to the event and include a photograph. The Charter Township of Meridian will use the photo for identification purposes and will hold it in confidence.

Social Media Content Review

Failure to abide by policies established for use of social media or participation in any activity deemed inappropriate may result in the loss of access privileges. As with any policy, violation may also result in disciplinary action leading up to and including termination.

- Supports the Township's standards of ethics in government
- Supports and promotes the Charter Township of Meridian's mission and vision statement
- Protects the intellectual property rights of creators of content
- Protects the personality rights of any person appearing in material posted

Social Media Audit

An annual and periodic social media audit will be conducted to assess Meridian Township's social presence and performance, as well as social media marketing campaigns and overall plan. The purpose of the audit is to identify what is working, what is not working and what needs improvement to optimize Meridian Township's digital footprint and brand presence.

Critical Information

- Critical information like closures must be immediately communicated to the public
- Critical information must contain alternate routes to take
- Critical information must contain any effects on businesses and/or the Township
- Critical information must contain safety and welfare if applicable
- Critical information must be posted at minimum of three times daily with or without updated information
- All critical communications must be approved by the Township Manager or Communications Director or designated employee

Non-Critical Information

- Public questions and comments are responded to immediately, even if it is to say we are finding out the information for you

- Township-wide events, business hours, holiday hours, public hearing notices, press releases, Township job openings, official meeting dates and times, seasonal, timely, due dates, etc.
- Department specific evergreen informational posts that are not Township-wide specific remain on the department Facebook pages and are not shared. Examples include; fire safety, composting, rain barrels, energy tips, recreation rules and recreation event specific information, volunteer specific to particular programs and not Township-wide
- Township meetings should be announced as outlined in the brand guidelines
- Share regional partner information, publications, departmental press releases & blogs
- Share follow-up information from events and meetings

Elected and Appointed Officials

- Charter Township of Meridian staff does not create or operate elected and/or appointed officials' social networking sites
- Charter Township of Meridian social networking sites intent is to share official Township business, information and events, not opinions of elected and appointed officials
- If a member of an elected or appointed body wishes to have information shared on one of Meridian Township's official social networking sites, that request must be submitted to the Communications Director for review and subsequent posting if the request abides by the social media policy; as determined by Communications Director
- Charter Township of Meridian staff will follow the HOMTV Social Media Election Content Policies and Procedures for fair and balanced social networking coverage of candidates running for office who agree to appear on HOMTV's election coverage
- HOMTV election coverage of candidates will be on the HOMTV social networking sites

Comment Use Policy

The Charter Township of Meridian's goal is to share and exchange information with those interested in topics relating to the Meridian Township community. It is Township policy to accept the majority of comments made to the Township operated pages. Posted comments and images by the public do not necessarily represent the views of Meridian Township or its employees. The Township will have the following Comment Use Policy linked to each Official Township operated social site:

We welcome your comments on Meridian Township's social media accounts. The purpose of this page is to present matters of public interest to the Meridian Township community. We encourage you to submit your local photos, questions, comments and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum.

Meridian Township will delete comments that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial or religious group. Further, Meridian Township also will delete comments that are: (i) spam or include links to other sites not applicable to the Meridian Township community; (ii) clearly off topic; (iii) advocate illegal activity; (iv) promote particular services, products, or political organizations; (v) infringe on copyrights or trademarks (vi) contain nudity in profile pictures or (vii) in violation of any local, state, or federal laws and/or is otherwise unlawful.

We expect ideas and information shared in a respectful manner on any social media account operated by the Meridian Township. Three (3) violations of the Township's Social Media Comment Policy may result in the offending user being blocked or banned from posting. If an individual wishes to appeal a ban or block from Meridian Township's social media sites, an appeal can be made to the Communications Commission at communications@meridian.mi.us.

If Meridian Township believes a post violates the community standards of any social media site; including trolling, Meridian Township may report the violator in question to the site's administrators.

Disclaimer:

Meridian Township does not agree with or endorse every comment that individuals post on social media sites operated by the Township. Our goal is to share and exchange information with those interested in topics relating to the Meridian Township community and our policy is to accept the majority of comments made to our page. These posted comments and images do not necessarily represent the views of Meridian Township and its employees.