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## Ontario BIA Association Social Media Policy

The provisions of this **Social Media Policy Manual** will apply to all employees and volunteers working for the **Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA)**.

Nothing contained in this **Social Media Policy Manual** shall relieve the **OBIAA** or its' employees from complying with all applicable municipal by-laws, provincial and federal statutes.

### Procedure

Social media are powerful communications tools that can create immediate and widespread social interaction. These tools are highly accessible and easy-to-use and because they often blur the lines between the professional and personal life, they can have a significant impact on both organizational and individual reputations. Examples of social media include LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook.

OBIAA representing BIA's across the province should maintain consistent standards. BIA Staff must ensure that as a local board reporting to the municipality, that social media sites:

1. Implement in a manner that positively enhances the BIA's and area's reputation.
2. Provide a consistent and professional voice so that residents can be assured that the information they are receiving can be trusted
3. Be effectively managed to ensure that they provide timely and accurate information and responses.
4. Have guidelines in place to address controversial or sensitive online content
5. Adhere to established records retention, privacy, and accessibility requirements.

### Guidelines for Use of Social Media

The following guidelines should be applied to both personal and business use of social media.

- **Know what you're getting into:** Social media sites must be kept current and up to date to be successful. Writing content can be very time consuming. Don't start a site without understanding the ongoing time commitment.
- **Know your audience:** Use language appropriate for the target audience but remember that everyone has access to social media sites so don't alienate or provoke other groups.
- **Think twice before posting:** Never post anything you wouldn't want repeated to your boss or to appear in the paper. Privacy does not exist in social media. Once material is posted it can never be fully removed. Consider what might happen if a post becomes widely distributed.
- **Be accurate:** Don't react to or repeat rumours. Get the facts straight before you post on social media.
- **Be considerate:** Encourage informed, respectful dialogue not personal attacks. Don't criticize individuals on social media. Be slanderous of any person, illegal, offensive,



abusive, inflammatory, an invasion of privacy, or in the opinion of OBIAA be otherwise unacceptable.

- Don't be partisan or political in nature. Cannot be used to promote individual political opinions or campaigns.
- **Be responsible:** Don't reveal confidential information. Do not make known the personal data of other individuals, including their name and address, phone number, email or other personal data.
- **Watch your language:** Never use threatening, offensive or harassing language or target any group or promote illegal or dangerous activities.
- **Personal sites:** Always adhere to your municipal policies on the personal use of computers at work.
- **Respect copyright laws:** Don't reproduce or borrow content that violates trademark or copyright laws but do provide links to interesting and relevant materials. Infringe any copyright, database right or trade mark, or other third party right of any other person.
- Don't breach any legal duty owed to a third party, such as a contractual duty or a duty of confidence, or breach the terms of use of any third party website.
- Do not encourage prejudice based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, pardoned conviction, or sexual orientation.
- Do not make comments that promote religious or political messages that might be deemed prejudicial to other religious or political groups are not permitted.
- Comments promoting any business for commercial gain are not permitted.
- Should not contain content that may cause harm to individuals, computers or systems.
- Give the impression that the borrowed content originates from OBIAA, or impersonate any person, misrepresent your identity or your affiliations.
- Encourage anyone to commit any unlawful or criminal act or condone any unlawful or criminal act.
- Contain any advertising.
- Refer to or disclose information contrary to any court order or statute.
- OBIAA posts should indicate "We" rather than "I"
- Do not respond to inflammatory comments
- Inappropriate comments that do not comply with the above guidelines will be removed from the site and the user may be blocked.

## Privacy

At the discretion of OBIAA, any information, photos or videos that are shared or posted to its social media account may be reproduced for promotional and other purposes with the appropriate permissions and acknowledgement of the source.

Comments and messages solicited and collected by OBIAA for the public record using social media will be treated like any other form of communications received, and will be subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.