

LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP  
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

I. PURPOSE:

A. To establish guidelines and practices for the use and management of Township social media including establishing general standards for public participation.

Policy Statement: This policy statement will be made available on social media sites and the township web page.

Read the Township's Social Media Policy below:

The sole purpose of this site is to provide information concerning Lower Makefield Township, to its many residents, businesses and visitors. To that end, the Township has disabled the ability to comment to the extent permitted by a particular social media platform. To the extent that the Township maintains any social media where disabling of commenting features are not permitted, the Township's social media is for moderated online discussions only and is not a public forum. Accordingly, all user comments must directly relate to information provided by the Township. Any user who has general inquires, comments, requests, or other should communicate directly communicated to the Township.

Any posting on the Township's social media may be subject to disclosure under the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law, 65 P.S. § 67.101, *et seq.*, as well as any other public record or disclosure laws or discovery litigation. To request official records, you may email Admin@lmt.org, call 267-274-1101 or go to www.lmt.org. Any posting to the Township's social will be maintained as required by the Municipal Records Act, 53 Pa.C.S. § 1381.

No user who posts any information on any Township social media has any rights in the content posted. The Township shall have all rights to and full permission for any content posted on its social media.

Comments, media, or other information posted to or displayed on any platform are subject to monitoring and review at any time Users have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality with respect to any content they post to the Township's social media. This includes any information made available through a user's privacy setting on his or her own social media.

Monitoring of social media pages will not occur 24/7, and as such, Lower Makefield Township is not liable for inappropriate or offensive comments that may be posted during a non-monitored timeframe.

The Township will not edit or otherwise modify any content posted by a user on any social media platform where the Township is unable to disable the comment functioning. The only action that may be taken by the Township is removal that contain the following:

- Comments that do not directly relate to the information or comments posted or displayed by the Township.

- Vulgar or obscene language
- Defamatory content
- False, misleading or deceptive information or media
- Personal attacks or threatening or harassing activity of any kind
- Spam or links to other sites
- Any content that constitutes, promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, genetics, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or intellectual disability or sexual orientation, or any other classification protected by law
- Any comment that advocates or promotes illegal activity
- Promotion of commercial services, transactions, or products, or political organization
- Non-public information concerning securities or that constitutes insider-trading or forwarding looking statements.
- Content that infringes on copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, licenses, or any other intellectual property of another.
- Confidential information such as social security numbers or financial account numbers.
- Personal health information protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations.

The Township would also like to encourage people to use their best judgment when interacting with any individuals through Township social media. The Township does not screen any individuals who may use or associated themselves with the Township’s social media sites. Use caution in connecting to people you do not know, whether through the internet or in real life, even accepting a “friend” request through Facebook, for example, may give that individual access to any personal information and photos that you have on your page.

If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact the Township at Admin@lmt.org. This policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time without notice.

LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP  
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: PERSONNEL

I. PURPOSE:

A. To establish a policy regarding use of social media and social networking by Lower Makefield Township employees, contractors, consultants and temporary staffing (“personnel”). This policy outlines the regulations for use of social media for official Township business and provides guidelines to assist personnel in making responsible decisions in using social media. This policy also serves to protect the Township’s reputation and image (which are valuable assets in which Township has invested time and resources developing) as it must maintain the trust and confidence of the public it serves.

B. The Township recognizes that social media can enhance communication, collaboration, and productivity and foster community outreach, citizen engagement and public education and participation.

C. The Township recognizes that the world of electronic communication is expanding rapidly. This policy is intended to address social media in general, rather than singular form of social media or networking, as advances in technology are constantly emerging. The use of the term social media therefore should be understood to mean a variety of things, including all means on communicating and posting information or content on the Internet.

Examples of social media platforms to which this policy applies includes but is not limited to:

- Personal blogs and websites
- Forums or message boards
- Facebook and Facebook Messenger
- Myspace
- YouTube
- Twitter
- Flickr
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn
- Digg
- Instagram
- VSCO

D. Social media also plays a significant role in the personal lives of numerous Township personnel. However, it must be formally and universally recognized that the personal use of social media has the potential to impact the Township, as well as individual members serving in their official capacity. As such, this policy provides information of a precautionary nature as well as restrictions on the use of social media by Township personnel.

E. Township Personnel are professionals and represent the Township in all aspects of their lives and should conduct themselves publicly in accordance with the responsibilities of public service. Personnel must maintain public confidence, not only in his or her professional capacity, but also in his or her online activities. Moreover, as personnel are necessarily held to a higher standard than general members of the public, the online activities of personnel of Lower Makefield Township shall reflect such professional expectations and standards.

F. Nothing contained in this policy shall be interpreted, construed or applied in any manner that would restrict an individual’s First Amendment rights, the right to engage in concerted

activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection, or any other activity protected by law. .

**Reminder: Individual employees have no expectation of privacy in their designated storage areas, as the entire computer and communications network is the property of Lower Makefield Township. Lower Makefield Township reserves the right to access, inspect, print, copy, examine, read, etc., any file or portion of its computer network.**

## **II. At-Work Use of Social Media**

1. All electronic messages sent using social media on *behalf of the Township*, require prior authorization by the Township Manager or designee. The posting of any videos or photographs must be done in accordance with Township security policies and with specific authorization to post the video or photograph.
2. Disclosing confidential or privileged information on social media is prohibited. If you are unsure whether information is confidential or privileged, please speak with your supervisor.

## **III. Personal Use of Social Media**

The Township recognizes that personal social media use that occurs outside of working hours and off Township premises are largely unrelated to the Township; however, certain types of communication by virtue of its subject matter may relate enough to the Township to result in review and discipline.

1. Use of personal social media during working hours or while on Township business is prohibited, whether or not such use is through a personal electronic device or Township computers, cell phones, or other technology resource. Employees may use their own electronic devices during unpaid breaks. Social Media sites may be blocked on work computers for employees who are not utilizing the sites as authorized on behalf of the Township. All postings must follow Township policies including the anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. Do not post any information that includes discriminatory, harassing, or threatening remarks or images, information that could create a danger of disruption in the work environment, knowingly or recklessly false or defamatory statements about a person or organization, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct.
2. No personnel are authorized to use the Lower Makefield Township Seal, letterhead, or any representation logo in connection with social media use unless approved by the Township Manager or designee.
3. Employees are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between their personal social media use and their professional lives. Where an employee identifies himself or herself as Township employee, his or her online opinions may be interpreted as the opinions of the Township. Employees may not act in any manner that creates a false impression that they are communicating on behalf of or as a representative of the Township. Generally, to avoid misleading statements, employees are encouraged to include a disclaimer, such

as: “The views expressed on this site are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.” Personnel may not make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements on behalf of the Township; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this Township.

4. Employees shall not use their official Township email address for any reason not related to Township business. Including non-work-related business, personal use, or for creating or using a social media account.
5. Lower Makefield Township personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.

#### **IV. Reporting Violations:**

Personnel who become aware of or have knowledge of a posting or of any website or webpage in violation of the provision of this policy or any Township Policy, including the anti-harassment or anti-discrimination policies, should notify his or her supervisor, or other individual in accordance with Township Policies.

Personnel are prohibited from taking negative action against any individual for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation.

#### **V. Consequences of Misuse:**

Violations of this policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

*READ AND REVIEWED:*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP  
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP EMPLOYEE POSTING ON  
OFFICIAL TOWNSHIP SITES

Township manager or designees must approve all posts. The individuals who approve and post should place their initials at the end of each post for accountability.

Designees and staff will only post respective department specific information.

Designees and staff will only post general information during working hours; emergency information may be updated by designees outside of these parameters.

Designees and staff will not respond to inquiries on social media; all inquiries will be redirected to [Admin@lmt.org](mailto:Admin@lmt.org).

Negative comments will be removed if they contain:

- Comments that do not directly relate to the information or comments posted or displayed by the Township.
- Vulgar or obscene language
- Defamatory content
- False, misleading or deceptive information or media
- Personal attacks or threatening or harassing activity of any kind
- Spam or links to other sites
- Any content that constitutes, promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, genetics, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or intellectual disability or sexual orientation, or any other classification protected by law
- Any comment that advocates or promotes illegal activity
- Promotion of commercial services, transactions, or products, or political organization
- Non-public information concerning securities or that constitutes insider-trading or forwarding looking statements.
- Content that infringes on copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, licenses, or any other intellectual property of another.
- Confidential information such as social security numbers or financial account numbers.
- Personal health information protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations.

You must receive prior approval of any external photos used in posts; photos of specific person(s) must have coinciding photo release form on file.