

Town of Birch Hills

Social Media Policy

The Town of Birch Hills passed a policy effective March 27, 2019 to provide guidelines for the use of Social Media.

POLICY

Every member of Town Council, Administration, and Staff (Employees) has the responsibility to maintain and enhance the public image of the Town of Birch Hills. This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

PROCEDURES

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of the Town of Birch Hills as well as personal use of social media when referencing the Town of Birch Hills.

- Employees need to know and adhere to the Town of Birch Hills Employee Human Resource Manual, Code of Conduct, and Code of Ethics when using social media in reference to the Town of Birch Hills.
- Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as the Town of Birch Hills' image. The information employees posted or published may be public information for a long time.
- Employees should be aware that the Town of Birch Hills may observe content and information made available by employees through social media. Employees should use their best judgement in posting material that is either inappropriate or harmful to the Town of Birch Hills, its employees, or customers.
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- Employees are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, employees should check with a supervisor or Town Council.
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Employees should refer these inquiries to authorized Town spokespersons.
- If employees finds or encounters a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor.

- Employees should get appropriate permission before you refer to or post images of current or former employees, members, vendors or suppliers. Additionally, employees should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.
- Social media use shouldn't interfere with employee's responsibilities at the Town of Birch Hills. The Town of Birch Hills' computer systems and electronic devices are to be used for business purposes only. When using the Town's computer systems and electronic devices, use of social media for business purposes is allowed, but personal use of social media networks or personal blogging of online content is discouraged and could result in disciplinary action.
- Subject to applicable law, after-hours online activity that violates the Town of Birch Hills Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics or any other company policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action or termination.
- If employees publish content after-hours that involves work or subject associated with the Town of Birch Hills, a disclaimer should be used.
- It is highly recommended that employees keep the Town of Birch Hills related social media accounts separate from personal accounts.

POLICY EFFECTIVE: March 27, 2019

Accepted as Policy by the Council of the Town of Birch Hills

Date: March 27, 2019

(Resolution 19-083 approved March 27, 2019)