

Social Media Policies

Part of *Approaches to Clean Water Communication*

The use of social media by water quality programs often is guided by implicit or formally adopted social media policies. This document contains information about different programs' social media policies and related processes. The information provided here originates from responses to an Environmental Law Institute survey distributed in the fall of 2019 and does not necessarily capture a given jurisdiction's entire or current policy. The examples are not intended to be comprehensive; rather, their collection is meant to facilitate the sharing of ideas among water quality programs, especially 303(d) programs, and generate new ideas about the use of social media.

Alaska: Most social media platforms are blocked on state computers and very few individuals have access to post and review. This makes interacting with the public on these platforms difficult.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: There is no written SOP, but internal protocol is to only use sites for beach advisories.

Connecticut: A form must be filled out. Only specific people have access to the DEEP Facebook account, and posts must receive pre-approval from the webmaster before being posted on Facebook or added to any webpage.

District of Columbia: All communication and outreach are coordinated through the Office of Communications, Engagement, and Outreach, and must follow internal agency style and protocol guides. All DOEE communications require Public Information Officer approval.

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa: Employees are not allowed to use Facebook, so one employee has permission to use it only to make updates.

Guam: Media is handled by the agency public information office.

Indiana: Technically, CWA 303(d)/TMDL/NPS staff can post to social media, but posting must be facilitated by a staff member from Media and Communications Services. Staff do not have access to social media on state-owned computers and cannot monitor feedback. Therefore, the value/timeliness of the information-getting itself is questionable, and rarely is social media used.

Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma: Everything must go through a long approval process, so social media is not used very often.

Kansas: Social media is controlled by the agency's public information office. CWA 303(d) and TMDL programs do not have their own account but can submit success to the PIO for publishing.

Kentucky: Posts are submitted to a contact in the Cabinet who edits and makes the posts. Until recently, the TMDL program had its own Facebook page, but the Cabinet has sought to consolidate social media accounts, in part so that there are more frequent posts.

Louisiana: There is not a formal policy in place. All communications on DEQ social media accounts are posted via the Communications Division, where posts are thoroughly vetted prior to posting.

Maine: Postings must be vetted through Maine DEP's Communication's Director.

Maryland: All social media communication must be routed through the office of communications, which resides in the office of the Secretary.

Massachusetts: Staff are allowed to use social media, but have not utilized it often because posts must go through the press office first. Staff do not think to use social media.

Meskwaki Nation: The department developed a social media policy, but in general, posts to the Facebook page are thoroughly reviewed by department leadership before being released.

Michigan: Posts require supervisor review and 24-hour prior notification to Outreach and Education staff.

Minnesota: PCA employs a full-time social media strategist who generates and posts content.

Missouri: Any items and photos can be submitted to the social media coordinator, but selection of items for use on social media is at their discretion.

Montana: The full (draft) social media policy can be viewed [here](#).

Nebraska: All posts are run through public information office staff.

Nevada: Staff work with the department public information office to produce social media posts.

New Jersey: Designation to post is assigned to only one or two staff in order to keep messaging on point.

New Mexico: There is not yet a formal policy. Management often requests social media post suggestions from staff, and posts are only made by the Communications Director or upper management.

North Dakota: The full social media policy can be viewed [here](#).

Oregon: Social media is run through the communications department.

Red Lake Nation: The policy is to use common sense: maintain a professional image, do not post selfies or pictures in which anyone is inappropriately dressed, do not share sensitive materials (e.g., by having computer screens in the background).

Rhode Island: There is no formal written policy. A single person is the social media manager and reviews all social media posts.

South Dakota: Social media has to go through the Secretary's office.

Tennessee: No personal postings are allowed, updates must be posted twice per week, and public comments cannot be censored.

Virginia: DEQ has to develop a communications plan with the communications liaison; once it is approved, DEQ can have the communications liaison post material (after editing it as necessary).

Washington: Department of Ecology (ECY) Headquarters is where all social media communications originate. Most common are blog posts about water quality and the importance of not polluting—not about CWA 303(d) listing or TMDL program specifics.

West Virginia: The public information office controls social media posts.