

**CALHOUN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
POLICY STATEMENT**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>  <b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>	<b>DATE APPROVED:</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> <b>Immediately</b>	<b>POLICY NO.</b> <b>430</b>
	<b>8/6/2015</b>	<b>REPLACES:</b> <b>New</b>	

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Calhoun County acknowledges that social media is a way for employees to share their life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist employees with making responsible decisions about social media, the following guidelines for appropriate use have been established. This policy applies to all employees that work for Calhoun County, regardless of position.

**GUIDELINES:**

*Social Media* includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including an employee’s own or someone else’s web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, (whether or not associated or affiliated with Calhoun County government), as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the County policies apply to an employee’s online activities. Ultimately, the employee is solely responsible for what they post online. Before creating online content, employees should consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keeping in mind that any conduct that adversely affects the employee’s job performance, the performance of fellow associates, or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of the County or the County’s legitimate business interests, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**KNOW AND FOLLOW CURRENT POLICIES:**

To ensure postings are consistent with current policy, employees should carefully read and understand the following:

- Policy #290 Workplace Violence
- Policy #315 Equal Employment Opportunity
- Policy #326 Harassment

Inappropriate postings that may include threats of violence, discriminatory remarks, harassment, and/or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and violators may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **BE RESPECTFUL:**

Employees should strive to always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, customers, suppliers or people who work on behalf of the County. Work-related complaints are more likely to be resolved by speaking directly with co-workers or supervisor rather than posting complaints and criticisms to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if an employee does post complaints or criticisms, then they should avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, and/or disparages customers, co-workers, suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or County/Court policies.

### **BE HONEST AND ACCURATE:**

Employees should make sure posts and information shared are always honest and accurate. Mistakes should be corrected quickly and the employee should be very open and honest about prior posts that have been altered. Remember that the internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Employees should never post any information or rumors that are known to be false about the County or the Court, co-workers, customers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the County or the Court.

### **POST ONLY APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL CONTENT:**

- Employees must maintain the confidentiality of private or confidential information. As such, internal reports, records, files, policies, procedures, communications, or any other business-related matter of a confidential nature may not be posted or shared.
- Employees may not create links from their blog, website or other social networking site to the County website, without identifying themselves as a County/Court employee.
- Employees should never represent themselves as a spokesperson for the County or Court and should express only their own personal opinions. If the County or Court is a subject of the content being created, then the employee needs to be clear and open about the fact that they are an employee and that their views do not represent those of the County or Court, co-workers, customers, suppliers or people working on behalf of the County/Court. If an employee does publish a blog or post online related to their work or about subjects associated with the County/Court, then it must be made clear that it is not on behalf of the County or Court. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the County or Court."

### **USING SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK:**

Employees shall refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment provided, unless it is work-related as authorized by their supervisor or consistent with other policies, including Policy #535 Internet Access, Policy #440 Electronic Communications, and Policy #445 County Website Acceptable Use. Employees may not use County/Court email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

**RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED:**

The County/Court prohibits taking negative action against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another co-worker for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

The County Administrator/Controller has been designated by the Board of Commissioners as the County Public Information Officer. As such, employees should direct all media inquiries to the Administrator/Controller and should not speak to the media on behalf of the County without obtaining advance approval from the Administrator/Controller. This provision of the policy does not apply to Elected Officials and/or their designee who may serve as the official spokesperson for their respective offices.

**OTHER:**

This Policy can be amended or terminated at any time by the Board of Commissioners.