

**RESOLUTION**  
**A RESOLUTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF**  
**ADOPTING A SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**  
**POLICY FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

**Recitals**

**WHEREAS**, the role of technology in the 21st century workplace is constantly expanding and now includes social media communication tools that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration. Commonly used social media Web sites, such as Facebook©, Twitter©, MySpace™, YouTube©, Flickr®, Blogger, and LinkedIn®, have large, loyal user bases and are, thus, increasingly important outreach and communication tools for government entities; and

**WHEREAS**, to address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the Calvert County Government may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The County encourages the use of social media in accordance with this Policy to further the goals of the County and the missions of its departments, where appropriate; and

**WHEREAS**, the use of social media tools by the County provides a way to build community and to officially and rapidly communicate directly with stakeholders, partners, the general public and the media as part of online communications. These tools are simply another way to deliver public information, customer service and E-government to our residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the official County website, [www.co.cal.md.us](http://www.co.cal.md.us), and its associated functionality, remains the primary and predominant public source for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the County. The County website, [www.co.cal.md.us](http://www.co.cal.md.us), and its associated functionality will remain the primary and predominant source for County resident and employees to find in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services; and

**WHEREAS**, the County supports the use of social media technology to enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange to meet business mission and goals; and

**WHEREAS**, the County has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the County on social media sites; and

**WHEREAS**, Calvert County desires to augment traditional communication methods with the use of social media channels as set forth in the Calvert County Government Social Media Policy set forth herein.

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, Maryland hereby adopts the following Policy for the use of social media on behalf of the

County:

### **PURPOSE**

The need to use social media outlets primarily stems from public demand and the rapid growth of social media use by other local, state and federal government entities as an indication that social media can effectively enhance constituent communications. Calvert County desires to augment traditional communication methods using social media channels. The County supports using social media technology to enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange to meet business mission and goals. The County has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the County on social media sites. This is the County’s social media and social networking Policy. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to, a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this Policy and, where no policy or guideline exists, employees should use their professional judgment and take the most prudent action possible. A Department Head should be consulted if there is uncertainty.

This Policy is issued as an interim Policy and will stay in effect in its current form, until it has been incorporated in the County Computer Usage Policy or Personnel Code, as appropriate.

### **SCOPE**

This Policy establishes rights and responsibilities to mitigate risks associated with the use of this technology where possible. The Policy provides guidelines for acceptable use of social media by authorized employees, agents and contractors of Calvert County Government in representing the County to the public.

This Policy applies to all employees and approved volunteers, consultants, service providers and contractors performing business on behalf of a County agency/department. Persons and departments using social media technology prior to the implementation of the County Social Media Use Policy shall achieve full Policy compliance as soon as practicable, but not more than 90 days after the Effective Date of this document. Failure to comply with this Policy may be grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 86 of the Calvert County Code.

### **PRIVACY AND SECURITY**

The County has the right to monitor and restrict employees’ social media use on behalf of the County and will exercise this right as necessary. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when utilizing social media on behalf of the County. Social media is not a secure means of communication and shall not be used for any communication other than permissible disclosures of public records, as that phrase is used pursuant to the Maryland Public Information Act, Maryland Annotated Code, State Government Article, §10-611, et seq.

**ACCEPTABLE USE**

When using social media Calvert County employees will act in a professional and ethical manner by:

- Posting only public information that is professional and reflects positively on the County; and
- Promoting the value and importance of County services; and
- Providing factual data, sources, balanced views, acknowledging and correcting errors, using proper grammar and style; and
- Being aware that all content is subject to open records law.

Social media is not a substitute for customer service. Customers are to be referred to the customer service representative within the appropriate department for issue resolution.

A Department Head should be consulted when there are doubts regarding the appropriateness of content.

Permissible social media use is for official County communication, in accordance with organizational goals and objectives, not for personal use.

Communication through social media outlets should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with the County's communications Policy, practices and expectations. Employees must not use county social media sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions or to engage in private business activities.

**UNACCEPTABLE USE**

Any person representing the County when using social media may be subject to disciplinary action, including, without limitation, suspension or termination for:

- Providing information regarding pending business decisions that would compromise negotiations; or
- Providing confidential information about cases or clients, including names; or
- Providing information not subject to disclosure pursuant to the Maryland Public Information Act, Maryland Annotated Code, State Government Article, §10-611, et seq.; or
- Providing information different in form or content than approved for dissemination; or
- Failing to exercise good judgment or respect of the opinions of those who may comment on a social media site operating on behalf of the County.

**POLICY**

- There will be one official social media site for Calvert County Government, with the exception of Parks and Recreations Facebook page during the trial phase.

- Only the following persons or their express designees shall be authorized to post information on behalf of the County: County Administrator, Public Safety Director, Emergency Management Director, Public Information Team, General Services Director and Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners.
- Departments may use the official County government social media site upon approval from the County Administrator.
- If approved, Department Heads are responsible for determining who is authorized to use social media on behalf of the agency/department and for designating appropriate access levels.
- Department use of social media technology shall conform to the policies, protocols and procedures contained, or referenced, herein.
- Departments authorized to maintain a social media site are responsible for establishing and maintaining content posted to their social media sites and shall have measures in effect to prevent inappropriate or technically harmful information and links.
- Department social media sites shall be created and maintained in accordance with County social network usage standards and with identifiable characteristics of an official County site.
- Department social media sites shall be monitored regularly and prompt corrective action shall be taken as necessary.
- Access to social media networks from within the County's infrastructure is limited to individuals performing official County business and to agencies/departments with sufficient information and technology security controls.
- Employees may not utilize social media resources on behalf of the County at any time unless they are authorized to do so. Employees representing the County via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the County and in accordance with all County policies.
- Discretion must be exercised before posting or commenting. Once comments or posts are made they can be seen by anyone and may not be able to be "taken back."
- Protect and respect privacy and permissions.
- Strive for accuracy, transparency and openness in social media communications.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Access to Social Media Networks**

- Access to social media networks on behalf of the County is limited to individuals set forth herein and, then, when such individuals are performing official County business and as otherwise may be permitted to access social media networks pursuant to the County's Personnel Manual.
- Social media network access on behalf of the County shall be limited only to those with a clear business purpose to use the forum.

- Authorized users shall be provided a copy of this social media Policy and are required to acknowledge their understanding and acceptance via wet signature.

### **Official County Social Media Sites**

The following social media may be utilized on behalf of the County as an approved means of communication of the County:

1. Facebook

### **Site Content**

- Information and comments shared through social media channels shall fully comply with agency/department communications policies and procedures and shall not disclose confidential or proprietary information.
- Sharing or posting content owned by others shall be performed in accordance with copyright, fair use and established laws pertaining to materials owned by others. This includes, but is not limited to, quotes, images, documents, links, etc.
- It is not intended to use social media sites in a way that guarantees the right to protected free speech. Each agency/department is responsible for monitoring postings and taking appropriate action when necessary to protect general site visitors from inappropriate or technically harmful information and links.
- Sites that allow public comment shall inform visitors of the intended purpose of the site and provide a clear statement of the discussion topic introduced for public comment so that the public is aware of the limited nature of the discussion and that inappropriate posts are subject to removal, including but not limited to the following types of postings regardless of format (text, video, images, links, documents, etc.):
  - comments not topically related;
  - profane language or content;
  - content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regards to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
  - adult or sexual content or links to adult or sexual content;
  - solicitations of commerce;
  - conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- Agencies/departments choosing to allow public comments shall consult with the County Attorney to develop agency- or department-specific disclaimers. The County Attorney may also be consulted to determine whether to remove comments that violate this Policy.

**Records Management**

- Agency/department use of social media shall be documented and maintained in an easily accessible format.
- Account password information shall only be shared with authorized staff that has been designated by the Department Head, or her/his designee, to fulfill the role of site account administrator.
- Account password shall promptly be reset when an employee is removed as an account administrator.
- Departments shall maintain a record of social media sites created for County use, including, but not be limited to, a log file containing the name of the social media network, account id, password, registered email address, date established, authorizing representative and name of person who created account and agreed to the sites terms of use agreement and/or Policy.

**Site Monitoring**

- Department social media sites shall be monitored regularly and prompt corrective action shall be taken when necessary.
- Department social media site administrators shall review site activity and content daily for exploitation or misuse.
- Departments shall be responsible for monitoring employee use of social media and social networking websites on behalf of the County.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, Maryland that in the event any portion of this Resolution is found to be unconstitutional, illegal, null or void it is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners to sever only the invalid portion or provision, and that the remainder of the Resolution shall be enforceable and valid.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, Maryland that the foregoing recitals are adopted as if fully rewritten herein.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, Maryland that this Policy will be effective on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2012 and will stay in effective until amended or rescinded by the County Commissioners of Calvert County, Maryland.

[SIGNATURES ON FOLLOWING PAGE]


DONE, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2012 by the Board of  
County Commissioners of Calvert County, Maryland, sitting in regular session.

Aye: 5  
Nay: 0  
Absent/Abstain: 0


ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

  
Maureen L. Frederick, Acting Clerk

  
Gerald W. Clark, President


Approved for form and legal  
sufficiency on 12/4/12 by:

  
Steven R. Weems, Vice-President

  
Pat Nutter

  
John B. Norris, III, County Attorney

  
Susan Shaw

  
Evan K. Slaughenhaupt, Jr.

Received for Record 12/5 2012  
at 10:25 o'clock A.M. Same day  
recorded in Liber KPS No. 41  
Folio 253 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION.

