

Town of Cary Guidelines on Social Media (Including personal Web sites, wikis, blogs and online communities)

At the Town of Cary, we neither encourage nor discourage your personal participation (off duty and using personal/non-Town equipment) in social media. Our goal in offering these guidelines is to provide you with best practices so that, if you choose to participate, you can do so appropriately and effectively. We also think it's important for you to know the Town's expectations for virtual communications that involve Town activities, issues, staff, and volunteers.

1. While blogs, wikis and other forms of online discourse are individual interactions, please remember that to our citizens, you are always a representative of the Town of Cary.
2. Respect your audience and welcome feedback about your posts. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc., and show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. If your posting reflects negatively on the Town (the organization as a whole or co-workers individually) – by being lewd, illegal or offensive – it can become a personnel issue. Keep in mind that the Town's [Personnel Ordinance](#) stipulates that personal detrimental conduct – on or off duty -- can be grounds for discipline or dismissal.
3. Know the legal risks of participating in social media. You can be held personally legally and financially responsible for the things you say and do, including defaming a person or entity with your posts; don't use other people's writings or images without their permission; respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
4. Don't pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes, and don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.
5. Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective.
6. Protect your privacy and your reputation. Be mindful that what you post will be public for a long time, even if you think you've successfully removed the posting from the Internet.
7. When posting about online references and original source materials, link to them directly. Remember: there is only one official Web site for the Town. Direct people to the Town's Web site for information about Town services, projects, programs, etc.
8. To help ensure that no one mistakes your personal postings with official Town communications, please refrain from posting videos, photographs, or other images of yourself in/with/alongside Town of Cary property including but not limited to vehicles, uniforms/clothing, offices, etc.
9. Your participation in social media during breaks at work or from work devices should be extremely limited and in accordance with these guidelines, the Town's [Technology Appropriate Use Policy](#), and the Town's [Standard Procedure \(105\) on media contacts](#).
10. If your personal participation in social media starts to involve the Town, let your supervisor and the Public Information Office know.
11. If you believe your work should involve social media or you want to respond to a post, talk to your supervisor and the Public Information Office before doing so.

12. Remember: true and complete anonymity on the Internet does not exist. So, when personally blogging about the Town of Cary or any issue involving the Town of Cary, you have a responsibility to identify yourself - name and, when relevant, role at TOC. Write in the first person, and include a disclaimer that makes it clear that your postings are your own and don't necessarily represent TOC's positions, strategies or opinions.

Questions? Contact the Public Information Officer.

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