



TITLE: SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY DRAFT

SOP NUMBER: 1.20

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 25 , 2023

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to outline the policy and procedures for Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center (SVASC) employees' use of social media to comment upon SVASC operations. This policy includes Augusta County's Policy #59 Social Media.

II. POLICY:

This policy provides guidance to SVASC employees in the use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to electronically share information with others in an engaging manner.

With respect to pending court cases, SVASC staff and or volunteers shall not use social media to discuss: clients, employees, animal control officers or their agencies and any court case animals and or pending court cases involving SVASC. It is vital that staff and volunteers refrain from commenting on such events (on either the SVASC's social media pages and/or the individual's personal social media pages) so as not to harm any potential legal cases that might arise concerning SVASC.

All social media posts by SVASC employees regarding SVASC and animal control officers related to the internal operations of SVASC must be approved by the SVASC Director before the post is published. Any internal information, defamation, or other information not approved for publication by the Director concerning SVASC posted on social media sites will result in disciplinary action. Volunteers are encouraged to only share/repost information on social media accounts about SVASC animals from approved SVASC social media sites networks. Any concerns regarding another rescue or foster group should be sent to the Director of SVASC.

III. PROCEDURES:

Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment. Employees are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential. This shall include any court case animals and or court case information that involve Augusta County, the City of Staunton or the City of Waynesboro's Animal Control Officers.

Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Employees should refer these inquiries to the Shelter Director.

If employees encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of the Shelter Director.

Employees should get appropriate permission from the Shelter Director before referring to or posting images of current or former employees, volunteers, animal control officers or any animals in the custody of the Shelter.

Additionally, employees should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property prior to posting information as approved by the SVASC Director.

Social media use should not interfere with an employee's responsibilities at SVASC. SVASCs computer systems are to be used for business purposes only. When using SVASCs computer systems, use of social media for business purposes is allowed. Use of SVASC's computer systems for personal posting of online content is discouraged and could result in disciplinary action if it interferes with the employee's SVASC responsibilities.

Subject to applicable law, after-hours personal online activity that violates this Policy, may subject an employee to disciplinary action or termination. Employees shall keep SVASC related social media accounts separate from personal accounts.