



Hanover Township Social Media Policy

I. Goals

It is the goal of Hanover Township, Cook County, Illinois (the "Township") to:

- A. use the Township website to convey Township-related information and matters of public concern to its residents, employees, and visitors; and
- B. use popular social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram as a means to supplement the Township's website in providing information on Township business and matters of public concern to users of those platforms.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this social media policy is to establish guidelines and enforceable rules for the use of social media by Township officers and employees when engaged in Township business. The Township has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the Township on its social media sites.

The Township's website and social media platforms are intended as limited-public forums and shall be implemented to be primarily informative and only expository on issues of Township policy established by its Board of Trustees.

For purposes of this policy, "social media" is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Specific examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram. For purposes of this policy, "comments" include information, articles, and pictures, and direct messages will be treated like comments.

Rules are necessary to assure:

- A. that communications made on behalf of the Township are properly authorized and in correct form;
- B. that communications to the Township by means of social media which can be viewed by the public are appropriate and pertinent;
- C. that all communications to the Township are related to the posted Township information; and
- D. that the sender is clearly and fully informed that a message received by means of social media is not a substitute for any official Township reporting procedure as required by any law, ordinance, or rule.

III. Scope

This policy shall apply to all Township offices and departments, as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency, official, commission, board, or council permitted by the Township to post on Township social media sites.

IV. Limited-Public Forum Status

The Township's social media accounts are limited public forums as that term is defined by federal law. The Township does not make its social media accounts available for general public discourse, but rather reserves and limits the topics that may be discussed on the social media accounts. The public may submit comments on Township social media, subject to the rules herein. As such, employees are prohibited from deleting any comments without the prior approval of the Township Administrator, to be given after consultation with the Township Attorney when practicable.

V. General Policy

The objective of the use of social media by the Township or its departments is to expand and facilitate the dissemination of information from the Township to its residents, taxpayers, and the general public.

A. The Township shall only establish and operate the social media sites indicated below. No other social media sites are authorized. No Township social media site shall be established without prior approval of the Township Administrator, or his designee. The following social media sites are approved by the Township Administrator:

1. Facebook:
 - i. Hanover Township: www.facebook.com/HanoverTwsp
 - ii. Hanover Township Youth and Family Services: www.facebook.com/HTYFS/
 - iii. Hanover Township Emergency Services: www.facebook.com/HanoverTownshipEmergencyServices
 - iv. Hanover Township Aging Services: <https://www.facebook.com/HTASIL>
2. X (formerly Twitter): @HanoverTownship
3. YouTube: Hanover Township: www.youtube.com/user/HanoverTownship
4. LinkedIn: Hanover Township: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/hanover-township/>
5. Instagram:
 - i. Hanover Township: https://www.instagram.com/hanover_township/
 - ii. Hanover Township Youth and Family Services: https://www.instagram.com/hanovertownshipyfs_os/

- B.** The Township social media sites shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by the Township and that they follow this Township Social Media Policy.
- C.** Wherever possible, the Township social media sites should link back to the official Township website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with the Township.
- D.** The Township website at www.hanover-township.org will remain the Township's primary and predominant internet presence.
- E.** The Township social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the Township, for example, requesting a construction permit, reporting code enforcement violations, reporting dangerous conditions, or requesting emergency assistance. Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Township social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting official communications.
- F.** All Township presence and activity on social media are an integral part of the Township's information networks and must comply with all rules and policies governing the Township's computers and electronic media, including but not limited to the applicable Township Technology Use policies.
- G.** The Township will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, Township-wide.
- H.** The Township, in its use of social media, is responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Open Meetings Act (OMA), Local Records Act (LRA), First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws, and information security policies established by the Township, when applicable.
- I.** Each social media account is operated by a third party separate from the Township, and social media sites occasionally become inoperable. The Township reserves the right to disable its social media accounts either temporarily or permanently at any time. There is no guarantee of "uptime."
- J.** The Director of Community & Government Affairs has the authority to make determinations on all aspects of the Township social media accounts, including but not limited to social media connections, posts, and comments.
- K.** The Township Director of Community & Government Affairs shall monitor Township social media sites to ensure adherence to both this Township Social Media Policy and the interests and goals of the Township.
- L.** This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by the Township Administrator, or his designee.
- M.** Whenever possible, the social media accounts should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the accounts do not reflect the opinions of the Township.
- N.** The Township has the right and will restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Township Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed

based on these guidelines will be retained by the Township Administrator, or his designee, pursuant to the applicable Township retention policy, including the time, date, and identity of the poster, when available.

- O. Employees representing the Township's government via its social media sites should normally disclose that they are a representative of the Township.
- P. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
- Q. This social media policy shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink on the Township website and all Township social media sites.
- R. This policy governs all social media use by or on behalf of the Township and its departments.
- S. Employees are prohibited from "friending," "following," or making other connections between a Township social media account and another social media profile or page without approval from the Director of Community & Government Affairs.

VI. Comment Policy

- A. As a public entity the Township must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
- B. The intended purpose behind establishing Township social media sites is to disseminate relevant, accurate, and appropriate information from the Township about the Township to its residents, employees, and visitors.
- C. Comments posted on official social media accounts are subject to disclosure as public records, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- D. In cases where comments violate local, state, or federal laws, Hanover Township may report the user to the appropriate authorities.
- E. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Township social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Township, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Township.
- F. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Township's internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrator will be denied access to the sites.
- G. The Township reserves the right to deny access to its social media sites for any individual who violates the Township Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.
- H. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>, and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsible action. All Township

policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.

- I. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of X's (formerly Twitter's) Terms of Service, located at <https://twitter.com/tos>, and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of X's Terms of Service to X with the intent of X taking appropriate and reasonable responsible action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
- J. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of YouTube's Terms of Service, located at <https://www.youtube.com/t/terms>, and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of YouTube's Terms of Service to YouTube with the intent of YouTube taking appropriate and reasonable responsible action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
- K. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of LinkedIn's Terms of Service, located at <https://www.linkedin.com/legal//service-terms>, and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of LinkedIn's Terms of Service to LinkedIn with the intent of LinkedIn taking appropriate and reasonable responsible action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
- L. All comments posted to any Instagram sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of Instagram Terms of Service, located at <help.instagram.com/581066165581870>, and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of Instagram Terms of Service to Instagram with the intent of Instagram taking appropriate and reasonable responsible action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
- M. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on Township social media.

VII. Prohibited Content

- A. Since the Township's social media constitute limited public forums, the Township reserves the right to remove and investigate user content posted to or transmitted via the Township's website or any of its authorized social media as well as any other actions which the Township determines, in its sole judgment, to be offensive, illegal, might violate the rights of, harm, or threaten the safety of others, or otherwise violate this Township Social Media Policy.
- B. However, the Township shall not remove any content based solely on the viewpoint expressed therein. Rather, content that is deemed not suitable for posting by the Township Director of Community & Government Affairs because it is not topically related to the particular subject being commented upon or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria defined below, is subject to removal by the Township.
- C. However, to the extent any removed content constitutes a "public record" under state law,

it shall be retained pursuant to the Township's records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content was deleted.

- D.** The following is a partial list of the kind of user content that is prohibited from transmission through the Township's social media. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on the Township's social media sites and are subject to removal and restriction by the Township Director of Community & Government Affairs, Township Administrator, or his designee.
1. Comments unrelated to the particular post being commented upon;
 2. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content or language, or sexually suggestive or explicit content links to such materials. Any image or link containing minors or suspected minors in sexual or provocative situations will be reported to law enforcement;
 3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sex, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, order of protection status, military status, pregnancy, citizenship status, parental status, source of income, or housing status;
 4. Defamatory attacks and potentially libelous statements or material;
 5. Threats, personal attacks, harassment, or advocating the harassment of another person or organization;
 6. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
 7. Impersonating or falsely misrepresenting your affiliation with the Township or any Township personnel;
 8. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
 9. Posts or comments which reveal an individual's or entity's private information which was not intended for public disclosure;
 10. Promoting or proving information you know to be false or misleading;
 11. Promotion of or providing information about illegal activity, encouragement of illegal activity, or illegal activity;
 12. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, trademark, service mark, trade secret, or other propriety right of any party. The Township does not permit or allow copyright infringing activities or infringement of intellectual property rights on its website or social media sites and will remove any and all content and submissions if properly notified that such content or submission infringes on another's intellectual property rights;
 13. Private contact information such as names, addresses, and phone numbers no matter how easily obtained elsewhere, including personal information of a person other than the poster;

14. Spamming or repetitive content;
 15. Charitable solicitations or political campaigning;
 16. Any action which disrupts the operation of the service, including cyber-attacks. Cyber-attacks include malware, phishing, spam, viruses, man-in-the-middle attack (MithM), denial-of-service attack (DoS), structured query language (SQL), zero-day exploit, or any other form of cyber-attack;
 17. Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a Township media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old. Parents are responsible for any minor child's posting or comments;
 18. Content that incites violence;
 19. Content that is in violation of the Illinois Stalking (720 ILCS 5/12-7.3 *et seq.*), Cyberstalking (720 ILCS 5/12-7.5 *et seq.*), Threatening a Public Official (720 ILCS 5/12-9 *et seq.*), or Disorderly Conduct (720 ILCS 5/26-1 *et seq.*) laws or any other similar laws;
 20. Information that may tend to compromise or interfere with ongoing investigations of law enforcement, police tactics, or the safety or security of the public or public systems; and
 21. Comments containing vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations.
- E. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on Township social media.
- F. Only content approved by the Township Director of Community & Government Affairs or Township Administrator, or his designee, for public release is allowed to be posted. Content of a sensitive nature shall not be allowed to be posted.
- G. A "designee" or a person appointed by the Township Administrator or Director of Community & Government Affairs is never to be allowed to transfer their social media account information or allow someone access to their account on their behalf without prior written authorization from the Township Administrator or Director of Community & Government Affairs.

VIII. Breach of Policy

- A. The Township Director of Community & Government Affairs may be required to remove internet postings on Township social media sites which are deemed to constitute a breach of policy, as determined by the Township Director of Community & Government Affairs or Administrator, subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements.
- B. Any social media account created by the Township remains the property of the Township, including all the followers and friends generated by the account. If the person who created the account leaves the employment of the Township, the person must relinquish everything related to the account including usernames, passwords, access codes, or other relevant information.

IX. Accessibility

The Township website is intended to be accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for reasonable accommodations relating to equal access to communication, or other issues relating to Township Website accessibility, should be directed to:

Hanover Township
Attn: Township Administrator
250 S. IL Route 59
Bartlett, IL 60103
(630) 837-0301/1092
info@hanover-township.org

X. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Hanover Township Office of Community Affairs and updated as needed to reflect changes in technology, best practices, and legal requirements.

XI. Terms of Use Disclosure (To be posted on all Township Social Media Sites)

A. Information Disclaimer: By visiting this Hanover Township social media site, you understand and agree that this site is provided "AS IS". Hanover Township makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information on its social media sites. The information contained herein is not official nor in any way shall it be deemed to constitute legal notice where such legal notice is required by law. The information contained in this site is provided as a service and convenience to people needing information about Hanover Township. Hanover Township online accounts are not monitored 24/7. Portions of the information on this site may be incorrect or not current. Hanover Township, its officers, employees, or agents shall not be liable for damages or losses of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of information, including but not limited to, damages or losses caused by reliance upon the accuracy or timeliness of any such information, or damages incurred from the viewing, distributing, or copying of those materials.

B. Linking Policy - Links to External Sites: The Hanover Township social media site contains links to outside websites. These websites are not owned, operated, controlled, or reviewed by Hanover Township. These links are provided solely as a courtesy and convenience to you, the visitor.

Hanover Township and its employees exercise no control over the outside organizations' views, accuracy, copyright or trademark compliance, or the legality of the material contained in these outside websites. Hanover Township and its employees do not sponsor, endorse, or approve the information, content, proceeds, materials, opinions, or services contained on such outside websites. The visitor proceeds to these outside websites at the visitor's own risk. Hanover Township specifically disclaims any and all liability from damages which may result from the access to a third-party site linked to the Hanover Township website or from reliance upon only such information.

C. Endorsement Disclaimer: Reference in this website to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by Hanover Township, its Trustees, or its employees.

- D. Copyright and Trademark Limitations:** Hanover Township makes no warranty that materials contained herein are free of copyright or trademark claims or other restrictions or limitations on free use or display. Making a copy of such material may be subject to copyright or trademark laws.
- E. Use of material from this site:** Hanover Township has made the content of these pages available to the public and anyone may view, copy, or distribute Hanover Township information found here without obligation to Hanover Township for non-commercial, personal use only, unless otherwise stated on particular material or information to which a restriction on free use may apply.

The design of this site, original graphics, and original content are all copyrighted by Hanover Township and may not be re-engineered, distributed, modified, transmitted, re-used, reposted, or duplicated without the express written permission of Hanover Township in each instance. All requests to use any part of the original design, code, graphics, or content of this site should be made via e-mail to the Township Administrator.

- F. Unauthorized Modifications:** Unauthorized attempts to modify or otherwise alter any information or image stored on any Hanover Township website may result in criminal prosecution.
- G. Corrections and Updates:** If you wish to suggest or update any information on our website or social media accounts, please send an email to info@hanover-township.org.