

<p><b>COUNTY OF PRINCE GEORGE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES</b></p> <p>Prince George, Virginia</p>	<p><b>POLICY NUMBER: 270.1 through 270.2</b></p>	<p>Page 1 of 2</p>
<p><b>SUBJECT:</b></p>	<p><b>SUPERSEDES: December 16, 2014</b></p>	<p><b>DATE ISSUED: June 10, 2015</b></p>
<p><b>Employee Use of Social Media and Internet</b></p>	<p><b>AUTHORIZATION: County Administrator</b></p>	

**270.1 Employee Use of Social Media and Internet**

The County respects and honors the First Amendment rights of its employees to speak out as citizens on matters of public concern and to post materials, comments or information on the Internet or social media sites; however, a County employee whose social media or Internet postings disrupt the County’s ability to provide effective and efficient services to the public, or interfere with the County’s operations or security, may be disciplined, up to and including termination, for such comments or postings.

Employees shall expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the County or other authorities at any time without any prior notice. Any speech or images created as an alias or fake persona does not relieve nor shield the employee of any Prince George County policy. An exception shall be made for work required for law enforcement activities.

Personnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to the County’s and departmental personnel policies is required even in your personal use of social media. In particular, County personnel are prohibited from the following:

1. speech or images containing obscene, vulgar, or sexually explicit activity or language;
2. speech or images that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals;
3. speech or images that reflect behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible;
4. speech or images that reflect negatively on the County; and,
5. discussion of sensitive, confidential, proprietary, or classified information.

Examples of social media or online postings which are inappropriate and for which an employee may be disciplined include, but are not limited to, posts or comments that:

- a. impair the performance of your duties;
- b. impair discipline and harmony among coworkers;
- c. impair working relationships of the County;
- d. interfere with County business or operations;
- e. disclose confidential or sensitive information; or,
- f. negatively affect the public perception of the County.

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The employee shall be aware of their association with the County in online social networks. The employee shall assume that his/her speech and related activities on social media sites will reflect upon the County. The employee shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access as a result of their employment unless it is already public information. The employee shall ensure their profile and related content is consistent with how they want to present themselves as a County employee, appropriate with the public trust associated with the position, and consistent with County and departmental personnel policies.

The employee is prohibited from posting department logos, uniforms, or anything else identifying the department or County on a social media site or web page in a manner that reflects poor judgment or unprofessional actions.

The employee shall be aware that you may be subject to civil liability for:

1. publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization;
2. publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone, without their permission, that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;
3. using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes for an exploitative purpose and without that person's permission; or
4. publishing, without permission of the owner, the creative work of another, trademarked work or certain confidential business information.

The employee shall be aware that privacy settings on social media sites are constantly in flux, and shall never assume that information posted on such sites is private or protected. Moreover, social media and Internet usage shall never be considered anonymous.

## **270.2 Distribution of Employee Use of Social Media and Internet; Employee Acknowledgement**

A copy of the Employee Use of Social Media and Internet Policy shall be distributed to each County employee with an Employee Acknowledgement. Each County employee shall acknowledge receipt of the Policy by signing and dating the Employee Acknowledgement form in the presence of a witness who shall also sign and date the Acknowledgement. The executed Employee Acknowledgement shall be returned to the Department of Human Resources for filing in the respective employee's personnel file.