

Social Media

C4.1 Social Media Communications Policy



Regional Board Policy

Social Media Communications Policy

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Office of Primary Responsibility: Communications Department		
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PURPOSE:

The Cariboo Regional District’s social media policy establishes and outlines the principles of use for CRD communications staff, or other designated staff, and CRD Directors when engaging and posting on the CRD’s social media accounts.

POLICY:

The CRD uses social media accounts to communicate about CRD initiatives, events and goals and as an avenue for engaging with residents. Our primary goals for using social media are:

- Increasing public awareness of and citizen’s access to the Regional District;
- Providing better customer service, including sharing time-sensitive information, correcting misinformation, fixing mistakes or providing updates on service changes;
- Enhancing the reputation and image of the CRD;
- Gathering feedback and facilitating conversations for stronger two-way communication with the public; and
- Building trust and strengthening relationships with residents, partners and stakeholders.

General Use

CRD messages will be simple, engaging and link the reader to further information on the CRD website or appropriate affiliated agency websites.

The CRD may reply to online questions or comments if:

- the post asks a sincere question about a CRD service, program or policy
- the post includes inaccurate information – the CRD may provide a correction

The CRD may not reply to online questions or comments if:

- the post includes respectful statements of opinion – people are welcome to express their views even if they disagree with CRD policies, programs or decisions
- the post is respectful, and directed at other participants in the conversation

Posts that include profane or disrespectful language, especially those directed at CRD employees or Directors, are not appropriate and will not be tolerated. If a post violates the CRD's social media commenting guidelines (detailed below), the following steps will be taken:

- The CRD will hide or delete the post if possible;
- If removal is not possible, and the post is directed at an employee, the CRD will respond
- and ask the user to refrain from further disrespectful and inappropriate comments;
- If the user does not comply, the CRD may ignore, mute or block the user.

As an active participant in online conversations, the CRD may follow partners, community groups, organizations or individuals, and may share content from other users if the material is aligned with the CRD's corporate values, programs, services or initiatives. Sharing content or following social media profiles does not imply endorsement of any kind.

The CRD may promote events on its website and/or social media sites if the Regional District is involved as a participant, host or partner. Otherwise, the CRD does not permit members of the public to promote events on its website and/or social media sites.

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

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

Responsibility

The CRD's social media initiatives, including development, implementation and usage, are managed by the Communications Department in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Communications Chair.

Posting content or engaging on social media on behalf of the CRD will be the responsibility of the Communications Department. All other employees must have permission prior to posting from the Communications Manager or Chief Administrative

Officer (or designate) or the EOC Director. Select employees may be authorized from CRD departments, as required, to post, respond to comments or monitor social media.

When representing the CRD on social media, employees are expected to communicate accurately, respectfully and professionally and in accordance with all CRD policies. All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that employees must otherwise follow.

The Chair, Directors and 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.

The Communications Department will regularly monitor social media accounts and sites during office hours, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 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 as timely manner possible during office hours; however, the usual ways of contacting us for official correspondence will continue to be encouraged. Social media posts may be scheduled outside of office hours.

Commenting Guidelines

The CRD values the opportunity its social media sites provide in terms of real-time interaction with the public, however we reserve the right to remove any comments for the following reasons.

The CRD will immediately remove posts that contain profanity, are discriminatory, hateful, defamatory, racist, sexist, or obscene or otherwise objectionable as determined by the CRD in its sole discretion. This includes 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.

Posts that contain personal attacks or promotion of CRD elected officials and staff or any person, group, event or organization, or that contain advertisements or promotion of commercial services of any nature or in any way, will be immediately removed.

Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems or content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party will also not be allowed. Comments not topically related to the post, link or article may be removed at the CRD's discretion.

The CRD also reserves the right to ban certain social media users who disregard these guidelines and will report the said user to the social media's network administrators. By posting comments on the CRD's social media pages, users agree to these terms and conditions.

Guidelines for Elected Officials

Social media profiles and websites representing CRD Directors will not act as official information media platforms on behalf of the Regional District.

Any information to be communicated to the CRD's followers via social media will be provided by the CRD's communications department. CRD staff monitor and respond to questions using the CRD's official accounts.

Rather than duplicating the service provided by staff, CRD Director social media profiles and websites will be a secondary information source once matters have been officially released by the CRD. Directors will use the designated sharing tools on the various social media platforms based on this direction. CRD Directors will not report directly on CRD-related business or post/comment on CRD social media accounts. Directors should direct customer-service related questions to the CRD's official social media accounts, website or by phone or email.

Directors will include an "in my opinion" disclaimer either within the banner or description of their individual social media site(s) or website(s) or separately when making follow up posts to the CRD's social media postings and when creating original posts pertaining to CRD related business.

Directors 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.

Guidelines for Employees Using Personal Accounts

Cariboo Regional District employees are encouraged to use social media to be informed about the CRD and to share the CRD's official social media activities.

The CRD asks employees to follow a few basic guidelines when participating in their own personal websites, blogs and/or social networking channels:

- Please share the CRD's official messages.
- If you like what the CRD is doing, share it, comment on it, give yourself or others credit for working on it.
- If you are asked a question about CRD operations or a customer service-related question, refer people to the CRD's official social media accounts, website, or by phone or email.
- Do not share CRD information that is not already available to the public.
- Please do not share content that reflects poorly on you, your co-workers or the CRD.

NOTE: Opinions expressed on an employee's personal website, blog and/or social media account do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Cariboo Regional District.

Records

The Cariboo Regional District social networking activities will adhere to applicable provincial, federal and local laws, and 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.

***** END OF POLICY *****

<u>Amended (Y/N)</u>	<u>Date Reissued</u>	<u>Authority (Resolution #)</u>
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