

# WESTMORELAND COUNTY

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

**Subject:** WEB CONTENT/SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Policy Number:**

**Effective Date:** SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

**Revised Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **PURPOSE:**

Due to the many opportunities presented by the internet and the role it can play in educating county residents and visitors, county departments may consider providing web content and social media formats to reach a broader audience. Westmoreland County encourages expanding web content and the use of Social Media to further the goals of the County and the missions of its departments where appropriate.

Three tenets county social media publishers must follow regarding the types of content to share:

**Relevant:** Information that helps residents and pertains to their daily lives

**Timely:** Information about deadlines, upcoming events, news or current events

**Actionable:** Information to register, attend, go or do

The Board of Commissioners has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding who may “speak” and what is “spoken” on behalf of Westmoreland County on the county website and social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of the county website and social media sites for those employees who are not governed by the Unified Judicial System Code of Conduct. For those employees who are state employees employed by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, as well as those employees who are county-level employees under the supervision and authority of the President Judge of the 10th Judicial District (that is, those who work in judicial chambers, for magisterial district judges, in Adult Probation or Juvenile Probation, the Law Library, the Jury Service Center, Domestic Relations or Drug Court), conduct is governed by the Code of Conduct for Employees of the Unified Judicial System,

as well as the Unified Judicial System Policy on Non-Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity.

Westmoreland County's Information Systems Department in conjunction with the County Commissioners shall approve what content will be permitted on the county website and what social media outlets may be suitable for use by the County and its departments. The Information Systems Department shall serve to educate departments of how to best use the county web site and various social media outlets to achieve their goals.

In summary, this policy is to outline what content is suitable to be placed on the Westmoreland County website and the official websites for each department.

For this policy, the term "social media" is being used as a broad term which includes social networking (i.e. Facebook & MySpace), blogs (i.e. Twitter), Forums and discussion boards (i.e. Yahoo Groups and Google Groups), and video and photo sharing sites (i.e. YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram), etc.

**POLICY:**

A. All official Westmoreland County presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the County's information networks and are governed by this policy.

B. The Information Systems Department will advocate using the county web site and social media sites to help departments reach their stated goals by assisting departments in developing appropriate uses for the web and social media sites.

C. Links to additional information should direct users back to the County's official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with Westmoreland County. If a department wishes to have a link to a site that is not part of the County's official website, the department must receive approval from the Board of Commissioners prior to adding the link.

D. All official department social media sites must be administered/owned by the Information Systems Department with content/posting rights given to each individual department. Because we cannot filter what the general public could post, the official County social media sites will not permit public comment unless the site offers the County the ability to approve public postings before they are made public.

E. Departments on the county web site and social media sites are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and

policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law, First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by Westmoreland County.

F. Employees representing the County government via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representative of Westmoreland County. Employees that fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to disciplinary procedures.

G. To avoid confusion, the seal of Westmoreland County is only to be used on official websites.

H. All web and social media content, references, and links to web content must:

- Be applicable to the functions of the departments
- Not be used to promote selected private businesses
- Not promote any illegal or unprofessional products or activity
- Not contradict the mission of the Board of Commissioners
- Not promote or link to sites that promote the following:
  - Violence
  - Illegal or inappropriate sexual behavior
  - Illegal or inappropriate drug and alcohol use
  - Political commentary
  - Political advocacy groups
  - Moral/ethically offensive material
  - Tasteless material

I. The following information is not to be posted on official websites or social media:

- Information about items in litigation or about claims that could be brought against the county.
- Nonpublic information of any kind.
- Personnel, sensitive or confidential information of any kind.
- Medical information that violates a person's Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protections

J. The County recognizes that its web site provides access to many court filings through its E-Services site and does not wish to infringe upon the public's access to those or any other public documents. However, to avoid drawing special attention to a specific filing or case, no document that has been filed with a County department is to appear on or have a direct link from any department's web site without prior approval from the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners.

K. The County Information Systems Department will review requests to add content to the county web sites and to use social media sites and will work with the county Solicitor and the County Commissioners when questions arise.

L. The Information Systems Department will monitor content on each of the Departments web sites and official social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message and branding consistent with the goals and mission of Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners. Each department is responsible for ensuring that the Information Systems Department is notified of and given owner/administrative rights to all "official" sites of that department.

M. Some social media websites may not allow for the disabling of public comments. In those instances, the comments must be monitored for their appropriateness on a regular basis by each department. Additionally, the page must include either a link to the following comments policy or the complete text published on the social media site:

The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in Westmoreland County in a courteous manner for the benefit of its many residents, businesses and visitors. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments, and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum. Once posted, the county reserves the right to delete these kinds of submissions:

- Vulgar language
- Personal attacks of any kind
- Comments or content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, genetics, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or intellectual disability or sexual orientation
- Spam or links to other sites
- Clearly off topic
- Advocate illegal activity
- Promote particular services, products, or political organizations
- Infringe on copyrights or trademarks
- Personally identifiable medical information
- Information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations.

Please note that the comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Westmoreland County Government or its officers and employees

N. The Board of Commissioners retains the authority and sole discretion to remove information deemed inappropriate from county web sites and official county/department social media sites.

O. Violation of these standards may result in the removal of department pages from social media outlets.

P. This policy is not intended to govern employees' establishment or use of personal social media accounts for personal purposes, outside the workplace and using non-County devices. However, some such personal uses of social media may reflect on the County or appear to represent County policy or to be used on behalf of the County. In addition, accessing and using personal social media accounts by means of County devices is subject to County policy. For these reasons, County employees are expected to comply with all County policies, as well as the following standards, when using personal social media accounts:

1. County employees have no right to privacy with respect to their personal use of social media or personal social media accounts accessed by means of County devices, or with respect to personal social media content so accessed. They should not expect or assume privacy or confidentiality with respect to such personal social media use or social media content.
2. Postings and user profiles on personal social media accounts must not state or imply that the views, conclusions, statements or other social media content are an official policy, statement, position or communication of the County or represent the views of the County. If you identify yourself as a county employee/officeholder on social media platforms, then you must indicate your views are not the official view of Westmoreland County. If you publish content on any website that relates to your work or subjects associated with the County other than an official county website, then use a disclaimer such as, "The views expressed on this site (or in this post) are my own and do not necessarily represent Westmoreland County's positions, strategies or opinions."
3. When using social media in a personal capacity, employees must:
  - a. If an employee does acknowledge his or her employment with the County or their department, the employee will be responsible for ensuring that his or her actions do not reflect negatively on the County or his or her department.

- b. If the employee identifies his or her employment with the County, the employee is responsible for representing the County in a professional manner.
- c. An employee should not discuss private, confidential, privileged or proprietary information about the County, its elected officials, employees or the public they serve, through social media.
- d. Employees should not use social media to engage in inappropriate discussions about the County, its elected officials, employees or the public they serve. If you decide to post complaints or criticism avoiding using statements, photographs, video or audio that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, or that disparage the public they serve, the County, its elected officials or co-workers, or that might constitute harassment, bullying or contribute to a hostile work environment.
- e. Without prior written approval from the County, no employee shall publish the County seal, logos or other marks on personal sites.
- f. Be mindful that if the County receives a complaint from an employee about information posted about that employee, the County may need to investigate that complaint to ensure that there has been no violation of the harassment policy or other County policy. In the event there is such a complaint, you will be expected to cooperate in any investigation of that complaint, including providing access to the posts at issue.
- g. Be mindful that many social networking sites provide for extended relationships which allows "friends of friends of friends" to view your personal content. Regardless of any privacy settings on various social media platforms, social media is not private. Information becomes public the moment it is posted on the Internet.
- h. Employees understand that nothing is anonymous on the Internet and user identities can be obtained through website administrators.

Q. Employees shall not use personal or County owned cellular devices, phones, etc. to access non-work related social media applications on County work time.

R. Serious and/or repeated violations of this policy may result in referral to and personnel action taken by the Westmoreland County Human Resources department, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with the disciplinary policies of the County, and for union employees, the terms of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

S. This policy is intended to supplement the County's User Agreement and Policies Regarding Internet Access & Use, E-Mail Use and Cell Phone Policy & Procedures. Notwithstanding any provision in the County's User Agreement and Policies Regarding Internet Access & Use, E-Mail Use and Cell Phone Policy & Procedures or of this Policy, no Employee is permitted to use any County owned computer, computer system or electronic communications system to access any social networking website for the employee's personal use and may only do so for official County business.

T. Nothing in the within Policy is intended to inhibit employees' activity protected by the Public Employe Relations Act to self organization, to form, join or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through reresentatives of their own choosing, or to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collectibe bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.

U. Employees who have rightful access to their County's email system in the course of their work have a right to use the email system to engage in protected communications under the Public Employe Relations Act on nonworking time.

**I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Westmoreland County Web Content/Social Media Policy. I have reviewed and understand the policy.**

Printed name

Signature

Dated:\_\_\_\_\_