

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA PUBLICATIONS/CONTACTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy Number:	COM-100
Effective Date:	Approved by the Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS) Board of Trustees on September 7, 2022
Application:	Applies to all board members, employees, volunteers, and contractors of EWSHS.
History:	Originally enacted on December 8, 2015. Updated with new number. This policy replaces Policy BP#106 which replaced HR# 107.

Article I PURPOSE

EWSHS's Internal Communications, Media Publications/ Contacts and Social Media Policy is designed to: 1) foster open, transparent, timely, professional, accurate and effective internal communications between the Board of Trustees, Administration, and Staff; 2) to foster open, transparent, timely, professional, and accurate information exchanges with the media that support quality relationships; and 3) to use EWSHS Social Media, consistent with applicable rules and regulations, as a tool to support the mission of EWSHS and as a tool to interact with the public in new and dynamic ways that facilitate interactivity, collaboration, interest and support for EWSHS.

Article II MEDIA RELATIONS

- 2.1 Communication Expectations: EWSHS is interested in fostering and maintaining positive relationships with reporters, editors, and journalists who represent the news media, press, magazines, and journals. These publications and the media can have a significant impact on EWSHS and its operations. Therefore, consistently open, transparent, timely, professional, and accurate information exchanges are key to promoting relationships.
- 2.2 Media Contacts: Staff and/or the Executive Director will be responsible for coordinating all media communication. Executive Director will keep Board Chair informed about any crisis or significant events.
- 2.3 Designated Spokespersons: EWSHS is committed to maintaining professional, open, transparent, timely, and accurate information exchanges with the media. Only designated spokespersons for EWSHS are authorized to participate in media interviews or in online communications such as blogs, discussion forums, and other social networks regarding general or routine matters on behalf of EWSHS. Employees, the Executive Director, and Board Members will advise the media representative that the matter will be referred to the designated spokesperson.

- 2.3.1 General Contacts: The Media Relations Specialist and Executive Director are considered designated spokespersons for general matters. The Executive Director may designate other employees as spokespersons, as appropriate.
- 2.3.2 Significant Contacts: In regards to “significant contacts,” before communicating with the media one must contact and coordinate with a public relations staff member Executive Director, and/or Board President. The Board President and Executive Director are considered the designated spokespeople for “significant contacts.” The Executive Director may delegate a spokesperson for specific matters absent any conflicts of interest.

Article III SOCIAL MEDIA

- 3.0 Definition: For the purposes of this policy, social media includes online services (available over the internet by computer or mobile device) that allow people to socially network, to collaborate, or to share information. Social media services are usually based on participant contributions to content.
- 3.1 Designated Official Spokespersons: Employees and volunteers will not participate on social media websites or other online forums on behalf of EWSHS unless expressly authorized to serve as an “official” spokesperson by the Executive Director or Board President.
 - 3.1.1 Permitted Use: Authorized Official Spokespersons shall use social media only for approved agency purposes. All use shall be consistent with applicable laws and regulations related to use of EWSHS’s resources.
 - 3.1.2 Social media shall not be used to transmit information or knowingly connect to sites for an unlawful or prohibited purpose, including, but not limited to the following examples:
 - 3.1.2.1 Discrimination on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, sensory, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, veteran status or genetic information.
 - 3.1.2.2 Transmission of obscene, defamatory, profane or otherwise offensive or inappropriate language or materials.
 - 3.1.2.3 Personal attacks, threats, sexual harassment or sites containing sexual content.
 - 3.1.2.4 Transmission of privileged, protected, confidential or private information.
 - 3.1.2.5 Transmission of proprietary information, copyright infringement or any infringement on intellectual property.
 - 3.1.2.6 Expression of any campaign, political or religious beliefs.
 - 3.1.2.7 Conduct of a personal, outside business or other financial benefit or gain.

- 3.1.3 EWSHS reserves the right to monitor use of institutional resources including Social Media, computer, and internet to ensure use is consistent with this and other EWSHS policies.
- 3.2 Privacy Issues: Official spokespersons, employees, and volunteers, have no expectation of privacy in the use of EWSHS Internet resources. Private or protected information may never be disclosed absent express legal authority.
 - 3.2.1 Owners of social media sites often share user activity and demographic information with third parties. This information may be captured directly during user interactions or indirectly using tracking cookies. It is important to remember that all activity conducted on social media sites is open to unrestricted public observation and users should conduct themselves accordingly.
 - 3.2.2 Where the agency posts information to a site or service offered or controlled by a third party, the employee posting the information and the employee authorizing the post should, to the extent possible, include or make reference to the privacy policies or privacy notice applicable to the site or service.
 - 3.2.3 The Internet is an unsecured publicly accessible network. Links and embedded files on social networking sites may contain malicious software or redirect users to inappropriate sites. Owners of social media sites commonly monitor usage activity and those activities may be disclosed to any number of parties.
- 3.3 Links: Extra care should be taken in posting links. Sharing or posting links that support/oppose ballot measures or initiatives or are associated with political purposes/campaigns are prohibited due to state ethics law. Linking to an outside company website could be perceived as promoting its products or services and could also violate state ethics law. Linking to a personally owned business is also prohibited due to state ethics law.
- 3.4 Public Records – A record is defined broadly to include electronic records, including e-mail and metadata. Any record that is prepared, owned, used or maintained by EWSHS potentially relates to the conduct of government and is potentially disclosable. While many social media postings may be considered transitory in nature, social media records will be maintained consistent with EWSHS’s records retention policies and Washington State public records laws.
- 3.5 Consequences and Restrictions – Failure to follow this policy may result in the loss of access privileges and corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

References that apply to this policy

Chapter 27.34 RCW, State Historical Societies	Chapter 42.52 RCW, Ethics in Public Service
WAC 292-110-010 Use of State Resources	EWSHS Information Technology Policy
EWSHS Ethics Policy	