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## City of Seattle Blogging Policy

### Introduction

City of Seattle web log, commonly referred to as "blog" sites, provide City officials and City organizations the ability to publish articles related to governance of the City. City blogs facilitate further discussion of those articles related to governance issues by providing members of the public the opportunity to submit comments regarding the articles. Comments submitted by members of the public must be directly related to the content of the articles. Submission of comments by members of the public constitutes participation in a limited public forum.

### Policy

#### General

1. All City of Seattle blogs shall be (1) approved by the Chief Technology Officer; (2) published using the approved City blogging platform and tools; and (3) administered by the Department of Information Technology Citywide Web Team.
2. All City of Seattle blogs shall adhere to the following City policies:
  - a. [Web Presentation and Accessibility Standards](#)
  - b. [Online Privacy and Security Policy](#)
  - c. [Single Domain Name Policy](#)
  - d. [Policy on Non-Government Information and Links](#)
3. City of Seattle blogs shall comply with the [Seattle Ethics and Elections](#) ordinance and administrative rules.
4. City of Seattle blogs are subject to State of Washington public records laws. All blog sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
5. Relevant City of Seattle records retention schedules apply to blogs and blog content. Records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using the approved City blogging platform and tools. Content submitted for posting that is deemed not suitable for posting by a City of Seattle Blog moderator because it is not topically related to the particular blog article being commented upon, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria in Policy - General - Section 9 of this policy, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.
6. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this blogging policy or any applicable law.
7. Each City of Seattle blog shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the blog.
8. City of Seattle blog articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:
  - a. Comments not topically related to the particular blog article being commented upon;
  - b. Profane language or content;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
  - d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;

- e. Solicitations of commerce;
  - f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party
9. City of Seattle blog moderators shall allow blog comments that are topically related to the particular blog article being commented and thus within the purpose of the limited public forum, with the exception of the prohibited content listed in Policy - General - Section 9 above.
  10. All City of Seattle blog moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of this City of Seattle Blogging Policy, including their responsibilities to review content submitted for posting to ensure compliance with the Policy.
  11. All blog sites shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the City of Seattle and shall have City of Seattle contact information prominently displayed.

### **Author and Commenter Identification**

1. All City of Seattle blog authors and public commenters shall be clearly identified. Anonymous posting shall not be allowed.
2. Enrollment of public commenters shall be accompanied by valid contact information including a name, address, and email address.
3. Authentication credentials used for posting blog articles and blog comments by authorized City of Seattle blog authors and public commenters shall conform to the City's password standard.

### **Ownership and Moderation**

1. The content of each City of Seattle blog shall be owned by and the sole responsibility of the department/agency producing and using the blog.
2. Comments and articles submitted to a City of Seattle blog shall be moderated by an authorized blog moderator trained and assigned by the department/agency creating and maintaining the blog.

### **Blog Comments & Responses**

1. All blog articles and comments shall be reviewed and approved by an authorized blog moderator before posting on a City of Seattle blog.
2. All blog articles and comments submitted for posting with attached content shall be scanned using antivirus technology prior to posting.
3. The linked content of embedded hyperlinks within any City of Seattle blog articles or blog comments submitted for posting shall be evaluated prior to posting. Any posted hyperlinks shall be accompanied by a disclaimer stating that the City of Seattle guarantees neither the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of the link, web site or content linked thereto.

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### **Definitions**

For the purpose of this City of Seattle Blogging Policy, the following terms are defined as provided below:

- **Blog:** (an abridgment of the term web log) is a City of Seattle website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.
- **City of Seattle blog author:** An authorized City of Seattle official that creates and is responsible for posted blog articles (see blog article below).

- **Blog article:** An original posting of content to a City of Seattle blog site by a City of Seattle blog author.
- **Blog commenter:** A City of Seattle official or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular City of Seattle blog article.
- **Blog comment:** A response to a City of Seattle blog article submitted by a blog commenter.
- **City of Seattle blog moderator:** An authorized City of Seattle official who reviews, authorizes and allows content submitted by City of Seattle blog authors and public commenters to be posted to a City of Seattle blog site.

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Bill Schrier, Chief Technology Officer, City of Seattle  
November 3, 2008

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