



## Administrative Policies and Procedures

Date: 10/29/24  
No. 001

Islamorada, Village of Islands Policy on Use of Social Media

Department:  
Village Manager

### I. PURPOSE

Islamorada, Village of Islands (the “Village”) recognizes the need and value of social media as an immediate, accessible form of communication to reach a broad audience, to share information, and to engage with members of the public. Social media channels are used to increase public awareness of the Village’s policies, programs, services, accomplishments, events, and news.

The Village desires to establish a standard for interaction with social media tools and their associated technology, to provide guidance and information to the Village’s use of social media, and to maintain integrity of the Village’s presence in social media.

### II. SCOPE

The scope of this policy includes the use of social media platforms by Islamorada, Village of Islands and any departments within the Village as a communication platform.

The Village retains the exclusive right to treat Village-utilized social media services as a designated or limited public forum, or alternatively, as a forum for the sole expression of the Village’s government speech alone at any time and without notice. Such conversion or modification of a traditional or limited public forum to a forum only allowing the Village’s government speech may occur through disabling all comments on the particular social media service, or if the ability to disable comments is unavailable, through the Village’s clear communication that public comments or posts are not solicited, will no longer be accepted, and will be deleted as soon as practicable under the circumstances.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Social Media** is the term that refers to internet-based digital communication platforms that integrate user-generated content and user participation to share information, opinions and other content such as photos, videos, articles, and other publications. Social media

sites may include but are not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.

**Social Networks** are online communities of people or organizations that share interests and/or activities as user a wide variety of internet technology to make the interaction a rich and robust experience.

**Social Media Account** means any registration, login credential, tool, forum, website, or network that is created or maintained by a department for the purpose of establishing or perpetuating a social media presence.

**Social Media Content** includes any materials, documents, photographs, graphics, and other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted using social media internet sites or social media tools.

**Post** is any message, picture, graphic, advertisement, notification, feed, stream, transmission, broadcast, podcast, video, instant message, text message, blog, micoblog, status update, wall post, comment, and any and all other forms, means, or attempts at collaboration or communication that is uploaded, posted to, or otherwise displayed on or transmitted by, any social media account or network.

**Content** shall mean any posts, writings, material, documents, photographs, graphics, or other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted via social media.

**Tag or Tagging** someone or some business or organization means a link is created to that person's or organization's profile. The person/organization that is tagged in a post will be notified and the post may be added to the person's/organization's timeline or newsfeed.

**Authorized User** shall mean any employee, or any person or contractor acting on their behalf, who has been authorized by their department director and registered with and approved by the Village Manager's office to establish, create, edit, or maintain any social media account and the posts it may contain, in the transaction of official business of Islamorada, Village of Islands including anyone acting on behalf of, appearing to act on behalf of, or in the name of the Village.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Authorized users are responsible for ensuring that social media posts provide accurate information, professional presentation, and are relevant to and on topic with the Village's mission. Care must be taken to ensure that grammar and spelling are correct. Mistakes must be corrected quickly.

## **V. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

### **a. Use**

- i. The Village's official social media accounts will be used for purposes of providing information and transparency as it relates to policy information, Village Council business, accomplishments, events, programs, news and updates, announcements of official sponsors, to elicit engagement, and for emergency alerts.
- ii. The Village's official social media pages will not be used for: reporting criminal activity or emergencies, general advertising/promotion of third-party businesses, or political lobbying.

### **b. Content**

- i. Posts made by authorized social media users from Islamorada, Village of Islands official accounts:
  1. These accounts will be used to post general information to increase public awareness of the Village's policies, programs, services, and news/updates. Types of acceptable posts made by an official account of Islamorada, Village of Islands, in a text, photo or video format, include but are not limited to information about a village program, service or event, a policy decision/outcome, agenda summaries, general information or history about the Village, and alerts and/or notifications shared from official county channels.

### **c. Comments and responses**

- i. Comments/replies on the Village's posts from the public are allowed and will be monitored by the administrators for inappropriate content.
- ii. Responses from the Village to comments/replies from the public will be warranted and given when: a specific question is asked about a Village policy, program, service, or event information and there is specific answer, or the page will respond to correct an inaccuracy when discussion occurs among the public and there is misinformation about a Village policy, program, service or event.

### **d. Posting, Updating, and Responding**

- i. Village employees may not publish or post information on Village social media sites that includes:
  1. Confidential information.
  2. Copyright violations.
  3. Profanity.
  4. Racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments.
  5. Partisan political views.

6. Commercial endorsement or spam.

e. Following Accounts

- i. Village social media accounts should exclusively follow accounts of the below nature:
  1. Government entities that serve the Village and/or Monroe County, either directly or through a mutual aid agreement.
  2. Professional organizations that Village employees are part of.
  3. The Islamorada Chamber of Commerce.
  4. Monroe County schools/district (where appropriate).
- ii. Village social media accounts should not follow accounts of individual persons, that are private, are political in nature, or contain any political/partisan messaging.
- iii. Deviation from the above guidelines may be considered on a case-by-case basis and is up to the discretion of the Public Information Officer and the Village Manager.

## **VI. EXTERNAL LINKS**

To meet its purpose, the Village's social media sites may contain links to other social media sites or websites that are not owned, regularly reviewed or controlled by the Village. The Village's social media platforms do not provide links to external sites that are strictly political or religious in nature. The provision of direct links should not be construed as an endorsement or sponsorship of these external sites, their content or their hosts. The Village specifically disavows legal responsibility for what a user may find on another site. The views and opinions of the authors of documents published on or linked to the Village's social media pages do not necessarily state or reflect the opinion, policy or position of the Village.

The Village is not responsible for the content, quality, accuracy or completeness of any offsite materials referenced by or linked through the Village's social media pages. By using the Village's social networking sites, the user acknowledges and accepts the risk of injury or damage from viewing, hearing, downloading or storing such materials rests entirely with the user and that the Village is not responsible for any materials stored on other social networking sites or websites, nor is it liable for any inaccurate, defamatory, offensive or illegal materials found on other social networking sites or websites.

The Village does not endorse any content, viewpoint, products or services linked from its social networking sites and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the

accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information. The Village does not warrant the accuracy or reliability of or endorse any products or service providers listed or linked to its site.

Links shall not be made to sites that are associated with, sponsored by or serve a candidate for elected office or any political part or organization supporting or seeking to defeat any candidate for elective office or ballot proposal.

## **VII. TERMS OF USE**

- a. Content containing graphic, obscene, or explicit comments or submissions; or comments that are abusive, threatening, hateful, or intended to defame anyone or any organization; or comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity will not be tolerated.
- b. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.
- c. Content posted by persons whose profile picture or avatar, username, or email address contains any of the aforementioned prohibited conduct will not be tolerated.
- d. Content should be related to the subject matter of the social media site where it is posted.
- e. Solicitations or advertisements are not permitted. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial, or non-governmental agency or attempts to defame or defraud anyone.
- f. Information intended to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems will not be tolerated.
- g. You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username, and any information provided.
- h. All comments are subject to public records law.