

External Social Media Policy

Purpose

This Policy (“Policy”) is adopted by Loudoun Water to guide users of, and visitors to, our social media sites. For the purposes of this Policy, social media is defined as web-based technologies that include social media sites, collaborative sites, web logs and blogs, including, but not limited to, Facebook and Twitter (collectively “platforms”). Loudoun Water maintains social media platforms that contain news and information directly related to our programs and services to facilitate communications and distribution of information.

Loudoun Water Social Media Platforms Use Policy

The purpose of Loudoun Water’s social media platforms is to provide information of interest to the Loudoun Water community, as well as create dialogue with Loudoun Water’s customers and Loudoun County residents, the business community, visitors, and other members of the general public. The Loudoun Water social media platforms are provided as a community resource but are not “public forums.” Comments, posts and content expressed on the Loudoun Water social media sites do not reflect the opinions and position of Loudoun Water or its officers and employees.

Loudoun Water considers its social media platforms to be moderated online discussion sites. Published content on all Loudoun Water social media platforms is subject to monitoring. As a result, Loudoun Water reserves the right to remove comments that contain:

- Profane language or content;
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination against protected classes;
- Sexual harassment content;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Spam or comments that include links to external online sites;
- Solicitations of commerce or advertisements including promotion or endorsement;
- Promotions of particular services, products or political candidates or organizations;
- Content that violates legal ownership interest of any other party, such as copyright or trademark infringement;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Personally identifiable information, including medical information;
- Contain threats, defamatory statements or personal attacks;
- Content not related to Loudoun Water specific topics or which significantly deviates from a particular conversational thread or discussion.

Violators of this policy may have their comments removed from Loudoun Water’s social media platforms. Continued or egregious violations of this policy may prompt Loudoun Water to further restrict or prohibit an individual’s commenting on official Loudoun Water social media platforms.

Loudoun Water's social media platforms are administered by designated staff. When one of Loudoun Water's social media administrators suspects a violation of this Policy, he or she will contact the Loudoun Water Communications Division. The Communications Division will review and authorize removal of content when appropriate. When appropriate and if possible, a social media administrator will contact the commenter regarding a violation of Loudoun Water's Social Media Policy to notify the commenter and/or to request voluntary removal of the comment. Anonymous comments are considered spam and will be removed. Appeals regarding the Communication Division's decision to remove a comment may be submitted via email to communications@loudounwater.org or by calling 571-291-7893. The Communications Division will respond to appeals within two business days.

Linking

Loudoun Water is neither responsible for the content, nor endorses any site, which has a link to or from our social media platforms. Loudoun Water may make available social media applications and may publish social media content to third party sites. Loudoun Water does not control the policies of these third party sites and, therefore, the policies of the specific third party site apply. Loudoun Water may follow or like other social media sites for informational purposes only and such actions do not constitute or imply Loudoun Water's endorsement, agreement or support of any site content or sponsor.

Privacy

Only public information is permitted to be posted on Loudoun Water social media platforms. Postings from the public on Loudoun Water platforms may become public records. All content, comments and replies posted may be subject to Virginia public information laws and public information requests. For more information about public records and information requests, please contact Loudoun Water using the Contact link on our website (<http://www.loudounwater.org>), or call (571) 291-7880.

Loudoun Water is not responsible for content posted by others on our social media platforms. If users of, and visitors to, our official social media sites post, share or enter personal information on our social media platforms, they do so at their own risk. ***Loudoun Water is not responsible for the voluntary public display of private information.*** Loudoun Water may remove postings that contain personally identifiable information, but Loudoun Water, is not responsible for any damages caused by delays in such removal.

Retention of Social Media Communications, Posts and Publications

Social media platforms may contain communications, posts and publications that may be public records subject to the Virginia Public Records Act and the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Loudoun Water will preserve social media records on agency social media platforms pursuant to the applicable records retention schedule for the legally required retention period. The content of the communication, post and/or publication will determine whether the posting, tweet, *etc.*, is a public record subject to retention. If social media content is subject to retention, the record will be retained regardless of format (*i.e.*, digital text, photos, audio, and video). In the event social media content is related to a reasonably anticipated or pending litigation, or a government investigation, such content may be retained pursuant to a Legal Hold.

Terms of Service

Loudoun Water social media platforms are administered by third party sites and have terms of service and policies that are not governed by Loudoun Water. These third party sites are not official agency platforms and the specific third party website's terms of service and policies apply.

No Endorsement of Content

The views expressed in user-posted comments, replies, retweets, likes, followers, favorites, and/or links reflect those of the author(s) and do not imply endorsement, agreement or support by or on behalf of Loudoun Water, and do not reflect the official views and/or policies of Loudoun Water. All content, comments, replies, and/or retweets, posted to any Loudoun Water social media platforms may be subject to Virginia public information laws as noted above.

Formal Public Comment

Social media posts do not constitute official public comment and will not be included in the official record for Loudoun Water board consideration. Loudoun Water considers opinions expressed on any agency social media platform as posted ***for discussion only*** and not as a substitute for a formal statement in the public comment process. Comments by external parties on Loudoun Water social media platforms, including but not limited to replies, retweets, favorites, likes and other similar secondary postings are not considered official public testimony concerning any project, service or program.

Comments intended to become part of the official public comment process should be submitted in writing during applicable public comment periods to Loudoun Water via letter, fax, or email format as described by our official Public Comment Policy.