

**Appendix 'A'**  
**Employee Guidelines for Acceptable Social Media Use**  
**To Town of Newmarket**  
**Social Media Policy COMM.3-01**

Town of Newmarket (Town) employees who engage in personal use of social media should be aware that there are professional risks. Employees cannot control the fact that an audience may perceive that their posts are being made within the context of their employment with the Town. As such, caution should always be exercised. Furthermore, while social media activity can seem transitory, posts on social media are considered publications and are subject to laws governing publications.

Employees shall be guided by a traffic light model to help inform their judgement about their personal use of social media as those employees engaging in social media are unable to control that they may be perceived to be representing the Town. These guidelines are meant to provide employees with a sense of what types of activity could have the potential to affect the Town's corporate image and harm the Town, fellow employees, or personal interests.

**Green Light** – Activity that is low-risk. Employees should feel comfortable posting content that falls within this category without hesitation. This includes content or activity that:

- ✓ Is non-controversial, and positive in tone;
- ✓ Is unrelated to the Town ;
- ✓ Adheres to the terms of service of the applicable social media platform; and,
- ✓ Respects Town policies, procedures, standards and guidelines.

**Yellow Light** – Activity that may involve risk. Social media content or activity that meets any of the following criteria should be considered carefully before posting:

- Content that promotes a particular product, opinion or cause;
- Content that refers to a political party, political candidate or elected official;
- Content that refers to an individual or an identifiable group;
- Content that refers to media coverage;
- Content that shares or re-posts information that was produced by someone else;
- Content that posts photographs of events or individuals; or,
- Content that relates to the Town and its business.

**What are the risks?**

There are plenty of examples of the above content that can be shared by employees on their personal accounts without causing harm to the Town, their fellow employees, or their own interests. However, employees should use their best judgment and think carefully before posting. Here are some questions you may want to ask before you post:

- Am I respecting others' privacy?
- Am I confident that this could not be viewed as an attack on an individual or group?
- Have I made it clear that my views are my own, and not the views of the Town?

- *If sharing something created by a third-party or media outlet:* Have I read it through in its entirety? Do I know what I am sharing?
- Am I confident that this post does not have the potential to harm the Town or anyone employed by the Town?
- *If it relates to Town business:* Am I making it clear that I am an employee of the Town?
- Am I comfortable with the possibility that I could be misinterpreted, by some audiences, as speaking on behalf of the Town?
- Would I say the same thing in a public meeting? Would I post the comment under my own name?

If the answer to any of the above questions is not a confident “yes”, employees are encouraged to exercise caution. If they feel strongly that their information should be posted, employees would be wise to consult with their immediate supervisor or a Designated Social Media Moderator before posting the information.

**Red Light** – Activity that is high-risk. It is very likely to be considered unprofessional, and may affect the Town’s corporate image and/or cause harm to the Town, Town employees, the person posting, or others. As such, employees should refrain from posting content that:

- Provides personal information of individuals without their consent.
- Promotes, perpetuates and/or fosters discrimination based on any a prohibited ground(s) in accordance with Human Rights legislation.
- Is a personal attack on an individual or specific group.
- Is profane or abusive.
- Is sexually explicit or links to content that is sexually explicit.
- Conducts or encourages illegal activity.
- May compromise the safety and/or security of the public or public systems.
- Violates a legal ownership interest of another party.
- Responds to online inquiries or comments addressed to any of the Town’s corporate social media accounts or other official communications channel (only Designated Social Media Moderators shall respond to inquiries on behalf of the Town).
- Is posted to a personal account during the employee’s hours of work, with the exception of designated breaks or lunch periods.

For further information or clarification, employees are encouraged to contact or consult with a Designated Social Media Moderator or Corporate Communications at extension 2040.