



UPDATED DECEMBER 2020

Benton County Social Media Policy

This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by Benton County of social media sites as a means of conveying County information and soliciting feedback from its citizens.

Communicating with Benton County through social media further enables residents and stakeholders to contact the County in a direct and meaningful way. All social media exchanged with Benton County is public record.

Benton County has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of Benton County social media sites.

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. Examples of social media include, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Vimeo. For purposes of this policy, “comments” include information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on a Benton County social media site.

General Policy

Benton County and its administrators reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law.

All Benton County social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.

Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Benton County business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure or FOIA.

Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the topic or Benton County may be removed.

Employee Use

Employees representing Benton County government via Benton County social media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of Benton County and in accordance with all Benton County policies. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time.

Comment Policy

Social media sites operated by Benton County may allow for users to make comments. The purpose of the County allowing comments on such sites is to promote its receipt of communications to further the provision of county services. It is not for the purpose of creating a public forum for speech or expression. Accordingly, the County may remove comments from its site in the sole discretion of the County's officials and employees. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Benton County social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by Benton County administrators:

- Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
- Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin;
- Defamatory or personal attacks;
- Threats to any person or organization;
- Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
- Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
- Encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party; or
- Content that perpetuates misinformation or disinformation and/or malformation.

This comment policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Benton County 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, Benton County government, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of Benton County government or its employees.

Benton County reserves the right to deny access to its social media sites for any individual who violates this Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.

A follower of one of the social media sites may be banned from any social media site based on the following conditions: the follower has generated several (more than 3 posts) posts that are perceived to violate this policy. If a follower is banned from the site, the communications director will notify the county attorney, with written documentation

of why a follower was banned creating a record of the time, date, person and reason for banning the individual.