



**Category: Administration Policy**

**Policy Title:** **Social Media, Media Relations and Public Statements**  
**Adopted by:** **Executive Leadership Team (ELT)**  
**Effective Date:** **October 10, 2016**  
**Last Updated:** **August 26, 2023**  
**Responsible Service(s):** **Strategic Marketing and Communications**

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1. The purpose of this administration policy is to outline how The City of Calgary (The City) and its employees interact with social media, the media and members of the public to protect the reputations of The City and its employees.

**2. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1. The City acknowledges and respects the rights of employees and volunteers to participate in public forums as private citizens.
- 2.2. Employees and volunteers shall conduct themselves with awareness that their interactions will reflect on The City.
- 2.3. Only an employee who has been officially delegated as a City spokesperson may make statements in public forums on behalf of The City.

**3. DEFINITIONS**

*3.1. In this administration policy:*

- a. **"City Communicator"** means an employee of Customer Service and Communications with responsibility to advise, or communicate on behalf of, City business units;
- b. **"City Social Media Account"** means a social media account that officially represents The City or its business;
- c. **"City Spokesperson"** means an employee that has been officially approved by the Director of Customer Service & Communication via a business unit director or general manager to communicate publicly on behalf of The City;
- d. **"Employee"** means any person employed by The City and reporting to a City of Calgary business unit, department, the City Manager's Office, the City Auditor's office, the Calgary Housing Company or the Calgary Police Service, including those working under an employment contract with The City;
- e. **"Media"** means television, radio, newspaper outlets, online reporting, blogs and forums that provide news reported by journalists;

- f. **“Media Relations”** means an ongoing relationship between The City and local, national and international media outlets and journalists;
- g. **“Public Forum”** means an open-access place, situation, or group in which people exchange ideas and discuss issues. Public forums include social media accounts, online or traditional media, and public meetings;
- h. **“Public Statement”** means a declaration made by an employee in any public forum, which can include statements that relate to The City, its business or its employees;
- i. **“Social Media”** means an internet-based communication tool with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation and information sharing. Social media includes social networking sites, forums, weblogs, wikis, online chat sites, and video/photo sharing sites; and
- j. **“Volunteer”** means an individual who has agreed to perform a service or task at the direction of and on behalf of The City without expecting or receiving compensation.

#### **4. APPLICABILITY**

- 4.1. This policy applies to all City of Calgary employees and volunteers.
- 4.2. This policy does not apply to the Mayor, Councillors, Ward Office staff, employees of Calgary Housing Company or employees and volunteers of the Calgary Police Service.

#### **5. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

- 5.1. This policy is established in accordance with the Municipal Government Act (Alberta) which describes the responsibility of the City Manager to implement the policies and programs of the municipality.

#### **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 6.1. Employees and volunteers are responsible for understanding the procedures related to this policy and seeking appropriate clarification before making City-related statements in public forums as private citizens.
- 6.2. City Spokespersons and City Communicators are jointly responsible for:
  - a. Posting content on or interacting in public forums on behalf of The City;
  - b. Making public statements and issuing news releases, stories, or editorials on behalf of The City; and
  - c. Responding to general or issue-related media inquiries on behalf of The City.
- 6.3. Directors are responsible for nominating employees to act as City spokespersons.
- 6.4. The Director of Customer Service & Communication is responsible for:

- a. Providing oversight for all City social media account activity;
- b. Providing oversight for all City media relations activity; and
- c. Approving employees to act as City spokespersons.

## **7. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

7.1. Failure to adhere to this Administration policy and its related standards and procedures may result in:

- a. Disciplinary action for employees in accordance with either the Labour Relations or Exempt Staff policies; and/or
- b. Disciplinary action for volunteers according to contracts and agreements, or by discontinuing work with individuals or organizations.

## **8. HISTORY**

| <b>Policy Action</b> | <b>Date</b>      | <b>Report Number</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|---|
| Minor Revision       | August 26, 2023  | n/a                  | Conform to new policy template and move procedural statements to a new standard.  |
| Amendment            | October 17, 2016 | ALT2016-0798         | Policy renamed; inclusion of Social Media; changed and updated media relations and public statement sections                                |
| New                  | March 11, 2008   | ALT2008-026          | New; With the evolution of new social media, the policy requires inclusion of processes to address these media.                             |
| Revision             | 2005             | n/a                  | Revised; modified to be incorporated into the Code of Conduct   |
| New                  | 2002             | n/a                  | New policy, superceding Chapter 6: Public Relations, Section 0603: News Media Relations in the hard copy Administration Manual 1992 Jan 27. |