

# SOCIAL MEDIA

SOURCE: OHIO EPA ADMINISTRATION

CONTACT: PUBLIC INTEREST CENTER

## Overview

Ohio EPA is embracing social media as a means to improve openness, accessibility and transparency. Strategic use of social media helps the Agency foster positive relationships with key audiences such as regulated facilities, taxpayers, overseers, government peers and employees.

Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube give the Agency a cost-effective means for communicating with these audiences. Social media plays an important part in the Agency's overall communication and customer service strategies. It complements existing practices such as media relations, citizen outreach, public meetings, newsletters, listservs and internal communications.

To ensure effective usage of social media, the Agency has adopted the following policies and procedures.

## Access

1. Ohio EPA's Public Interest Center is responsible for all Agency social media pages, feeds and platforms.
2. Only designated PIC staff, the Deputy Director of Communication and Director may send messages and/or respond to comments via Agency social media platforms and create new pages, feeds, groups etc. on social networks on behalf of the Agency. Communications staff and the Director's Office have final say on selection of new social media tools – with close counsel from Information Technologies Systems (ITS) staff.
3. ITS is responsible for technical and security issues.
4. Program staff may submit social media ideas, messages and programs to PIC staff for vetting and posting.
5. Staff will follow the Agency's [Use of Internet, E-Mail and other IT Resources](#), [Ohio EPA's Information Security Policies](#) as well as [Ethics Policy](#) while using social media.

## **Account Management**

1. Staff in PIC will manage all social media accounts. Divisions or offices interested in posting news or campaign ideas via social media should submit their ideas to PIC.
2. PIC is responsible for maintaining a list of all social media application usernames, the names of all Ohio EPA administrators of these accounts, as well as the associated user identifications and passwords currently active.

## **Acceptable Use**

Please see [Use of Internet, E-Mail and other IT Resources’ Employment Policy](#). Items specific to social media include:

“Participation in Online Communities. Any use of state-provided IT resources to operate, participate in, or contribute to an online community including, but not limited to, *online forums, chat rooms, instant messaging, listservs, blogs, wikis, peer-to-peer file sharing, e-bay, craigs list, and social networks*, unless organized or approved by the Ohio EPA is strictly prohibited. If an individual is approved to participate in any of these forms of communication as part of state business, cyber security awareness and training will be provided advising avoidance of inadvertent disclosure of sensitive information and practices that could harm the security of Agency computer systems and networks.”

## **Content**

PIC and the Director’s Office will monitor and post content on social media platforms on behalf of the Agency. Divisions or districts who would like something posted should contact PIC. All content represents the state of Ohio and Ohio EPA. Unacceptable usage of social media platforms includes content which violates—or supports/encourages the violation of—local, state and federal law. Content which solicits money for or supports political causes is strictly prohibited. All content must be factual, credible, professional and useful to Ohio’s citizens.

## **Training**

Communications staff using social media on behalf of the Agency will be trained in the use of social media tools to ensure consistency during vacations/sick time, and prevent interruption of service if staff leaves the Agency. Should an administrator leave, passwords will be changed immediately.

## **Branding**

All Agency social media presences will have a consistent look and feel, including use of the Agency’s logo.

## **Implied Endorsements**

If possible, the Agency's content will not appear next to advertisements. Platform settings will be reviewed to disable advertisements when possible.

## **Security**

As with any type of communication, there is a certain degree of risk associated with participation on social media platforms. Just as privacy and security are carefully accounted for and monitored on Agency websites and personally identifiable information is not shared through traditional communication mediums, such as news releases, the same approach applies to social media engagement.

When sharing content on social media platforms, content must not include confidential, critical or personally identifiable information. [Ohio IT Policy ITP-B.11](#), "Data Classification," outlines the various data classification labels that each Agency already has in place. [Ohio Revised Code Chapter 1347](#) also provides guidance on what is considered personally identifiable information. If the Agency engages in social media communications on third party social media platforms, it must include a disclaimer on the pages that advises users that they are no longer on a State of Ohio site and that the privacy policy of the social media platform applies.

## **Legal**

### Terms of Service

Social media tools each have different characteristics and their Terms of Service (TOS) differ markedly. As such, attorneys in Legal should read these Terms of Service and evaluate the risks and the capability Ohio EPA has to agree to certain terms, including:

- The site's conditions of use and access privileges.
- The Agency's ownership of the data, and our ability to retrieve it.
- Conflict of laws, jurisdictional and venue provisions.
- Liability and indemnification provisions, and Ohio laws and practices concerning the same.

### Records Management

Any content posted on social media platforms that is considered a public record must be retained in accordance with the appropriate State and Agency record retention schedules.

PIC will maintain copies of postings that are vital to the transaction of public business and that evidence an Agency's public functions, decisions and operations. Where such materials are in the custody of a third party provider, Ohio EPA will make reasonable efforts to obtain a copy of such when needed for public access or record preservation purposes.

Ohio EPA must be proactive to ensure that publicly vital content remains accessible, and to ensure that any subset of materials which may be subject to records retention laws is treated appropriately.

If needed, Ohio EPA will use the following third party sites or tools to scrape and archive the Agency's social media content to protect citizen privacy. This includes options such as:

- Twinbox: A Microsoft Outlook plug-in that can be used to archive Twitter postings.
- Tweetake: A free service allowing agencies to archive lists of followers, people the Agency is following, and tweets.
- ArchiveFB: A free plugin for the Firefox browser that creates a zip file and archives Facebook profiles and information associated with Facebook.
- SocialSafe: A similar tool archiving Facebook pages for a small fee.
- Backupify: A service which archives a variety of social networking tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Wordpress, and Flickr.
- Or, have the Agency build its own archival system/database for this type of content, or how the data might be archived by a central Agency.

### Participation Scope

Staff approved to post information via social media channels do so as Agency spokespersons. They will follow these guidelines:

- Further the State's mission;
- Deliver government services;
- Facilitate business-related research and access to information;
- Provide service of the highest quality to its citizens;
- Discover new ways to use resources to enhance government service;
- Increase staff efficiency; and
- Promote staff development.

### Citizen Privacy

Ohio EPA staff engaging in social media will protect citizens' privacy by not disclosing personal information and by reminding social media users of the program's Terms of Use. Often, the Terms of Use state that the social media company (for example, Facebook), owns the rights to information posted on its site. That means that any photos or videos uploaded to the site are no longer solely owned by the user.

### **Citizen Conduct**

This policy language will be added to any Agency social media pages that allow comments or wall postings:

*We welcome you and your comments to Ohio EPA's Facebook/YouTube/Flickr/etc. pages. The purpose of this site is to present information about Ohio EPA's activities/programs. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site.*

*Once posted, Ohio EPA reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, gender or religious group. Further, the Agency also reserves the right to delete comments that:*

- (i) are spam or include links to other sites;*
- (ii) are clearly off topic;*
- (iii) advocate illegal activity;*
- (iv) promote particular services, products, or political organizations;*
- (v) infringe on copyrights or trademarks;*
- (vi) contain enforcement case-specific and other confidential information.*

*Please note that the comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Ohio EPA or the State of Ohio or its officers and employees. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact the Public Interest Center at [web.requests@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:web.requests@epa.ohio.gov).*

See: Use of Internet, E-Mail and Other IT Resources Policy