



qathet

REGIONAL DISTRICT

SECTION 2 ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

POLICY 2.13

SUBJECT SOCIAL MEDIA

ADOPTED AUGUST 25, 2022

POLICY STATEMENT:

The qathet Regional District's goal in using social media is to share information with citizens effectively at their convenience and improve organizational transparency.

PURPOSE:

This Social Media Policy outlines the corporate standards and principles of communicating in the online world related to information sharing regarding on qathet Regional District (qRD) projects and services.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all qRD employees, contractors, volunteers, and elected officials.

This policy applies to all qRD corporate social media accounts and activities.

AUTHORITY TO ACT:

All information that runs through the qRDs email/website/internet systems is subject to *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)*.

Administrative Policy No. 2.9: *Public Communications and Engagement* dictates the key spokespersons within the organization.

Administrative Policy No. 2.12: *Bylaw Complaints and Enforcement* dictates the processes for complaints and enforcement relating to Regional District bylaws.

Administrative Policy No. 2.11 *General Complaints Policy Enforcement* dictates the processes for general complaints.

POLICY/GUIDELINES:

1. General:

- a. Social media is not a substitute for traditional means of communication (e.g., website, media releases, newsletters, posters/notices, print advertising, email, etc.), but rather to support and amplify messaging that is being produced. Use of social media is intended to increase online traffic to our website, public meetings, Board and committee meetings, and other direct engagement efforts with the public.
- b. Social media is not a primary channel for customer service or engagement. The qRD maintains the right to disable public comment on all content posted. Inquiries, questions and concerns will be invited through email, phone, in-person and mail.
- c. The qRD's social media sites are only to be used for the purpose of sharing of qRD information only and not for engaging in debate, nor for sharing information from individuals, including Directors, businesses or groups.
- d. To effectively reach people, social media posts need to be optimized with an understanding of each channel's information-filtering systems. The social presence needs to be engaging, frequent, responsive, and visual - more than just the automated distribution of a web notice.
- e. The qRD will use social media for the following purposes:
 - One-way sharing of information, including emergency updates;
 - Monitoring public issues;
 - Promoting key initiatives including engagement opportunities and opportunities to provide feedback;
 - Providing key information regarding elections, petitions, and other voting; and
 - Extending the reach of information from other communications channels.
- f. Official government pages will include qRD branding, information and website links. Social media terms of use, including a privacy procedure, will be posted and shared on all social media channels. qRD Social Media sites must display or link to the "Terms of Use Statement" below:

Welcome to the qathet Regional District [name of site] page. The purpose of this page is to share information of public interest with our many residents, businesses and visitors during regular business hours. We value the opportunity for information sharing that our [name of site] page provides.

If you are looking for the official source of up-to-date information about the qathet Regional District, please visit our website at qathet.ca.

Social media is not a primary channel for customer service or engagement. We reserve the right to disable public comment on posts and delete content in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Inquiries, questions and concerns will be invited through email, phone, in-person and mail and not responded to on this site.

The qathet Regional District reserves the right to remove any content that contain misinformation or disinformation, vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or that is deemed discriminatory, slanderous or obscene.

We do not allow external posts. We reserve the right to delete all external posts, including those that are solicitations and/or advertisements for commercial entities, commercial products and services, political organizations or candidates.

We do not allow content that suggests or encourages illegal activity.

We reserve the right to delete content deemed as spam and delete content that includes links to other sites.

Questions, comments or concerns regarding should be directed to administration@qathet.ca.

- g. Any social media page with no activity or growth over a period of six months, will be ended. Followers of those pages will be directed, instead, to other official channels. After one year, those accounts should be deleted, subject to organizational records management requirements.

2. Staff Responsibilities for Corporate Social Media Accounts:

- a. All social media channels must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer and Regional District Communications staff. No new accounts will be created without the consultation and authorization of the Chief Administrative Officer and Regional District Communications staff.
- b. All new social media platforms must include a Privacy Impact Assessment before approval or implementation.
- c. Any social media sites created not in accordance with this policy must be deleted.
- d. Social media sites created before adoption of this policy must be reviewed by qRD Communications staff and updated in accordance with this policy.

- e. All qRD affiliated social media sites must include qRD Communications staff as one of the account administrators.
- f. Designees and administrators can be any departmental employee or volunteer designated by the Manager that,
 - i. Has a complete understanding of this policy; and
 - ii. The appropriate content and technical expertise, as determined by Regional District Communications staff.
- g. Only staff with authorized access to qRD social media sites are permitted to post or comment on behalf of the qRD. Procedures for content development, posting and retention are detailed in the Communications and Engagement Procedure Manual.
- h. qRD Communications staff will monitor corporate social media sites at least twice per day during regular office hours. Departmental social media sites will be monitored by designated departmental staff at least twice per day during normal office hours.
- i. During events where a state of emergency has been declared, monitoring may be increased depending on the nature of emergency.
- j. Sharing account log in information with unauthorized staff or members of the public is not permitted.
- k. Regional District Staff must not link any qRD social media content to personal or business accounts, including but not limited to accounts of Directors, staff, and contractors.

3. Promotion and Advertising on Social Media:

- a. Regional District Staff and Directors may be requested by the Chief Administrative Officer, Manager of Administrative Services, or Regional District Communications staff to provide a response to a specific question related to their department or area of expertise on qRD social media channels.
- b. qRD Staff and Directors may work with Regional District Communications staff to develop social media advertising, campaigns and posts to support the communication or engagement about qRD projects, programs or services.
- c. qRD Staff and Directors are encouraged to share updates and posts from the official qRD channels that they are happy to endorse, through their personal channels.

4. Responsibilities on Personal Accounts:

- a. Staff must not speak on behalf of the qRD using personal accounts online. Regional District Staff and Directors must state that opinions are their own and do not reflect the views of the organization.
- b. Regional District Staff and Directors must not post personal comments or status updates that reflect negatively on the integrity of the organization nor to air grievances which should be directed through Human Resources.
- c. Regional District Staff and Directors must avoid using their personal social media channels to express opinions that could create a perception that they are unable to perform their duties in an objective or impartial manner.
- d. Staff are not permitted to use company email addresses as login accounts for personal social media sites.
- e. Staff and Board members are reminded that any social media comments or posts are public, and last in perpetuity.

5. Enforcement and Discipline:

- a. Content posted to qRD social media sites that violates this policy will be documented and forwarded to qRD Communications staff and the Manager of Administrative Services for follow up and further action as required.
- b. Posts or opinions that are derogatory or defamatory of the qRD, partners, staff, contractors, volunteers or other interest groups, cannot be “disclaimed from” and may result in disciplinary action.
- c. Failure to follow the expectations laid out in this policy will result in disciplinary action in accordance with qRD procedures, provincial and federal legislation.