



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice: Section 2.17	Issue Date: 3/19/2019 New ____ Revised ____ Supersedes Policy Dated:
Title: Social Media Policy	Approved By Effingham County Board of Commissioners

2.17 - SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose and intent of this policy is to establish guidelines for the acceptable use of Effingham County's Internet access and associated resources (social media activity). These rules are in place to protect the Effingham County Board of Commissioners (ECBOC) and its employees. Inappropriate use exposes Effingham County to unacceptable risks including virus attacks, network security issues, loss of confidential information, and legal issues.

POLICY

There shall be a consistent and uniform use of the County's Internet resources to prevent the unauthorized and unethical use of the Internet.

This policy is not intended to prohibit any employee's personal expression in general or through social media activity in particular; however because such activity can adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the County's interest in preventing unnecessary disruption to or interference with its operations and relationship to the public it serves.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the term "social media" is defined as the online technologies through which employees and other individuals engage in "social media activity" as defined below. In most cases, the term refers to internet based websites such as MySpace®, Facebook®, Twitter®, LinkedIn®, Google+®, YouTube®,



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy
--	-----------------------------------

Tumblr®, Blogger® and SnapChat®. Online social media technologies covered by this policy also include, but are not limited to such applications, as web logs/blogs, video logs/vlogs, message boards, podcasts and wikis.

For purposes of this policy, the term “social media activity” is defined as the act of sharing information or otherwise communicating through social media, including, but not limited to, the posting, uploading, reviewing, downloading, and/or forwarding of text, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs/images, symbols or hyperlinks.

Blogging - Writing a blog. A blog (short for weblog) is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption.

Spam - Unauthorized and/or unsolicited email.

Trojan - A program in which malicious or harmful code is contained inside apparently harmless programming or data in such a way that it can take control of a system and carry out its chosen form of damage.

PROCEDURES

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, consultants, temporary employees, and other workers at Effingham County that have access to the County’s Internet resources. These systems are to be used for business purposes in serving the interests of the County, and of our citizens and customers in the course of normal operations.

1. All employees of the Effingham Board of Commissioners should remain mindful, as public servants, you are generally held to higher standards than the general public with regard to your on duty and off duty conduct, professionalism and ethics. As a result, certain social media activity which may be tolerated or even acceptable in the private sector may nevertheless constitute a violation of this policy.



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	
Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy

2. Each employee engaging in social media activity must take personal responsibility for ensuring that such activity is consistent with all policies of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, including, but not limited to, those pertaining to making false or misleading statements, promoting or endorsing violence or illegal activity, promoting or endorsing the abuse of alcohol or drugs, disparaging individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other characteristics protected by law, or otherwise engaging in conduct unbecoming an employee of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, bringing discredit to the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, or interfering with or detrimental to the mission of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners.

3. Employees must refrain from engaging in any social media activity which disqualifies them from performing, or in any way reasonably calls into question their ability to objectively perform any essential function of their jobs. Example of such functions include, but are not limited to, testifying, making hiring or promotion decisions or recommendations, conducting performance evaluations, and determining eligibility for Effingham County Board of Commissioners programs.

4. While any employee, at his/her discretion, may engage in social media activity with any other employee(s) consistent with the prohibitions, limitation and restrictions, and guidelines of this policy, no employee may be required or otherwise compelled to engage in such activity with another employee.

5. No employee, whether for purpose of engaging in social media activity or otherwise, may disclose or otherwise reveal any privileged or confidential information of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, any other current or former employee of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, or any applicant for employment with the Effingham County Board of Commissioners.

6. Employees are strongly discouraged from disclosing or otherwise revealing their



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	
Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy

status as employees of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners through social media and, except as otherwise authorized in advance by the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, are strictly prohibited from directly or indirectly representing themselves to be speaking on behalf of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners. Similarly, in the absence of prior approval, employee's social media activity should not reveal or depict the Effingham County Board of Commissioners adopted logos, seals, symbols, uniforms, patches, badges, or similar items identified with the Effingham County Board of Commissioners.

7. If an employee's status as an employee of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners is disclosed, revealed, or otherwise made apparent in connection with his/her social media activity, his/her social media activity must include a prominently displayed disclaimer to the effect that the activity reflects only the employee's personal views or opinions and not those of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners; provided however, that no disclaimer will shield an employee from the imposition of appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action for social media activity which otherwise violates this policy. Employees should recognize that social media activity is generally more likely to violate this policy and other policies of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners if their status as Effingham County Board of Commissioners employees is disclosed or revealed in connection therewith.

8. To preserve the continuity of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners message, ensure accuracy, and avoid unnecessary confusion in the community, employees should refrain from engaging in any social media activity that purports or serves to announce or explain the details of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners programs, projects, activities, initiatives, or events.

9. The Effingham County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to require any employee to remove immediately any posted or uploaded text, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs/images, etc., (even if previously approved) if such posted material constitutes a violation of this policy or other Effingham County Board of Commissioners policies.



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	
Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy

10. All policies of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners relating to employee conduct apply equally to conduct that occurs through social media. This includes, but is not limited to, policies relating to discrimination, harassment, retaliation, workplace violence, conflicts of interest, and political activity.

11. All employees have an ongoing duty to report any violations of this policy by any other employee. The Effingham County Board of Commissioners considers this duty to report to be a critical component of its efforts to enforce this policy, and thereby ensure the safety, well-being morale and efficiency of its employees, preserves its reputation and goodwill in the community and avoids or minimizes unnecessary disruptions to or interference with its operations and service to the public.

12. Effingham County Board of Commissioners employees should be aware that social media activity is not secure or private, even if active steps are taken to restrict access. Once information has been posted or exchanged via social media, it is generally trackable, traceable and accessible indefinitely. For this reason, and consistent with the Effingham County Board of Commissioners current *Human Resources Standards of Practice 2.15, E-Mail, Internet and Computer Use*, employees should have no expectation of privacy in any social media activity conducted in the workplace and/or on duty or in any social media activity which otherwise directly or indirectly relates to or affects the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, any of its departments, or its employees.

13. The Effingham County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to inspect and/or monitor any social media activity engaged in by its employees using Effingham County Board of Commissioners owned computers or other electronic equipment or devices. In addition, employees may be required to provide access to any social media websites or other applications in which they participate upon a determination by the Effingham County Board of Commissioners that there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that such access will reveal evidence of a violation



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy
--	-----------------------------------

of this policy or any other Effingham County Board of Commissioners policy.

14. If an employee is sued in part due to his/her social media activity under circumstances where the Effingham County Board of Commissioners would ordinarily provide a defense and/or indemnify the employee, the Effingham County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to withhold or withdraw such defense or indemnification in the event any such activity is found to violate this policy or any other policy of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners.

15. Nothing in this policy is intended to or will be applied in a manner that violates any employee’s constitutional rights, including rights to freedom of speech, expression and association, or federal or state rights to engage in any statutorily-protected activity.

16. Any employee unsure about the application of this policy to any particular social media activity should seek guidance from the Human Resources Department before engaging in such activity.

17. This policy is intended for internal use of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners only and should not be construed as establishing a higher duty or standard of care for purposes of any third party civil claims against the Effingham County Board of Commissioners or its employees. A violation of this policy by an employee provides only a basis for corrective and/or disciplinary action against such employee by the Effingham County Board of Commissioners.

Acceptable Use

1. The County’s Internet access and associated resources are provided to conduct County business.
2. All official Effingham County websites, social media sites, and other Internet



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	
Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy

based sites shall be approved by the County Manager and the ECBOC, and as such, are subject to all related State and Federal laws and County policies and procedures. All departments wanting to create such sites should contact the County Manager for approval.

3. Occasional and incidental personal internet use shall be permitted if it does not interfere with the work of personnel, the County's ability to perform its mission, and meets the conditions outlined in County policies and procedures. Employees are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding the reasonableness of personal use. Individual departments are responsible for monitoring their users for excessive personal use of Internet resources. If abuse is suspected by department management, a request can be made by the County Manager or ECBOC to the Information Technology (IT) Department for recent logs of a user's Internet activity. The department head will determine if the usage is considered excessive and if disciplinary actions are required. If there is any uncertainty concerning personal use, employees should consult their supervisor or manager. The Information Technology (IT) Department may also deem usage excessive based on resources consumed and restrict a user's access, up to and including termination of access to County Internet resources.

4. Authorization for County Internet access shall be provided by the Information Technology Department (IT). Internet access should be requested by entering a work order in the IT Department's work order system and attaching a User Access Form with the necessary information and justification.

5. No one shall give any username and/or password for a County computer or Internet access to any unauthorized person, nor obtain any person's username/password by any unauthorized means. (This includes family and other household members if working from home.) No one except the system administrators in charge of County computers and Internet access are authorized to issue passwords for computer and Internet use. Users should keep passwords secure and



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	
Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy

not share accounts. Authorized users are responsible for the security of their passwords and accounts. User passwords should be changed every 90 days.

Unacceptable Use

The following activities are prohibited, although some employees may be exempted from these restrictions during the course of their legitimate job responsibilities (example: Law Enforcement staff may need to access inappropriate web sites for investigative reasons). The list below is by no means exhaustive, but attempts to provide a framework for activities which fall into the category of unacceptable use.

1. Access to streaming audio and video sites, including but not limited to Internet radio/television sites, news sites, etc., consume excessive network bandwidth and are not permitted on the County's network. Requests for temporary exceptions for video training purposes shall be reviewed by the IT Department. Requests should be sent to the IT Department via a work order stating the request, justification, and time frame needed.
2. For its own protection, the County reserves the right to block all Internet communications from sites that are involved in extensive spamming or other disruptive practices, even though this may leave the Internet users unable to communicate with such sites.
3. Under no circumstances is any user of the County's Internet access or resources authorized to engage in any Internet activity that is illegal under local, state, federal, or international law.
4. Unauthorized downloading or uploading of copyrighted material for which Effingham County or the end user does not have an active license is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and copyrighted software.



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy
--	-----------------------------------

5. Browsing, downloading, posting, sending, or acquiring sexually explicit or sexually oriented material, hate-based material, hacker-related material, or other material deemed offensive or dangerous is strictly prohibited.
6. Posting or sending sensitive or confidential information outside of the County without management authorization is prohibited.
7. County Internet users shall not use County Internet resources to post commercial announcements or advertising material.
8. County Internet access and resources shall not be used to promote or maintain a personal or private business.
9. Excessive Internet usage that disrupts the County's Internet access is strictly prohibited and may result in temporary or permanent termination of the user's Internet access. County related business that may consume excessive bandwidth (such as large software downloads) should be scheduled after hours as to not negatively impact the other County Internet users.
10. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Effingham County social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the Information Technology Department Director or his/her designees
 - a. Profane, vulgar, or obscene comments;
 - b. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - c. Comments not related to the original topic;



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy
--	-----------------------------------

- d. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or mental or physical disability;
- e. Defamatory or personal attacks;
- f. Threats to any person or organization;
- g. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
- h. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
- i. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
- j. Encouragement of illegal activity;
- k. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- l. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

Social Media / Blogging

1. Blogging or posting on Social Networking sites by employees, whether using Effingham County systems or personal computer systems, is also subject to the terms and restrictions set forth in this policy. Limited and occasional use of Effingham County's systems to engage in this activity is acceptable, provided that it is done in a professional and responsible manner, does not otherwise violate Effingham County's



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	
Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy

policy, is not detrimental to Effingham County's best interests, and does not interfere with an employee's regular work duties. As with any type of Internet access on the County's network, this activity is subject to monitoring.

2. Effingham County employees and other individuals covered by this policy are prohibited from revealing any Effingham County confidential or proprietary information, or any sensitive material when engaged in blogging or posting on social networking sites.

3. Employees shall not engage in any blogging or posts that may harm or tarnish the image, reputation and/or goodwill of the ECBOC and/or any of its employees. Employees are also prohibited from making any discriminatory, disparaging, defamatory or harassing comments when blogging, posting, or otherwise engaging in any similar conducts. Employees may also not attribute personal statements, opinions or beliefs to Effingham County when engaged in blogging. If an employee is expressing his or her beliefs and/or opinions in blogs, the employee may not, expressly or implicitly, represent themselves as an employee or representative of Effingham County. Employees assume any and all risks associated with the use of social media and blogging.

4. It is recommended that employees refrain from identifying themselves as an employee of the ECBOC on their personal social networking site. By identifying oneself as an employee of a company, a social networker becomes, to some extent, a representative of that company, and everything he/she posts has the potential to reflect on the company and its image. If an employee does identify themselves as an Effingham County employee, however, they shall place a disclaimer on personal posts or on their site so that it is clear that the opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of the ECBOC.

5. In addition to following all laws pertaining to the handling and disclosure of copyrighted or export controlled materials, Effingham County's trademarks, logos



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice Section 2.17	Title: Social Media Policy
--	-----------------------------------

and any other Effingham County intellectual property may also not be used in connection with any blogging activity or social networking sites other than on sites authorized by the ECBOC.

Enforcement

Employees engaging in social media activity in violation of this policy will be held accountable, and corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, may be taken in accordance with the Effingham County Board of Commissioners disciplinary policies and procedures.