



# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## A. Purpose

The Galveston Central Appraisal District has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” or published, on behalf of GCAD, on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of GCAD Social Media Sites and governs the use, administration, management, monitoring and retention of social media and social media content, consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online. The Galveston Central Appraisal District (“GCAD”) departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The Galveston Central Appraisal District encourages the use of social media to further the goals of GCAD and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

## B. Scope

This Policy applies to all interactive Social Media Sites of the Galveston Central Appraisal District, the uses of social media by GCAD employees maintaining, using, or providing oversight of social media tools. The term “Employee(s)” for this policy shall include, but not limited to: full-time or part-time employees, Board of Director members, and Appraisal Review Board (“ARB”) members. This policy also applies to members of the public who comment or otherwise interact with GCAD through its social media websites or platforms.

## C. Definitions

1. **SOCIAL MEDIA SITES or PLATFORMS** – Third party websites or applications which allow for the creation of content and dialogue around a specific issue or area of interest, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.
2. **GCAD SOCIAL MEDIA SITES or PLATFORMS** – Those pages, sections, or posting locations in Social Media that are established or maintained by an employee of the GCAD who is authorized to do so within the scope of the employee’s assigned duties and that are used to conduct GCAD business, communicate with the public on GCAD business.
3. **GCAD SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT** – Information, images or photographs posted or provided to a GCAD Social Media Site by a GCAD employee or authorized representative when such activity is within the course and scope of the employee’s assigned duties.



4. SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT – Information, images, or photographs posted or provided to a Social Media Site or Platform.
5. SOCIAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATORS – GCAD employees expressly designated by the Chief Appraiser to maintain oversight of their GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms. A Social Media Administrator’s authority is limited to actions that directly reflect guidance from the Chief Appraiser and these policies.
6. GCAD INFORMATION SYSTEMS – This term shall be defined to include but not limited to: Computers, wired and wireless networks, GCAD-issued cellular telephones, GCAD-issued tablets or iPads.

D. Responsibilities

1. Each Social Media Administrator is responsible for:
  - a. Implementing the provisions of this Policy and ensuring that employees are aware of this Policy for creating and maintaining GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms;
  - b. Ensuring that content is inappropriate or violates this Policy is not posted on GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms established and maintained by GCAD;
  - c. Ensuring that the approval is sought from the Chief Appraiser or his/her designee prior to the creation of GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms;
  - d. Ensuring the GCAD’s Social Media Sites or Platforms are regularly maintained and kept current;
  - e. Reviewing, frequently, information posted to GCAD’s Social Media Sites or Platforms to ensure the content is appropriate, professional, and consistent with GCAD’s policies and the purpose for which the Site or Platform exists;
  - f. Ensuring that GCAD-created and any reposted information is consistent with this Policy and that such information is accurate, professionally presented, respectful, relevant, and on topic with GCAD’s communication goals, with reasonable care taken to ensure that grammar and spelling are correct and mistakes are corrected quickly; and
  - g. Keeping the department supervisor information of GCAD’s communication and outreach goals, as well as the available social networking tools and activities.
2. Each department supervisor is responsible for ensuring that department employees are aware of this policy, adhere to this Policy and shall:
  - a. Review all requests to establish additional official GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms and recommend approval or denial to the Social Media Administrator. Social Media Administrators shall review the submitted request to ensure that it is in compliance with this Policy and shall submit the request, to the Chief Appraiser, for approval of such sites within 30 days of the effective date of this Policy; and



- b. Review all requests to post or generate department-specific content via official GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms and recommend approval or denial to the Social Media Administrator. Social Media Administrators shall review or generate the content for Social Media Sites or Platforms to ensure that they are in compliance with this Policy and GCAD Communication objectives. Social Media Administrators shall submit the request, to the Chief Appraiser, within 30 days of the effective date of this Policy.

## E. Policy

### 1. CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF GCAD SOCIAL MEDIA SITE OR PLATFORM

GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms may contain information that represents, or may create the appearance of representing GCAD's position on policy issues and/or the positions of its leadership. No employee may create or maintain a Social Media Site or Platform that purports to or appears to be a GCAD Social Media Site or Platform without the permission of both the Social Media Administrator and the Chief Appraiser, or designee. Before any employee or department representative creates a GCAD Social Media Site, an approved request must be received from the Chief Appraiser, or designee. The request must state the business necessity for the GCAD Social Media Site. For any GCAD Social Media Sites currently in existence, the department must submit a request for approval within 30 days of the effective date of this Policy.

Once a GCAD Social Media Site or Platform is approved by the Chief Appraiser, or designee, the following information must be recorded with GCAD Administration including, but not limited to the: Chief Appraiser, Executive Assistant to the Chief Appraiser, Deputy Chief Appraiser, Deputy Chief of Operations, Information Technology Director, and Social Media Administrator.

- a. All GCAD Social Media Sites or Platform login and password information (in the case of Facebook, you may make the Media Communication Specialist an administrator of the site instead of providing the password);
- b. Any changes to the login and password;
- c. The names of any persons who are authorized to access or maintain the GCAD Social Media Site or to post GCAD Social Media Content ("Administrator").

At the direction of the Chief Appraiser, or designee, the Social Media Administrator may disable a GCAD Social Media Site and prohibit posting of any GCAD Social Media Content to a site any time and for any reason, including any violation of this Policy, unprofessional use of these resources, lack of use or misuse by the public, or a failure to maintain the site.



## 2. PUBLIC RECORDS

GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms create official records that are subject to the Texas Public Information Act and document retention rules of the State of Texas. The records administrator with the assistance of the Social Media Administrator, shall ensure that such records are retained and archived in conformance with Texas law.

## 3. POSTING ON GCAD SOCIAL MEDIA SITES or PLATFORMS

Employees creating, maintaining, or posting Social Media Content on any GCAD Social Media Site:

- a. Must, at all times, conduct themselves as representatives of GCAD and in accord with all GCAD Personnel Policies and other department or management rules or directives;
- b. Will follow these guiding principles:
  - Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties with whom GCAD may be in litigation without the approval of the Staff Attorney or the Chief Appraiser;
  - Understand that postings are widely accessible, not retractable, and retained or referenced for a long period of time; all content should be carefully considered;
  - Refrain from the expression of personal opinions or positions regarding:
    - Programs or practices of other public agencies, political organizations, private companies, or non-profit groups;
    - Political campaigns; or
    - Religion.
  - Unless the Employee is posting or responding as the Social Media Administrator, the Employee should maintain transparency by using his/her given name and job title and clearly stating the Employee's role regarding the subject;
  - Use correct grammar and spelling;
  - Avoid jargon;
  - Write and post only about areas of expertise;
  - Keep post factual and accurate;
  - Do not post photographs, submitted by the public, that were taken at GCAD-related events held in public places unless you have permission from the photographer;
  - Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. When disagreeing with others' opinions or providing comments, do so in a meaningful, respectful, and relevant manner;
  - Ensure that Social Media Content does not violate another person's privacy interests;
  - Refrain from posting Social Media Content that is proprietary, copyrighted, attorney-client privileged, subject to state or federal privacy laws, and information not subject to the Texas Public Information Act;



#### 4. DESIGN AND CONTENT OF GCAD SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- The following shall be clearly posted on any GCAD Social Media Site or Platform:
  - a. *“The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest regarding the Galveston Central Appraisal District. We encourage you to submit comments, but please note that this is not a public forum. GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms that permit interactivity with the public through comments or postings are limited forum sites and should clearly post the following statement:*  
  
*GCAD reserves the right to delete completely or hide, when necessary and as soon as feasible, any posting unrelated to the purpose and topical scope of the page. By posting this Site or Platform, you agree to adhere to the posted policies, procedures, and guidelines.*
  - b. A clear statement of the intent, purpose, and subject matter of the site, so the public is aware of the topical scope of the page;
  - c. GCAD Communications email, [communications@galvestoncad.org](mailto:communications@galvestoncad.org);
  - d. Link to the GCAD website, [www.galvestoncad.org](http://www.galvestoncad.org).
- In addition, GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms that permit interactivity with the public, comments, or posting should post clear statements of the following:
  - All content and postings are subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act and e-discovery laws;
  - Disclaimer that postings do not necessarily reflect the views or position of the GCAD; and
  - Disclaimer that comments, messages, and any other communication with the GCAD via social media is not considered proper notice under the Texas Property Code;
  - This site is NOT monitored 24 hours a day.
- GCAD reserves the right to delete completely or hide, when necessary and as soon as feasible, any posting that contains:
  - Content that is not topically related to the particular posting by GCAD;
  - Content that contains false or misleading information;
  - Content that contains obscene language, sexual content, or links to sexual content;
  - Advertisements or content that is commercial in nature;
  - Content that threatens, defames, or personally attacks any person or organization;
  - Content that promotes, perpetuates, or fosters discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital status, and/or gender identity;



- Content that implies, promotes, or encourages illegal activity;
- Content that opposes or supports political candidates, political organizations, or ballot propositions;
- Content that is contrary to the safety of GCAD employees, the public, or public systems;
- Content that violates the legal ownership of another party or infringes on copyright, trademark or other intellectual property rights;
- Links to any site; or
- Content that is confidential according to the Texas Public Information Act.

Links placed on GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms should only be to a resource on the GCAD's website, a GCAD-owned website, a state, federal or local government site, an educational website, or an organization with an official partnership or supportive business relationship with the GCAD. Exceptions to this rule shall be at the discretion of the Chief Appraiser, or designee.

## 5. USE OF BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS

Due to open meetings requirements, individual members of Board of Directors, Appraisal Review Board, and any other board or commission are prohibited from participating in postings or discussion threads on GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms created and maintained by the GCAD.

## 6. EMPLOYEE STANDARD FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

All uses of social media on behalf of the GCAD or in any manner that appears to represent the GCAD or constitute communication by the GCAD, must comply with the provisions in this Policy, including the following standards:

- a. No GCAD employee may establish any Social Media Site in the name of or on behalf of the GCAD unless:
  - The Chief Appraiser, or designee, and the Social Media Administrator have all approved the Site; and
  - All information to be posted on the account has been approved by the Chief Appraiser and Social Media Administrator.
- b. Social Media Sites or Platforms, established by the GCAD, are to be used for GCAD business purposes only. Use for communications and postings that are not directly related to the GCAD or GCAD department business purpose is prohibited;
- c. Employees must report unauthorized uses of GCAD Social Media Sites or Platforms, GCAD Social Media Content, and comments or media that violate this Policy to the Social Media Administrator and/or Chief Appraiser, or designee; and



- d. Employees are expected to be attentive and careful in their use of social media. Employees should be aware that their use of social media may be perceived as representing the GCAD and local government and should tailor their use accordingly.

## 7. UNACCEPTABLE USES BY EMPLOYEES

GCAD considers the activities and uses listed below to be unacceptable uses of social media established by GCAD:

- Using social media in a manner that does not comply with federal, state, local laws and regulations, and with GCAD or departmental policies;
- Using social media in a manner that;
  - Violates copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property rights of any person or entity, or otherwise violates their legal ownership interests;
  - Includes ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, material that is harassing, defamatory, fraudulent or discriminatory, or other content or communications that would not be acceptable in a GCAD workplace under the Personnel Policy or department policy or practice;
  - Violates the terms of contracts governing the use of any social media content, including, but not limited to, software and other intellectual property licenses;
  - Displays sexually explicit images, cartoons, jokes, messages, or other material in violation of the GCAD sexual harassment policy;
  - Relates to Political Policy or Activity;
  - Contains confidential information that is protected from release pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act or “for official use only” information or information that does or may compromise the security of GCAD networks or information systems. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to medical information, social security numbers, and other personally identifiable information;
  - Violates the terms of use governing third-party websites that allow for the creation of social media sites;
  - Violates any section of this policy.

## 8. PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

This Policy is not intended to govern employees’ establishment or use of personal social media sites for personal purposes, outside the workplace, and using non-GCAD information systems. However, some personal uses of social media may reflect on the GCAD or appear to represent GCAD policy or to be on behalf of the GCAD. In addition, access, and use of personal social media accounts by means of GCAD information systems are subject to GCAD policy. For these





reasons, employees are expected to comply with all GCAD and department policies, as well as the following standards, when using personal social media accounts:

- a) GCAD employees have no right privacy with respect to their personal use of social media or personal social media accounts accessed by means of GCAD information systems, or with respect to personal social media content so accessed. Employees should not expect or assume privacy or confidentiality with respect to any such personal social media use or social media content;
- b) Post or user profiles on personal social media accounts must not state or imply that the views, conclusions, statements, or other social media content are an official policy statement, position, or communication of the GCAD, or represent the views of the GCAD or any GCAD officer or employee, unless the Social Media Administrator and/or Chief Appraiser, or designee, have previously granted express written permission for that user to do so;
- c) If an employee has not received such express written permission, any user profile, biography, or posting on a social media account that identifies that person as a GCAD employee must include a qualifying statement in substantially the following form: "The views I express on this site are my own and do not reflect any official view or position of the Galveston Central Appraisal District (GCAD)";
- d) Employees may not attribute personal statements or opinions to the GCAD when engaging in private blogging or postings on social media sites or platforms;
- e) Employees and GCAD volunteers shall not post images, files, or text depicting GCAD property, equipment, or personnel in any manner that would adversely affect the reputation of the GCAD;
- f) Employees and GCAD volunteers shall not use their GCAD email account in conjunction with a personal social networking site.

## 9. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy shall be at the discretion of the Chief Appraiser, or designee.

## 10. COMPLIANCE

Each GCAD Director shall be responsible for enforcing compliance of this policy by department employees. An employee who fails to comply with any aspect of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.