

PASSED BY THE CALHOUN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

CALHOUN COUNTY Social Media Usage Guidelines for Employees

Calhoun County has a legitimate business interest in monitoring internet activity, regardless of where it occurs, when that activity could violate privacy or otherwise adversely affect our client, our customers, our reputation, the reputation of others, the trust others place in us, or our working relationship with other organizations.

The intent of this policy is not to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information, but to minimize the risks, legal or otherwise, to Calhoun County and its staff members. The intent of this policy is to help avoid claims against Calhoun County or its personnel for things like: HIPAA violations; invasion of privacy; breach of confidentiality; and defamation or slander. This policy is also intended to provide guidelines for maintaining a respectable and ethical work environment and to ensure that our staff is acting in a manner that is consistent with our mission.

This policy is not intended or designed to prohibit the lawful exercise of employees' rights under applicable federal or state law. This policy will not be applied in any way that might limit any applicable legal rights of Calhoun County staff members. This includes, but is not limited to, any rights under federal or state law.

This policy applies to all Calhoun County staff and applies to all internet activity performed on duty and off duty; performed while using Calhoun County equipment or personal equipment; and whether it occurs on or off the premises of Calhoun County.

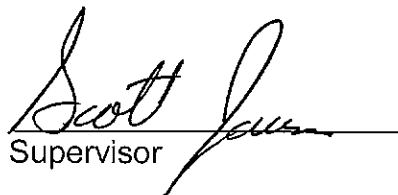
The following are policy guidelines for Calhoun County employees who participate in social media. Social media includes; but is not limited to personal blogs and other websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube and others. This policy also includes all internet activity.

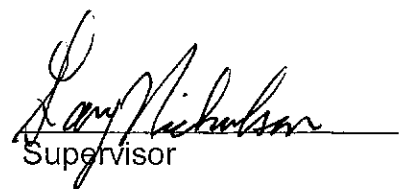
1. Follow all applicable County policies and State and Federal laws. Employees are also referred to Calhoun County Employee Computer/Internet Policy; and 2.18 Ethics and Confidentiality.
2. Employees must not share confidential or proprietary information about the County and must maintain privacy as required by law.
3. Employees may not post or otherwise disseminate Protected Health Information or any information that could possibly be used to identify a patient. Employees may not, without prior approval of their supervisor, post photos, videos or other images of themselves or other staff employees if the image or video depicts employees while on duty or while in Calhoun County uniform. Employees may not, without prior approval of the supervisor, post or otherwise disseminate photos, videos or other images of work related situations.
4. Write in the first person. Where the connection to the County is apparent, employees should make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the County. In those circumstances, it is proper to use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer."

5. If an employee identifies his/her affiliation with the County, the social media activities should be consistent with the County's standards of conduct.
6. Employees should be professional, use good judgment and be accurate and honest in their communications. Errors, omissions or unprofessional language or behavior reflect poorly on Calhoun County and may result in liability for the employee or the County. Be respectful and professional to fellow employees, business partners, competitors, customers and clients.
7. If an employee chooses to go public with personal opinions, he/she is legally responsible for the commentary. Individuals can be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous. For these reasons, persons should exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.
8. Employees should ensure that their social media activity does not interfere with work commitments. During working hours, employees may use personal social networking for limited family or personal communications so long as those communications do not interfere with their work.
9. Employees are discouraged from "friending" clients and others if the relationship will negatively impact work.
10. Unless approved by a supervisor, the employee's social media name, handle and URL should not include Calhoun County's name or logo. Employees should not use their county e-mail account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking site.
11. If posting on any of Calhoun County's web sites, employees should be mindful that any statements made are on behalf of the County; therefore, employees should use discretion before posting or commenting. Once these comments or posts are made they can be seen by anyone and may not be able to be "taken back". Consequently, communication should include no form of profanity, obscenity, or copyright violations. Likewise, confidential or non-public information should not be shared. Employees should always consider whether it is appropriate to post an opinion, commit oneself or one's agency to a course of action, or discuss areas outside of one's expertise.
12. Employees should also be aware that communication by way of the computer may be considered public and may be subject to open records requests. This includes e-mails and web-site postings made from County computers or on behalf of the County and are subject only to exceptions outlined by law. This means that both the posts/e-mails of the employee and any feedback by others, including citizens, may become part of the public record, unless a legal exception applies.
13. Employees should be mindful that inappropriate usage of social media can be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Approved by the Calhoun County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, May 22, 2012.


Chairman


Supervisor


Supervisor