

# Jefferson County Commission

## Employee Administrative Rules & Regulations



### Social Media Rule

Rule Number: 5.3.2025

Date Established: 1.15.2025

#### 1.0 PURPOSE

At Jefferson County Commission, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with others. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks, and the County relies on you to comply with certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established this rule regarding its appropriate use. This rule applies to all employees of Jefferson County Commission.

#### 2.0 RULE

In reference to this rule, social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room (whether or not that entity is affiliated with Jefferson County Commission).

Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before posting online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your online conduct and postings that adversely affect your job performance, the reputation of Jefferson County Commission or the privacy of fellow employees or citizens, contractors, or suppliers may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Know and follow the rules** - Carefully read these guidelines: the Integrity Matters Rule, the Use of Phone, Email, Computer and Information Systems Rule, and the Harassment and Retaliation Rule, and ensure your postings are consistent with the requirements specified. Inappropriate postings, including discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct, will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Be respectful** - Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, citizens, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of Jefferson County Commission. Keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your coworkers or by utilizing the [Compliance Hotline](#) than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Do not use statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage employees, contractors, or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such content include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on any status protected by law or County policy such as race, sex, gender, disability, religion, LGBTQ identification, etc.

**Be honest and accurate** - Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information and, if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the internet archives almost everything. Therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never

post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the Jefferson County Commission, fellow employees, customers, contractors, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the County.

**Post only appropriate and respectful content**

- Maintain the confidentiality of the County and any private or confidential information you have access to through your employment. Do not post internal reports, documents, or other business-related communications.
- Respect financial disclosure laws. It is illegal to communicate a 'tip' that constitutes inside information that may affect the price or sale of stocks or securities. This type of online conduct may violate laws that relate to insider trading.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a Jefferson County website without identifying yourself as an employee of the County.
- Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for Jefferson County unless authorized by the Public Information Officer for the County. If the County is the subject of the content you are posting, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and that your views are your personal opinions and do not represent those of the Commission or its employees, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the County. One way to make it clear you are not posting on behalf of the County is to include a disclaimer such as "The postings, opinions, and subject matter on this site are entirely my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Jefferson County Commission."
- County employees may not post about or engage in online conversations which violate the privacy rights (such as HIPAA rights) of another employee.

**Using social media at work** - Do not use social media during work time *or* use equipment provided by the County unless it is work-related, authorized by your manager, and consistent with the Use of Phone, Email, Computer, and Information Systems Rule. Do not use Jefferson County Commission email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

**Retaliation is prohibited** - Jefferson County Commission prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible violation of this rule or for cooperating in a related investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another for reporting a possible violation of this rule or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Media contacts** - Employees should not speak to the media on the County's behalf without approval of the Public Information Officer. All media inquiries should be directed to them.

**3.0 JEFFERSON COUNTY'S PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Content on the County's social media channels will be guided by transparency, and the events and information the public needs to know about County Commission actions affecting citizens and work done by the county to benefit citizens.

The Public Information Office will ask for consent before taking and/or utilizing photos or video of employees. Photos of children will not be utilized in the County's social media initiatives unless they are engaged in a public performance.

The County will not engage with individuals that post inflammatory remarks as a way of provoking others and causing arguments among its followers. The Public Information Office will answer questions in a respectful and factual manner if they are relevant to the information being posted. In addition, the County's social media presence will not engage in political debate on matters that are not within the County's control or purview.

Ideas for social media content may be submitted to the Public Information Officer by emailing [haysh@jccal.org](mailto:haysh@jccal.org).

#### **4.0 ENFORCEMENT**

The Compliance Office is responsible for interpretation, administration, and enforcement of this Rule.