

Social Media

C4.1 Social Media Communications Policy

Policy No. PS.11-06A-14

1.0 PURPOSE

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the Cariboo Regional District may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The CRD also has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the Regional District on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of all social media communications tools. This policy is not intended to be a guideline for Cariboo Regional District Directors' and staff's personal use of Social Media.

2.0 POLICY

Social Media is defined as e-technologies and practices that are used to share opinions and information, promote discussion, and build relationships online. There are thousands of different platforms and formats within social media including social networking sites, information sharing sites, blogging or personal publishing sites.

The CRD uses social media as an additional communication tool that is intended to encourage information sharing and dialogue for key specific events or programs. The use of social media shall be consistent with strong, ethical business practices and be a viable means to achieving business objectives and goals.

The CRD's social media initiatives including development, implementation and usage of these channels, is to be managed by the Communications Department in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Communications Chair.

2.1 Participation

Engaging in Social media is understood to be used for specific projects and the Emergency Operations Centre.

Social Media messages includes online communications tools such as posts, blog posts, wallposts, tweets, document posting, video posting, comments, replies, direct messages, events or invitations.

Messages will be simple, engaging and link the reader to further information on the CRD or appropriate affiliated agency sites including but not limited to other local governments, provincial and Federal governments or any of their affiliated agencies.

CRD staff members are not permitted to post content on CRD social media sites, except to respond to questions and comments from the public as directed by and only with permission from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate or the EOC Director.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary. All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that employees must otherwise follow. The Chair, Directors or CRD staff shall not divulge confidential information on social media sites, including but not limited to in camera items, personnel matters, or Emergency Operations Centre internal information.

Direct responses from the Chair and Directors will not be available on this site, but through regular appropriate channels, such as contacting the CRD offices via telephone, email or mail.

2.2 Disclosure

All social networking sites shall follow branding standards in accordance with the CRD Graphic Standards Manual.

2.3 Posting guidelines

After research into a wide range of social media tools, the Communications Department recommends several online tools. This recommendation is based on a number of factors, including; volume of users of a particular tool, popularity with the general public and ease of use. The online tools recommended for use by the CRD are:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Flickr
- LinkedIn

Content, comments or links containing any of the following will not be allowed on CRD Social Networking sites.

- Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article;
- Slandorous or defamatory remarks, obscene language or sexual content;
- Content that could, in the sole discretion of the CRD, constitute harassment of a CRD elected official, staff member or any other person;
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Promotion of commercial services of any variety;
- Promotion of political candidates;
- Promotion of illegal activity;

- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Cariboo Regional District reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy, incorrect or erroneous posts by external users of the CRD social media sites, or any applicable law.

2.4 Availability

The Cariboo Regional District's Communications Department will regularly monitor social media accounts and sites during office hours, Monday- Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. During events where a state of emergency has been declared, monitoring may be increased. As customer service is a priority, we will respond to all inquiries via social media in a timely manner possible during office hours; however, the usual ways of contacting us for official correspondence will continue to be encouraged.

2.5 Records

The Cariboo Regional District social networking activities will adhere to applicable provincial, federal and local laws, other public regulations. The activities will also adhere to Information Technology and Records Management policies and other applicable CRD policies.

The Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act applies to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with the act.