



**VILLAGE OF
HARRISON HOT SPRINGS
POLICY**

COUNCIL	POLICY NO. 1.32
SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS	DATE ADOPTED: September 29, 2020

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to:

- ensure that Mayor and Council members understand their responsibilities to the Village and their colleagues;
- protect the Village’s confidential business information, privacy, interest and reputation; and
- establish a standard for professional and respectful online communication.

POLICY

a) General

- i. This Policy applies to all Members of Council and their use of Social Media or Social Networking Sites including third-party hosted, web-based, and mobile technologies that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content to share opinions and information. These include but are not limited to: blogging, bookmarking, digital applications (apps), document sharing, forums and discussion boards, geo-mapping, microblogging, online encyclopedias, photo sharing, social networking, and/or video sharing.
- ii. Mayor and Council Members should refer to the Media Communications Policy which appoints the Mayor as official spokesperson to the media and public on behalf of Council matters.

b) Appropriate Use of Social Media

- i. Social media usage, even when anonymous or conducted under a pseudonym, must be in compliance with the BC Human Rights Code, the BC Criminal Code, the BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation, other Village policies and must be in accordance with the Terms of Service of each social media/networking site.
- ii. Any content posted by a member of council in their capacity as an elected official is considered a record and can be subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation.

- iii. If Mayor and Council Members choose to create a politician/elected official social media profile or account, this role should be indicated in the username or profile description and a separate photo other than their official Village photo should be used. All Village-related information posted to politician/elected official profiles should direct users to the Village's website or social media accounts for official information.
- iv. If Mayor and Council Members choose to create a personal account for election campaign purposes, that account may not be used for Village purposes, must not be created or supported by Village resources, and must not use their Council title or the Village of Harrison Hot Springs logo.

c) Inappropriate Use of Social Media

- i. Mayor and Councillors are prohibited from posting derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory, indecent, obscene, or false comments about the Village, its work, and any persons associated with and employed by the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, elected officials and/or Boards, even if such persons are not directly identified, as these posts can cause damage to the Village's reputation or Council's reputation and relationships with other agencies, partners and the public it serves.
- ii. Mayor and Council Members should not discuss the Village's, clients', partners' or suppliers' confidential or other proprietary information.
- iii. The Village of Harrison Hot Springs name, logo or trademark should not be used in any screen name, social media ID or profile name other than the official Village social media accounts and profiles.
- iv. Village-commissioned photography or images are not to be used in individual Mayor or Councillor profile photos or social media posts unless being shared directly from the Village's social media sites.
- v. Mayor and Council Members should not post information regarding emergency warnings or alerts. This information will be released from emergency response agencies.

d) Understanding Risks of Social Media Use

- i. Mayor and Councillors should be aware that when using social media/networking sites online, there is no expectation of privacy and therefore should conduct themselves in such a manner. Anything posted online should also be deemed appropriate for public distribution via traditional media or otherwise, and content can exist online in perpetuity or in individual computers even if the original post is removed or edited.
- ii. Mayor and Council Members have a legal duty to act in the best interests of the municipal corporation, and should always be alert to the fact that their comments and opinions might be used as evidence against themselves or local government in legal proceedings. The legal risk is amplified in the case of social media, where an off-hand comment or opinion

instantly becomes part of the permanent public record, and available for use against the local government.

e) Confidentiality and Privacy

- i. Mayor and Councillors have a duty of confidentiality to the Village. Social media discussions, comments and posts, including textual or visual material should not disclose personal or confidential information regarding any persons employed by the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, elected officials and/or advisory committee members, or confidential business information belonging to the Village. Confidential information includes any non-public financial or operational information, and anything else that is of value to the Village that is not already public.