

ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMORANDUM

Multiple Programs Memo No. 04

To: State and Regional Offices

From: Mathew Weaver, Director



Date: February 2, 2024

RE: IDWR & IWRB Social Media Guidelines

The Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR or Department) is developing a social media presence to improve public awareness about IDWR and Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB or Board) programs and activities, meeting notices, deadlines, and opportunities.

The Department and the Board have established a priority to utilize the following social media platforms to disseminate information to the public: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Other platforms may be considered in the future as the Department builds out expertise and proficiency in Social Media communications.

Definitions

Content: Information, status updates, images, and videos created for posting to social media channels.

Direct Messaging (DM), Chat, or Private Messaging: A private, online conversation between two or more people that is not visible on the public facing social media profile.

Follower: A person or entity that subscribes to a social media page to receive information and updates from the social media page.

Interacting on Social Media: commenting on, liking, and re-posting IDWR's content.

Post(ing): any information, status updates, images, and videos shared on a social media page. Uploading and sharing content.

Re-Post: sharing content posted by another social media page.

The Social Media Team

The Social Media Team (Team) is comprised of at least one employee from each IDWR Bureau and is selected or approved by the Bureau Chief or other Bureau leadership. Other Social Media Team members include the Director's Executive Assistant (Executive Assistant), IDWR's Communication Officer, and one Deputy Attorney General (DAG or Legal) assigned to advise on social media matters. Current Social Media Team members are included in the Microsoft Teams Group, "IDWR Social Media Team".

Posting Social Media Content

The Social Media Team is responsible for posting content on the Department's social media pages. Bureau Chiefs or other Bureau/Section leadership are responsible for approving proposed social media content for their respective Bureau/Section.

Department employees or Board members interested in posting content to IDWR's Social Media outlets must work with a member of the Social Media team to evaluate and post content.

The following is the process to post content to the Department's social media pages:

1. The Social Media Team member creates original content or drafts requested content.
 - a. Requests for posting content must be made in writing at least 5 working days prior to the requested posting date.
2. The Social Media Team member shall proof-read the content like any other agency communication, including spelling, grammar, and appropriateness of any image or graphic to be included with the post.
3. The Social Media Team members send the content to their respective Bureau/Section leadership for review and approval.
4. The Social Media Team member posts the approved content or works with the Communications Officer to post approved content on the social media platform.

Posting Standards

1. All social media posts shall adhere to IDWR's Mission, Vision, and Commitment. (See Attachment 1).
2. Social media posts shall be professionally written and proof-read like any other agency communication before posting to ensure no spelling or grammatical errors are present in the post.
3. When possible, IDWR and IWRB logos and standard color scheme should be used within the social media platform and in posting content.
4. Public meeting notices shall be posted at least five (5) days in advance of the public meeting and shall include a link to TownHall Idaho to adhere to Idaho's Open Meeting Law. Posting public meeting notice on a social media platform is not a substitute for posting public meeting notice as required by Idaho's Open Meeting Law. Department guidance for posting of public meetings to Townhall Idaho can be accessed in Administrator's Memorandum [Multiple Programs #3](#). Posting public meetings on social media is not required.
5. Typically, the Team should not post content on topics outside of IDWR and IWRB business. However, sharing content of pertinent water stories may be posted on a case-by-case basis after consideration of the pros and cons of sharing the content.
6. All postings shall adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements by including alternative text on all images and captions on videos if available.
7. Permission must be granted by an employee prior to posting a photo of the employee on IDWR's social media page.
8. Do not post content related to active litigated matters. The Executive Assistant will include a current version of Legal's "Active Matters" list to the IDWR Social Media Teams group files for reference. Any content that might be related to active litigated matters should be sent to the Executive Assistant to review with Legal for approval prior to posting.
9. Content must comply with the Idaho Public Records Act, Idaho Code Title 74, Chapter 1.

Posting Schedule

The Social Media Team shall develop and coordinate a posting schedule that considers Idaho's Open Meeting Law.

Public Comments and Communication with the Public

Generally, the Department and Board will not respond in their official capacity as IDWR employees during working hours to public comments in response to the Department's posted content. However, if the Team identifies an opportunity for education or outreach, the public comment will be escalated to the Communications Officer for evaluation and possible response. Responses to public comments are public records of the Department.

The Department encourages employees who are interacting with IDWR/IWRB posts on their own time and personal social media accounts, to be aware and considerate of the Department's mission and values (See Attachment 1).

Private messaging is disabled on all the Department's social media pages and the public will be directed to send questions and comments to IDWRinfo@idwr.idaho.gov, or a specified, pertinent IDWR information email address in individual posts, i.e. rulesinfo@idwr.idaho.gov.

Following Other Entities

Following, interacting with, and sharing posts of other entities is a key component of social media presence. It is necessary that the Department maintain a neutral presence on social media and not inadvertently influence perceptions of favoritism towards one entity or another. The Executive Assistant and Communications Officer will determine which entities to follow on a case-by-case basis.

Handling Bad Actors and Disruptive Behavior

Notice of bad actors, inappropriate comments or other disruptive behavior shall be sent to the Executive Assistant as soon as possible. The Executive Assistant will work with the Communications Officer and Legal to determine the appropriate course of action. Any action taken by the Department to remove bad actors or inappropriate comments from its social media pages are public records of the Department and shall be documented and retained for 365 days.

Comments of the following type will be deleted and those posting such material will be considered for removal from IDWR's social media pages:

- Obscenity
- Defamation
- Actual threats
- Spam
- Illegal activities
- Malware links
- Illegal discrimination
- Copyright infringement

Notice of posts containing marketing, advertisements, or endorsements should also be sent to the Executive Assistant for review and potential deletion.

IDWR Social Media Disclosure

The following media disclosure will be posted on the Department's "About" page, or where applicable for each social media platform:

IDWR Social Media Disclosure:

"The purpose of the Idaho Department of Water Resources Facebook page is to promote the positive exchange of information about water management and water projects in Idaho.

We are required by State of Idaho policy to maintain this discourse as a limited public forum specifically, in a family-friendly environment.

Language that is disruptive, threatening, abusive, profane, harassing, defamatory, libelous, obscene, hateful, or racially, ethnically, or otherwise objectionable as solely determined by IDWR or contains any product or service advertisements or endorsements, or can be construed as politically lobbying will not be tolerated.

Multiple successive off-topic posts or excessive postings on a particular issue by a single user (a.k.a. trolling) will also not be accepted. IDWR reserves the right to monitor, restrict, block, suspend, or discontinue your access to the IDWR social media sites at any time, with or without advanced notice.

Egregious or repeated violations of the comment policy may result in the deletion of your comment, or the reporting of your account to third party site administrators.

According to our legal department, the following topics that are NOT protected under the First Amendment:

- *Obscenity*
- *Defamation*
- *Actual threats*
- *Spam*
- *Illegal activities*
- *Malware links*
- *Illegal discrimination*
- *Copyright infringement*

Attachment 1

IDWR's Mission, Vision, and Commitment:

Our Mission

To serve the citizens of Idaho by ensuring that water is conserved and available for the sustainability of Idaho's economy, ecosystems, and resulting quality of life.

Our Vision

To achieve excellence in water management through innovation, efficiency, planning, and communication.

Our Commitment

- Sustain Idaho's Water Resources for the public good.
- Serve our customers responsively.
- Balance competing interests consistent with Idaho law.
- Be forward-looking and innovative.
- Deliver uncompromising ethical behavior.
- Communicate early, honestly, and completely.
- Return to the taxpayer an honest day's time and effort.