



Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for the creation, use and maintenance of social media communications, and outline social media governance for the Township of Zorra. This policy establishes criteria for acceptable use of Township social media accounts and actions.

This policy is required to ensure that:

- (a) The use of social media does not compromise public safety or the Township of Zorra image;
- (b) The information provided through social media aligns with the Township's vision and guiding principles;
- (c) Social media content does not violate individual privacy or conflict with existing municipal policies and by-laws or other regulations as applicable; and
- (d) Social media content posted on behalf of the municipality is as accurate, accessible, transparent and accountable as possible.

Definitions:

“Chief Administrative Officer” means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Township of Zorra.

“Corporate Social Media Accounts” means any social media networks bearing official corporate branding and identified as representing the Township of Zorra. The official social media accounts of the Township of Zorra are the Township's Facebook account (Township of Zorra), Twitter account (@ZorraTwp), and Instagram account (@zorratwp).

“MFIPPA” means the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56.

“Personal Social Media Accounts” means any social media networks created and maintained by individual employees, which can be identified as such through personal profile pictures, bios (which mention Corporate affiliation) or implicit association (i.e. an employee who is known to the public, but does not have his/her Township affiliation noted on profile).

“Political Content” means comments or posts made by politicians, supporters or otherwise, for the purpose of political gain.

“Social Media” means third-party, online communication channels in which the objective is to publicly share information and create dynamic interaction between two parties (i.e. the Township and a citizen) including, but not limited to: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

“Social Media Moderators” means employees of the Township of Zorra who have been appointed to speak on behalf of the Township by updating content on the Township's social media sites and pages, including the Township's official website. Moderators include, the Township's Records Management Coordinator/Executive Assistant and Director of Corporate Services.



“Township” means the Corporation of the Township of Zorra.

“Township website” means the official website of the Township of Zorra (www.zorra.ca).

“User” means a visitor to a Township social media site and/or the Township website.

Policy:

1.0. Application

- 1.1. This policy applies to all Township social media sites, including the Township website, and those who are authorized to post on the Township’s sites, including those who comment or interact with the site.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all Township employees who have and maintain personal social media accounts.
- 1.3. This policy applies to the usage during and outside regular hours of work.

2.0. General Guidelines for Use

- 2.1. The Township of Zorra’s municipal website (www.zorra.ca) will remain the predominant internet presence for in-depth service information, news updates, forms and documents.
- 2.2. The various social media accounts managed by the Township of Zorra will be administrated by one of the Social Media Moderators, primarily the Township’s Records Management Coordinator/Executive Assistant.
- 2.3. Any login and passwords for the Township’s social media sites are considered confidential information and will be stored under the supervision of the Chief Administrative Officer.

3.0. Content

- 3.1. Where possible all social media sites shall have the Township’s logo and/or contact information and refer to the Township’s website.
- 3.2. All content posted on the Township’s social media sites and website shall adhere to the Township’s visions and guiding principles, which includes safeguarding the Township’s image and reputation through open and transparent actions.
- 3.3. The Township may promote events on its website and/or social media sites if the Township is involved as a participant, partner, host, or if the event is in the Township and aligns with the Township’s corporate values.



- 3.4. The Social Media Moderators, upon agreement, or direction by the Chief Administrative Officer, reserve the right to remove content from the Township's social media sites that is deemed unsuitable, inappropriate or in violation of this Social Media Policy. Inappropriate content may include:
- (a) Commercial endorsement or solicitation of one product or service over another;
 - (b) Personal political content including statements in support of, or opposition to, matters before the Township of Zorra Council, or personal comments about staff or elected officials;
 - (c) Content considered to be defamatory, profane, disrespectful or insulting to Township staff or elected officials;
 - (d) Confidential information, including information about members of the public, municipal staff and elected officials;
 - (e) Objectionable material which may include material of a profane or sexually explicit nature, content that encourages illegal activity, or information that may compromise the safety and security of the public; and
 - (f) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, gender identity, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
- 3.5. Should the Township discover or receive a complaint regarding the posting of objectionable content on the Township's social media sites, an investigation will be conducted by the Chief Administrative Officer. If the material is deemed objectionable after the investigation has been completed, it will be removed from the social networking site.
- 3.6. The Township is not responsible for the authenticity or suitability of content posted to its social media site by other users.

4.0. Township Comments and Providing Responses

- 4.1. The Township's Social Media Moderators may respond to online inquiries and comments at his/her discretion and convenience. There is no obligation for the Social Media Moderators to respond to every online inquiry and comment.
- 4.2. The Township has an automated response to those who direct message the Township Facebook page and reads as follows:

The Township of Zorra uses Facebook as a means of sharing information with our residents and we do not monitor this account on a regular basis throughout the day. Please call the office at 519-485-2490 to address a specific issue. Thank you.

- 4.3. Should the Township respond to online inquiries or comments made through social media sites, the response shall only occur during regular business hours, Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



5.0. Users' Comments and Interaction on Township Social Media Sites

- 5.1. The Township reserves the right to hide users' comments from view on the Township's social media sites, specifically the Township's Facebook page, until approval of the comments by the Social Media Moderator.
- 5.2. The Township reserves the right to review, modify or delete any comment submitted to a Township social media site by a user. Comments that are negative, harmful or not in compliance with Township policies and procedures nor any other legislation, may be reviewed and/or deleted (see Appendix "A").
- 5.3. The Township shall request users to refrain from posting inappropriate comments, or may mute, hide, block, or ban users violating these social media commenting guidelines and/or the social media Terms of Use.
- 5.4. The Township reserves the right to deny access to the Township of Zorra social media sites for any individual who violates the Township's Social Media Policy.

6.0. New Social Media Sites

- 6.1. Employees wishing to create new social media sites on behalf of the Township require approval from the Chief Administrative Officer before establishing a social media presence on behalf of the Township of Zorra.
- 6.2. All social media accounts must be set up using an official, Township-provided email address. Personal email addresses are not permitted in the set-up of corporate social media accounts.
- 6.3. Township committees are prohibited from establishing and operating a Township associated social media site. Township committees may ask Council to grant an exemption, provided that the Township committee social media site will be used by the committee for fundraising purposes (i.e., promoting fundraising events, updating the community on funds raised so far, etc.).

7.0. Personal Social Media Accounts

- 7.1. Identifiable Township of Zorra employees should make it clear that, if posting from personal social media accounts and commenting upon Township-related matters, they are clearly voicing only their personal opinion, and not an official, Township position.
 - 7.1.1. Township staff should avoid the appearance of officially representing the Township by not posting Township logos, photographs, graphics or other visual insignia without the Township's permission.
- 7.2. Township employees posting comments on personal social media accounts are prohibited from disseminating content involving, but not limited to the following:

(a) Content which violates the *Criminal Code of Canada* or the *Ontario Human Rights Code*;



- (b) Proprietary and/or confidential Township information, such as internal deliberations regarding how policies and decisions are made;
- (c) Harassing, discriminatory or sexual innuendos directed at the Township of Zorra or any of its employees;
- (d) Identifying or making commentary on behalf of Township employees without the consent of that employee;
- (e) Content which violates any of the Township's policies; and
- (f) Negative inflammatory comments regarding the Township of Zorra.

7.3. Due to the possible sensitive nature, it is generally advised that employees refrain from commenting and/or interacting with Township related information posted on social media.

8.0. Expectation of Privacy

8.1. Township employees and members of the public commenting on Township-related posts can have no expectation of confidentiality or privacy in relation to their online activities as they pertain to, and are associated with, the legitimate interests of the Township. Posting content on social media sites regarding the Township, and Township matters, is considered a publication, not a private activity. Under no circumstances will Township staff publish personal information, pertain to either themselves or to others, on Township social media sites.

8.1.1. Personal information, within the meaning of *MFIPPA*, does not include the names and business contact particulars of the Township's elected officials.

8.1.2. All records or other information collected through social media are protected under the *Municipal Act* and *MFIPPA*.

9.0. Disclaimer and Social Media Terms of Use

9.1. Where possible, each Township social media site will contain a disclaimer clearly advising third party users or visitors to the site that third-party comments are not an official communication of the Corporation of the Township of Zorra. The following disclaimer, or a disclaimer of similar nature, shall be added to each of the Township's social media sites:

Comments made by members of the public are not official communications of the Township of Zorra and are not reflective of the Corporation's views, opinions and/or policies. Because this site is only periodically monitored, offensive materials or commentary may be present for which the Corporation of the Township of Zorra denies all responsibility. Further, all comments or other content posted to this site may be considered public records and be subject to public disclosure under MFIPPA.

9.2. The Township will adhere to applicable legislation regarding privacy and freedom of information.



- 9.3. The Township shall not be responsible for any losses or damages suffered as a result of using third party social media sites. Those using social media participate at their own risk and for their own benefit.
- 9.4. A link between the Township's social media sites and any other website or social media site does not imply endorsement or sponsorship by the Township of that website or social media site, the creator of the website/social media site, or the products therein.
- 9.5. A "follow" or "like" of a social media page, site or account on one of the Township's social media sites and/or website does not imply endorsement or sponsorship by the Township of that social media page, site or account, the creator of the social media page, site or account, or any opinions or positions therein.

10.0. Township Branding

- 10.1. All Township branded material on the Township's social media accounts shall be in accordance with the Township of Zorra's Brand and Communications Guide.
- 10.2. Social Media Moderators shall promote the Township's tagline "Doing Our Part" by using the hashtag #DoingOurPart or #DoingYourPart on social media posts at their discretion.

11.0. Exclusions

- 11.1. Social media sites representing the Township's Mayor and Councilors are exempt from this policy, as these activities are covered under the Township's Code of Conduct.

Departments Affected:

All departments.

Next revision date: (every five years)

March 2028.

Accessible Formats:

If you require this document to be in an accessible format, please contact the Director of Corporate Services at clerk@zorra.ca or 519-485-2490 ext. 7228.

Appendix “A”
Social Media User Commenting Guidelines and Prohibitions

The Township of Zorra invites community members to post, share, discuss and debate while treating each other with respect. However, the Township will not tolerate posts or comments that break any of the following rules and reserves the right to delete that post:

- (a) Anything political in nature;
- (b) Violent, obscene, profane, hateful, or racist posts, links or images;
- (c) Comments that are unrelated to the topic of the page or posts;
- (d) Solicitations, advertisements, or endorsements of any financial, commercial or not-for-profit organizations;
- (e) Comments that are illegal in nature or that violate copyrights or trademarks; and
- (f) Repetitive posts or copied and pasted or duplicated by single or multiple users.

If these rules are not adhered to and multiple offences are committed by the individual, we retain the right to block that person.