



DEQ POLICY STATEMENT PS23-02

POLICY STATEMENT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish general standards and responsibilities for the acceptable use of social media by Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) employees. DEQ's use of social media technology must conform to this policy.

BACKGROUND

The goal of DEQ's social media accounts is to enhance external communications and inform the public about the agency's mission and activities conducted in support of the mission. Social media platforms include all public forums such as web publishing and social networking that provide general interest information about DEQ's services, issues, news, programs, activities, and emergency communications.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Agency social media accounts are limited public forums under the First Amendment; therefore, all content published is subject to monitoring and is considered a public record. User-generated comments and private messages are considered casual correspondence and retained as such.

Social media sites are generally third-party owned. User-generated posts or comments from the public may be reported and/or rejected when the content violates legal standards of use as stated below. Before rejecting or removing user-generated posts, the agency's social media account administrator must consult with the Office of the Attorney General Office.

Agency social media accounts are created and maintained by the designated social media site administrator and content is approved by the Communications and Outreach Manager. The manager acts as the back-up administrator. All posts and comments are downloaded into the electronic data management system and retained according to the DEQ Records Retention Schedule.

Guidelines for posting on the agency social media accounts are governed by the established Social Media Guidelines and Procedures administered through the National Archives and Records Administration.

DEQ’s social media accounts are used for agency business purposes only. Posted information must follow professional standards for good grammar and spelling (see the DEQ Style Guide). The content should be brief, clear, and accurate. Avoid jargon, obscure terminology, or acronyms. Agency employees or authorized social media administrators recognize that the content and messages posted on social media accounts are public and may be cited or considered to be official agency statements.

Agency social media accounts may not be used for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities. Social media should not be used to circumvent other agency communication policies, including the news releases. The following information may not be posted on agency accounts:

- Confidential information
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or “spam”

STANDARD OF USE

DEQ reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments that are not topically related, including comments with profane or obscene language, sexual content, threats, and defamatory statements; encouragement of illegal activity, violations of the legal ownership interests of another party, and solicitations of commerce; statements in support or opposition to political candidates or ballot propositions; content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination; or information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems. Any content posted may be subject to public disclosure upon request. Activity on DEQ’s accounts is subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and policies.

RESPONSIBILITY

DEQ’s Web Design and Content Specialist is responsible for maintaining this policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is effective immediately and will remain in effect for 5 years unless amended, replaced, or rescinded prior to expiration.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2023

Jess Byrne
Director, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality