

**VILLAGE OF OCEAN BEACH**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

The Village of Ocean Beach (“Village”) respects the free speech rights of all its employees<sup>1</sup>.

This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

Employees should exercise sound judgment when participating in online social media. It is important that all employees are aware of the implications of engaging in forms of social media and online conversations that reference the Village and/or the employee’s relationship with the Village. Employees need to be aware that the Village may be held responsible for their behavior.

Employees must adhere to all the Village policies and the Employee Handbook when using social media in reference to the Village.

Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their image, as well as the Village’s image. Anything that you post that can potentially tarnish the Village’s image will ultimately be your responsibility.

If you come across negative or disparaging posts about the Village or its employees or you encounter third parties trying to spark negative conversations, avoid the temptation to react yourself. Pass the post(s) along to your supervisor or the Village Administrator.

Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Employees should refer these inquiries to the Village Administrator or to an authorized Village spokesperson.

Employees should be aware that the Village, other employees and residents may observe content and information made available by employees through social media. Keep this in mind that when publishing information online that can be seen by more than friends and family and know that information originally intended just for friends and family can be forwarded on.

Employees are prohibited from posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.

Unless specifically authorized by the Village Administrator or Village Mayor, employees are prohibited from posting commentary, content or images that appear, purport to be or may be perceived as being authorized and/or approved by the Village.

Employees are prohibited from publishing, posting or releasing any information that is confidential or non-public, including but not limited to, written or oral information, photographs, including but not limited to photographs of employees at their workplace, employees performing their duties, including

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by Ocean Beach Village Code, Section 302.

police, fire and other rescue duties, or individuals receiving aid from employees. The posting of such information online may hamper ongoing Village investigations. An employee that posts non-public information is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination/removal from service.

If there are questions about what is considered confidential, employees should check with their immediate supervisor or the Village Administrator.

Employees may also be held responsible for images depicting the use of illegal drugs or illegal activities.

Employees should get appropriate permission before they refer to or post images of current or former employees, vendors or residents. Additionally, employees should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property. Employees should be aware that taking public positions online that are counter to the Village's interest may cause conflict.

Social media use should not interfere with an employee's responsibility to the Village. Village computer systems are to be used for business purposes only. Personal use of social media networks on Village computers is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination/removal from service.

Remember once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you "remove/delete" it later or attempt to make it anonymous.