



Date Issued: October 22, 2013	Adopted By: Board
Last Amended: February 21, 2025	Policy Owner: Manager of Communications
Next Review Date: April 2, 2027	Manner Issued: Website

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

STATEMENT

Using a variety of accepted and effective communication tools, including social media, it is the Fraser Valley Regional District's objective to provide timely, transparent, proactive and two-way communication between the Fraser Valley Regional District and the people it serves.

The use of social media must, like all other forms of communication, further the business goals and objectives of the Fraser Valley Regional District and its departments, where appropriate.

PURPOSE

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) Social Media Policy applies to elected officials, employees, contractors, volunteers, or any person employed or engaged by FVRD to perform services for or on behalf of the FVRD at all times, including outside of working hours, in any capacity when using FVRD Social Media sites or any Social Media conversation related to the business of the FVRD, or to the professional portfolio of the elected official, employee, contractor, or volunteer, and applies regardless of whether the FVRD's network, systems, resources, devices or equipment are used. The FVRD Social Media Policy is intended to set out guidelines and requirements for the personal and professional use of social media and to ensure that all individuals understand:

- » Their personal and professional responsibilities regarding confidentiality, privacy and acceptable use of social media as outlined in this Social Media Policy;
- » That information communicated through the use of social media may be subject to the same laws, regulations, policies and other requirements as information communicated in other ways;
- » That the use of social media in a manner that directly or indirectly has a negative effect on the FVRD business interests, reputation, or relationship with its communities is prohibited; and,
- » A breach of the Social Media Policy will result in discipline for the individual up to and including termination of employment or termination of contract, as applicable; and,
- » The expectations for the public when interacting with FVRD Social Media Channels.

Social Media is a tool for instantaneously communicating with residents during emergency operations, and a useful tool for meeting FVRD general communications goals.

Social Media is not a substitute for traditional means of communications (e.g. website, media releases, newsletters, posters, notices, email, etc.), rather a complementary and strategic tool to:

- » Support and augment FVRD messaging;
- » Refer individuals to www.fvrd.ca, FVRD open houses, Board and committee meetings, haveyoursay.fvrd.ca;
- » Increase awareness/understanding of FVRD services and topics through timely information sharing;
- » Enhancing the reputation and image of the FVRD through engaging content that supports resident engagement;
- » Support strategic marketing objectives of the organization;
- » Support employee recruitment and retention;
- » Increase the speed of public feedback and input;
- » Build trustworthy and timely communications during incidents and emergencies; and
- » Strengthen relationships with residents, partners, and neighbours by providing additional communications methods and channels beyond traditional media.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media or Social Networking refers to all internet-based applications and technologies which provide for the creation, exchange or sharing of information, opinions, commentary, personal messages and other user-generated content, including but not limited to the use of social networks, web forums, newsgroups, chat rooms, blogging, vlogging, tweeting, wikis, podcasts, and includes but is not limited to Facebook, X, Bluesky, Reddit, Instagram, Threads, LinkedIn, Snapchat, WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube.

PROCEDURES

Part 1 - Principles

While social media has presented many opportunities with it can also come potential organizational risks. To mitigate organizational risks, FVRD has created one social media account per platform. That means one official Facebook account, one LinkedIn account, and Instagram account. The same will be the case for other social media platforms should FVRD adopt additional other social media platforms over time. Some of the existing social media accounts include pages for FVRD business units that use transactional practices with their clients (Hope & Area Recreation; CARE Centre; Vedder River Campground). Any future considerations for additional pages will be approved by the Manager of Communications.

The creation of separate accounts on social media under FVRD's name is prohibited. Some examples could resemble:

*FVRD Corporate Services Division
FVRD CAO's Office*

FVRD's official social media accounts are administered and monitored on a regular basis by the Communications Department within the organization's Corporate Services Division. Those employees designated to administer the organization's official social media platforms will promote FVRD related content and respond to stakeholder queries within 24-hours during regular business hours or as promptly as is practicable. In cases where obtaining information may take additional time, FVRD will be honest and transparent in the response by publically stating so on the social media account in use at the time.

When responding to queries via social media, the designated official social media account administrator from the Communications Department will contact the appropriate FVRD subject matter expert (by email or phone) to solicit the most accurate information. Upon receiving it, the designated social media administrator from the Communications Department will then post that response on the social media account from where the query originated.

For example, if one of FVRD's social media accounts receives a comment from someone wanting specific information on the organization's Noxious Weeds Program that may not be on FVRD's website. The person administering the FVRD's social media account would then go to the department that looks after that Program, obtain accurate information and then respond to it on the particular social media account.

Part 2 - Following/Followers/Likes

FVRD follows/likes accounts that are relevant to FVRD work and mandate. This could include the Facebook pages and/or Instagram accounts of individuals as well as organizations, public and private, who comment on FVRD topics. FVRD's decision to follow a particular social media user or page does not imply an endorsement of any kind.

Part 3 - Social Media Disclaimer

For the most part, comments and messages posted to FVRD's official social networking sites are considered transitory records and will not be kept as a permanent record by FVRD. In the event that comments and messages are transferred for use on other websites or communication media, users acknowledge and consent by their use of FVRD's social networking sites that their comments or messages may become part of the public record and used in official FVRD documentation. It is in the discretion of FVRD which comments will be archived or used.

It is not the intent of FVRD to collect any personal information when users participate on its social media websites other than what is volunteered to the FVRD. Comments and messages collected for the public record using social media will be treated like any other form of communication received by the FVRD.

FVRD may monitor social networking content for factuality, appropriateness and will make reasonable efforts to ensure that content it posts is accurate at the time of posting. However, it is in

the nature of social networking communications that accuracy and timeliness are not guaranteed and may not be reliable; as such, the user acknowledges that FVRD makes no such guarantees. As well, FVRD is not responsible for the authenticity or suitability of content posted to the channel by others. Posted comments and images do not necessarily represent the views of FVRD.

FVRD cannot and does not guarantee user's privacy on third party social networking websites as users are subject to the terms and conditions of the specific application. Users should review and agree to the third party terms and conditions prior to participating.

FVRD will not be responsible for any losses or damages any user may suffer as a result of using third party social networking websites; users participate at their own risk, for their own benefit and in so doing accept that they have no right of action against FVRD related to such use.

FVRD reserves the right to edit and/or modify comments and posts to ensure respectful dialogue for the public, FVRD employees, and representatives. Any comment, post, and message that contains any of the following may be hidden or deleted regardless of who has written it:

- » Profane, obscene, racist, or otherwise discriminatory content, including, without limitation, on the basis of any protected grounds under the British Columbia *Human Rights Code*;
- » Personal attacks, insults, harassing, or threatening language;
- » Plagiarized material or copyrighted material;
- » Solicitation of commerce or for personal gain;
- » Violations of local government bylaw, provincial or federal law, or encouragement of illegal activity;
- » Confidential information published without prior consent;
- » Promotion of political candidates or other political material;
- » Content considered inappropriate by FVRD;
- » Comments not relevant to the original post;
- » Comments that are inaccurate, misleading, off-topic, spreading misinformation or disinformation regarding FVRD services, programs, operations, staff, or the Board;
- » Comments unrelated to the particular page or post being commented upon;
- » Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party such as third-party intellectual property rights;
- » Are spam, link baiting or files containing viruses that could damage the operation of other people's computers or mobile devices;
- » Are commercial solicitations or promotion of a competitor; and
- » Information that may compromise safety, or security of the public, FVRD property or staff.

The FVRD may block or ban anyone from FVRD social media pages who continue to post comments as described above.

All FVRD social media pages must contain a link to the FVRD Social Media Policy, which will contain the following terms and conditions:

- » All posts are monitored by FVRD staff who may delete any message that is in violation of the Social Media Policy. If a submission violates guidelines, or is in any other way

disrespectful or inappropriate, the submission will be removed in its entirety from the site. If a user continues to post messages that violate the guidelines, the user may be blocked from using the site. If you believe a submission to any FVRD social media site violates the guidelines, please report it immediately to the FVRD by emailing communications@fvr.ca or calling 604-702-5000.

The FVRD will make a reasonable effort to respond to concerns and questions directed to its social media accounts. However, at its discretion, social media moderators may request the discussion be redirected to a more appropriate channel, by either phone or email. The reason(s) for this request may include but are not limited to privacy concerns (resident or employee), character limitations for messaging, amount of information required to resolve an inquiry, and to ensure customer enquiries and concerns are received for resolution.

Part 4 – Plain Language

FVRD will use plain language for its internal and external communications as much as possible while also adhering to meeting statutory requirements.

Part 5 - Requests for Freedom of Information (FOI)

FVRD does not accept requests for FOI records via social media. Such requests must be submitted in writing by any of the following methods:

- » By mail: Attention, FVRD Freedom of Information, 1- 45950 Cheam Avenue, Chilliwack, BC V2P 1N6
- » By email: foi@fvr.ca

Part 6 - FVRD Social Media Usage Guidelines for Staff Members

When using FVRD social media accounts or personal accounts, Staff Members are responsible for the content they publish online under their name, an alias, or anonymously. Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally on and off duty. The FVRD expects that all employees uphold the highest ethical standards when communicating using social media as the employees' use of social media can pose a risk to the FVRD. All staff members must ensure all online communications comply with applicable provincial, federal and local laws, regulations and policies, including all applicable FVRD policies including the FVRD Employee Code of Conduct. The following is a non-exhaustive set of guidelines to outline expectations for Staff Members when engaging in online activities:

1. Follow all applicable FVRD policies. Among the policies most relevant to these guidelines are those concerning FVRD's code of conduct, electronic communications and media relations policy.
2. FVRD monitors social media channels, internet, and website content for public

- engagement and risk management purposes.
3. Do not share confidential FVRD information.
 4. Be cautious in how you share your personal information.
 5. Be truthful about who you are. Clarify that your opinions are your own and do not reflect those of your employer unless you are an authorized FVRD spokesperson. Consider adding a disclaimer on your personal social media platforms such as, *"The views expressed here are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer."* or, *"My opinions are my own not those of my employer's."*
 6. Be a FVRD advocate. You are encouraged to promote, share or retweet FVRD news and information that is already publicly available. You are encouraged to follow FVRD social media channels and become part of FVRD's online community.
 7. Respect your audience. Do not engage in any conduct that would reflect poorly upon yourself as an individual and as an employee of FVRD. Treat past and present employers, peers, colleagues, vendors, friends and family with respect. Acknowledge differences in opinion diplomatically. Be aware that what you say/post may end up being permanent.
 8. Be aware that if you engage in any internet or social media communication that is intended to, or might reasonably have the effect of discriminating against, disparaging, defaming, harassing, humiliating, bullying, threatening or intimidating anyone, including other Staff Members, you may be violating FVRD Employee Code of Conduct or other FVRD policies. We will address concerns that come to the FVRD's attention. Action can include investigation and, if appropriate, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
 9. Be an ambassador. Even if you are not an official spokesperson, you are still an ambassador for FVRD. If you come across positive posts, comments, content or images, the Communications Department wants to hear about them in order to share them in the FVRD online community. If you see anything online that may be damaging to FVRD's brand and reputation please contact the Communications Department at communications@fvr.ca.

Any employee found failing to comply with FVRD's social media policy is subject to disciplinary action including, without limitation, termination. Any violations of the Code of Conduct by staff members will be dealt with according to the resolution process outlined in the Employee Code of Conduct.

Part 7 - FVRD Social Media Usage Guidelines for Committee/Board Members

1. Committee/Board members are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts, while respecting the Code of Responsible Conduct and applicable FVRD policies. Committee/Board members are encouraged to follow the official FVRD social media channels and to share its content.
2. Members will be responsible for creating, monitoring, and updating their personal social media accounts.
3. If members share content about FVRD on their personal social media pages and their

friends/followers make negative comments about the FVRD on their page, members are encouraged to advise FVRD administration.

4. Members are not permitted to use the FVRD logo.
5. Members should not mislead the public to believe their pages are the official voice of FVRD, or the voice of other Committee/Board members.
6. FVRD Social Media accounts will not post or share content posted by or about Committee/Board members unless the content depicts Committee/Board members actioning their role as a member of FVRD Board, or on behalf of FVRD Board.
7. As an elected representative of FVRD, it is expected that any time a public statement is made regarding FVRD (including on personal social media accounts), that the individual making the statement would be held to the same standards and professionalism as FVRD owned/operated social media accounts.

Any violations of the Code of Responsible Conduct by Committee/Board members will be dealt with according to the resolution process outlined in the Code of Responsible Conduct and in consultation with the FVRD Board Chair or designate and CAO.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Fraser Valley Regional District does not engage in ongoing or continuous monitoring of Staff Member or Committee/Board Member use of social media. The monitoring described in this Policy, and any ensuing collection, use or disclosure of information obtained from such monitoring, will be conducted by the Fraser Valley Regional District in accordance with the British Columbia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Part 8 - FVRD Social Media Usage Guidelines for Participants

The FVRD welcomes public comments and encourages discussion, dialogue, and conversation on FVRD social media channels. Participants should be aware that when engaging with FVRD on social media, all public contributions that can be seen by others are moderated in accordance with the FVRD Social Media Policy. Failure to abide by these rules may result in comments being deleted or individuals being removed or blocked from contributing.

Previous Amendments

N/A	
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