

Upper Dublin Township Social Media Policy

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by employees of Upper Dublin Township and its related companies ("Upper Dublin Township"). For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet.

Upper Dublin Township employees are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Upper Dublin Township employees are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as an Upper Dublin Township employee (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to Upper Dublin Township).

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that Upper Dublin Township employees must otherwise follow.

Setting up Social Media

Social media identities, logon ID's and user names may not use Upper Dublin Township's name without prior approval from the Department Director.

Don't Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information that is not subject to the Sunshine Act or the Right-To-Know Law.

Protect your own privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the Upper Dublin Township website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for Upper Dublin Township. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something that you are discussing, point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a

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long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Respect copyright laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including Upper Dublin Township's own copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect your audience, Upper Dublin Township, and your coworkers

The public in general, and Upper Dublin Township's employees, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the Upper Dublin Township website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of Upper Dublin Township.

Protect Upper Dublin Township citizens, partners and suppliers

Citizens, partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a citizen, partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a citizen engagement. It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects. Your blog is not the place to "conduct business" with a citizen.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about Upper Dublin Township in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Think About Consequences

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For example, consider what might happen if an Upper Dublin Township employee is in a meeting with a citizen and someone on the citizen's side pulls out a print-out of your blog and says "This person at Upper Dublin Township says that citizen is crazy."

Once again, it's all about judgment: using your blog to trash or embarrass Upper Dublin Township, our citizens, or your co-workers, is dangerous and ill-advised.

Disclaimers

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble - it may not have much legal effect.

Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer saying that while you work for Upper Dublin Township, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of Upper Dublin Township.

Don't forget your day job.

Make sure that blogging does not interfere with your job or commitments to citizens.

Social Media Tips

The following tips are not mandatory, but will contribute to successful use of social media.

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about.

Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. If you're not design-oriented, ask someone who is whether your blog looks decent, and take their advice on how to improve it.

The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause.

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