

CRCOG SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
ADOPTED BY CRCOG POLICY BOARD
DECEMBER 6, 2010

Purpose:

Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) may utilize social media and social network sites to further enhance communications with various stakeholder organizations in support of goals, policies and programs endorsed by the CRCOG Policy Board. CRCOG employees have the ability to publish articles, facilitate discussions and communicate information through various media related to conducting CRCOG business. Social media facilitates further discussion of regional issues, operations and services by providing members of the public the opportunity to participate in many ways using the Internet.

Policy:

- 1) All CRCOG social media sites shall be (1) approved by the Executive Director and the requesting Department Director; (2) administered by a designated CRCOG employee or volunteer to be determined by the Department Director; (3) Designees must have a complete understanding of this policy and the appropriate content and technical experience.
- 2) All CRCOG social networking sites shall adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies, CRCOG internet policies and any other applicable CRCOG policies.
- 3) Freedom of 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.
- 4) All social network sites and entries shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
- 5) CRCOG reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
- 6) Each CRCOG social networking site shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the blog and social network site. Where possible, social networking sites should link back to the official CRCOG internet site for forms, documents and other information.
- 7) CRCOG social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:
 - a) Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
 - b) Profane language or content;
 - c) 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;
 - d) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - e) Solicitations of commerce;
 - f) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - g) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - h) Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- 8) All CRCOG social networking moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of this CRCOG policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with the policy.

- 9) All social networking sites shall clearly indicate they are maintained by CRCOG and shall have CRCOG contact information clearly displayed.
- 10) Where appropriate, CRCOG IT security policies shall apply to all social networking sites and articles.
- 11) Employees representing CRCOG via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of CRCOG and in accordance with CRCOG Personnel Management Procedures Manual. See Attachment “Employee Guidance for Participating in Social Networking.”
- 12) Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

CRCOG SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY ATTACHMENTS

Definitions:

For the purpose of this CRCOG Social Media Policy, the following terms are defined as provided below:

- 1) **Social Media:** Social media is content created by individuals using accessible and scalable technologies through the Internet for two-way communication. Examples of social media include, Facebook, blogs, RSS Feeds, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, etc.
- 2) **Blog:** (an abridgement of the term web log) may be a CRCOG website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.
- 3) **CRCOG Author:** An authorized CRCOG employee that creates and is responsible for posted articles (See “article” below) and information on social media sites.
- 4) **Article:** An original posting of content to a CRCOG social media site by a CRCOG author.
- 5) **Commenter:** A CRCOG employee or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular CRCOG article or social media content.
- 6) **Comment:** A response to a CRCOG article or social media content submitted by a commenter.
- 7) **CRCOG Moderator:** An authorized CRCOG employee, who reviews, authorizes and allows content submitted by CRCOG authors and public commentators to be posted to a CRCOG social media site.

Blog Standards:

Comments submitted by members of the public must be directly related to the content of the articles. Submission of comments by members of the public constitutes participation in a limited public forum. CRCOG blog moderators shall allow comments that are topically related to the particular article being commented and thus within the purpose of the limited public forum, with the exception of the prohibited content listed in CRCOG Social Media Policy – Section 7 above.

Author and Commenter Identification

- 1) All CRCOG blog authors and public commentators shall be clearly identified. Anonymous blog postings shall not be allowed.
- 2) Enrollment of public commentators shall be accomplished by valid contact information, including name, address, and email address.

Ownership and Moderation

- 1) The content of each CRCOG blog shall be owned by and the sole responsibility of the department producing and using the blog.
- 2) Documents and articles submitted to a CRCOG blog shall be moderated by an authorized and trained blog moderator.

Blog Comments & Responses

- 1) All blog articles and comments shall be reviewed and approved by an authorized blog moderator before posting on a CRCOG blog.
- 2) All blog articles and comments submitted for posting with attached content shall be scanned using antivirus technology prior to posting.
- 3) The linked content of embedded hyperlinks within any CRCOG blog articles or blog comments submitted for posting shall be evaluated prior to posting. Any posted hyperlinks shall be accompanied by a disclaimer stating that CRCOG guarantees neither the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of the link, web site or content linked thereto.

Employee Guidance for Participating in Social Networking:

CRCOG understands that social networking and Internet services have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among stakeholders and citizens. Social networks are online communities of people or organizations that share interests and/or activities and use a wide variety of Internet technology to make the interaction a rich and robust experience. Employees that choose to participate in social networks as a CRCOG employee should adhere to the following guidelines.

- 1) CRCOG policies, rules, regulations and standards of conduct apply to employees that engage in social networking activities while conducting CRCOG business. Use of your CRCOG email address and communicating in your official capacity will constitute conducting CRCOG business. CRCOG employees are personally responsible for any online activity conducted with a CRCOG email address and/or which can be traced back to the company's domain, and/or which uses firm computers, PDAs or other assets. When using the company email address or company assets to engage in any social media or professional social networking activity, all actions are public, and CRCOG employees will be held fully responsible for any and all said activities. Any such activities are subject to the company's Electronic Monitoring Policy.
- 2) Outside the workplace, CRCOG employees' rights to privacy and free speech may, under certain circumstances, protect online activity conducted on employees' personal social networks with personal email addresses. However, what is published on such personal online sites should never be attributed to the company and should not appear to be endorsed by, or originated from, the company.
- 3) CRCOG employees shall notify their supervisor and the IT department if they intend to create a social networking site or service to conduct CRCOG business.
- 4) Departments have the option of allowing employees to participate in existing social networking sites as part of their job duties. Department Directors may allow or disallow employee participation in any social networking activities in their departments.
- 5) Protect your privacy, the privacy of citizens, and the information CRCOG holds. Follow all privacy protection laws, i.e. HIPPA, and protect sensitive CRCOG information.
- 6) Do not disclose or use confidential or proprietary information of the company or any client in any form of online media. Sharing this type of information, even unintentionally, can result in legal action against you, the firm, and/or the client.

- 7) Follow all copyright laws, public records laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and any other laws that might apply to CRCOG or your functional area.
- 8) Do not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without their approval.
- 9) Credit appropriately. Identify all copyrighted or borrowed material with citations and links. When publishing any material online that includes another's direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always give credit to the original material or author, where applicable.
- 10) Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of CRCOG. If you publish content on any website outside of CRCOG and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with CRCOG, use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent CRCOG's positions or opinions."
- 11) Do not use ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in CRCOG's workplace. Avoid comments or topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
- 12) If you identify yourself as a CRCOG employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues, citizens and other stakeholders.
- 13) Correct your mistakes, and don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so. Frame any comments or opposing views in a positive manner.
- 14) Add value to CRCOG through your interaction. Provide worthwhile information and perspective.
- 15) If you would not say it in the conference room in front of an important client, do not say it online. Remember, if in doubt, don't!