

Social Media Protocol

Ireland's guide to waste mywaste

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Introduction

My Waste is committed to the use of social networking at work for business purposes to enable us to:

- Listen to our clients
- Understand our audiences better
- Ask questions
- Gain feedback on ideas
- Gauge influence
- Disseminate information in an efficient manner
- Build on a public profile
- Disseminate information about waste services and policy

In social media, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are becoming increasingly blurred. By identifying yourself as an employee, official or member of My Waste, you can create perceptions about your expertise and about that of the Government of Ireland.

This Policy for *Acceptable Use of Social Media* has been developed to guide employees who are authorised to participate in these social media conversations. It is intended to inform participation in this area when an employee is acting on behalf of My Waste / the Government of Ireland. It is important to remember that the role of My Waste staff in the social media community is to promote and inform members of the public about waste services and assisting them where possible. The same rules that apply to other channels of communication also apply in the online social media world.

The best advice is to approach social media in the same way as all other channels of communication; using sound judgement and common sense while adhering to this policy and all other relevant Government of Ireland policies.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for staff, consultants, volunteers, members, stakeholders and affiliated groups. This policy covers the conduct and expectations, policies, audiences, definitions, standards, guidelines for employees and the public when participating in My Waste social media or social networking platforms.

My Waste staff must ensure the use social media communications maintains our brand, identity, integrity and reputation while minimizing legal risks, inside or outside of the workplace while also being aware that My Waste is first and foremost a representative of the Government of Ireland.

Social Media can move quickly and be challenging and is to be used to convey information about but not limited to:

- waste products, services and policy
- promote and raise awareness of the My Waste brand
- search for potentially new avenues to communicate with the citizens of Ireland;
 - o Waste issues which arise
 - o Respond to breaking news or negative publicity
 - o Discuss government-specific activities and events.

Scope of Policy

This policy relates to the acceptable use of social media and applies to all employees (permanent and temporary), independent contractors, consultants and other persons or entities that use My Waste resources

during and outside of working hours. It is every user's duty to use My Waste resources responsibly, professionally, ethically and lawfully.

Definition of Social Media

Social media or social networking includes all forms of online publishing and discussion, including but not limited to: blogs, wikis, file-sharing, user-generated video and audio, social networks and other social networking applications. This policy applies to all My Waste social media networks which include:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Web sites

Any staff member using social media will embrace all new social media environments that may appear in the future.

Brief Content Guidelines

- Content must be relevant, meet specified goals or purposes and add value to the My Waste brand.
- Any copyrighted or confidential information requires written or verbal authorization before it can be published and should be properly attributed.
- All content must conform to all appropriate laws and regulations, as well as guidelines adopted by and governing the industry, such as privacy laws.
- Content must be polite and respectful. All messaging should maintain the same tone as if interacting with someone in person on behalf of the organization.
- Social media comments from users must be addressed in a timely but thoughtful and respectful manner

Acceptable Use Guidelines for Authorised Online Spokespersons

Any employee who engages in specific social media activities must abide by the acceptable use guidelines detailed below.

Use of social media is only to take place on PC / Laptop during working hours by those who have been given access – this does not pertain to Instagram as unpaid posts can only be placed via a mobile device.

As with traditional media, it is necessary to protect the Government of Ireland's reputation in online media and to selectively engage and participate in online conversations that refer to My Waste. The following guidelines detail how authorised Online Spokespersons must represent My Waste in an online, official capacity when they are speaking *"on behalf of My Waste and the Government of Ireland"*:

- **Be mindful that you are representing the Government of Ireland.** As a My Waste representative, it is important that your posts convey the message in the same way as all other forms of communication. You must be respectful of all individuals, race, religions and cultures. How you conduct yourself in the online social media space not only reflects on you, it is also a direct reflection on The Government of Ireland.
- **Do not post** content that:
 - o Is inaccurate, unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing abusive, slanderous, hateful, biased or embarrassing to any other person or entity

- Contains content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, age, race, religious belief or membership of the Traveller Community
- References sexual content or links to sexual content
- Refers to illegal activity or encouragement of same
- Compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Violates a legal ownership interest of any other party
- Contravenes the National Guidelines for The Protection of Children and The Government of Ireland's Child Safeguarding Policy
- Expresses political bias
- Breaches the principles of The Government of Ireland's Dignity at Work Policy

This list is not exhaustive.

- **Be first to correct your own mistakes.** Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. Adopt a conversational tone and remember mistakes can happen.
- **Keep records.** Records created, maintained and stored by My Waste are subject to a range of legislation including Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection. Records management of social media content shall comply with National Records Retention Policy (2001) and any other relevant records retention policies.

It is critical to keep records of interactions in the online social media space. Remember that online statements can be held to the same legal standards as traditional media communications. Be sure to keep records of any online dialogue relating to My Waste.

- **When in doubt, do not post.** An employee is personally responsible for his / her words and actions. As an online spokesperson, you must ensure that your posts are completely accurate, are not misleading, and do not reveal confidential information.
- **Copyright and Other Legal Issues.** Do not claim authorship of something that is not yours. If you are using another person's content, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you using their content. Do not use the copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights, or other rights of others without the necessary permissions of the rights holder(s).
- **Proprietary or Confidential Information.** Proprietary information must not be exchanged, discussed or referred to on social networking sites even in private messages between site members who have authorised access to the information.

Examples of proprietary information include:

- *Personal Data as defined under the Data Protection Acts*
- *Financial Information (e.g. salaries, fees paid, contract details etc.)*
- *Discussions on any aspect of Government business or activity particularly issues the subject of administrative, legal, financial or regulatory process(es)*
- *Sensitive commercial information submitted as part of a tender or otherwise acquired*
- *Intellectual property such as images, drawings, designs, maps of infrastructure etc.*
- *Information about clients, customers, citizens or any particular individual or identifiable group (e.g. in particular personal information)*
- *Information about employees (sick leave, performance etc.)*
- **Work Related Social Media Activities.** My Waste understands that staff engage in online social media activities at work for legitimate purposes and that these activities may be helpful to Government of

Ireland business. However, employees must exercise sound judgement and common sense to prevent online social media sites from becoming a distraction at work.

- **Remember that your local posts can have global reach.** The way that you answer an online question must be accurate at all times. Keep this in mind when you are participating in online conversations.
- **Know that the Internet is permanent.** Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you “remove/delete” it later or attempt to make it anonymous. When uploading content to social media sites, be aware that it is available to the media and general public regardless of whether your profile is public or private.

Editorial Control

The Government of Ireland is authorized to remove any content that does not meet the rules and guidelines of the aforementioned policy or may be illegal or offensive. Removal of such information will be done without permission of the author or advance warning.

The Government of Ireland expects all public users (non-employees, non-members, non-stakeholders) to abide by all guidelines mentioned above and the Government of Ireland reserves the right to take the same action as mentioned above in removing offensive or illegal content.

Important information about Facebook and Twitter

- Information and guides for using Twitter are available on <http://support.twitter.com/>
- Facebook do not encourage the use of Facebook Profiles for business use, you must set up a Facebook Page for this purpose. Facebook have been known to delete Profiles if they find that they are being used for business purposes.
- It is important that you read the Facebook Terms and Conditions before posting any content on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>)
- You will also find useful information on using Facebook for business purposes here: <http://www.facebook.com/business>

Breach of Policy

Any breach of this policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment in the case of more serious breaches in line with the Government of Irelands Disciplinary Policy.