

**VAN BUREN COUNTY – ALL COURT POLICY**

<b>SUBJECT:</b> Court Website and Social Media Policy	<b>SECTION:</b> ADMINISTRATIVE	<b>DATE:</b> 11/15/19
<b>REVISIONS PREPARED BY:</b> Lynn Bullard, Cari Elmore, Frank Hardester, Lauren Harry, Amanda Hoefle, Jayce Schaffer, Mary Schmitt, and Alice Yonkman	<b>NUMBER:</b> <del>VBC-0120</del>	<b>SUPERSEDES:</b> 7/3/18

Renumbered to "Policy 4.005" on 9/16/20

**REFERENCES:**

- [State Court Administrative Office – Standards and Guidelines for Website and Social Media](#)
- [Van Buren County Information Technology Policies](#)
- [Michigan Model Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees](#)
- [Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct](#)

**DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS:**

- A. Social Media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn...)
- B. WIFI: Wireless internet access.
- C. ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
- D. Content: Written matter, illustrations, or music used.
- E. Third-party Applications: An application that is provided by a vendor other than the manufacturer.
- F. Microblogging: Practice of making short, frequent posts to a microblog.
- G. IT: Information Technology
- H. SCAO – State Court Administrative Office
- I. Like: An option on Facebook and Twitter that can be selected to demonstrate positive feedback towards a post.
- J. Post: An action on social media involving the submission of information made public. Information can appear as opinions, pictures, videos, quotes, etc.
- K. Share: The ability for someone to copy someone else’s post on social media by posting the same content with the Share button.
- L. Comment: An option on social media for people to express their thoughts on someone’s post.
- M. Tweet: Same definition as “Post”. Applied to Twitter only.
- N. Retweet: Same definition as “Share”. Applied to Twitter only.

**BACKGROUND:**

Van Buren County Courts utilize the use of a website and various social media sites as a means of one-way communication directly with members of the community in which we serve while preserving fairness and judicial impartiality in Van Buren County. Through the use of online resources, the Court has adopted practices to provide quality information and services to the community while enhancing customer service and increasing the overall public trust in the judiciary. The Court shall comply with the Michigan Trial Court Standards and Guidelines for Websites and Social Media, Michigan Model Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees and Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct. This policy is intended to describe the specific procedures used to manage the Van Buren County Courts website and various social media accounts.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

- A. Van Buren County Courts will comply with all Michigan Trial Court Standards and Guidelines for Websites and Social Media accounts.
- B. Van Buren County Courts will also exercise care in any website and social media platforms

content that is published.

- C. Procedures for management of website and social media platforms will be followed as presented in this policy.
- D. Administration of the website and social media platforms shall adhere to the Van Buren County Information Technologies Policies.
- E. Pursuant to the Michigan Trial Court Standards and Guidelines for Websites and Social Media, this policy will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary.
- F. The Chief Judge or his/her designee will appoint up to three account administrators for online resourcing and maintaining all website and social media content/updates.
- G. Website and Social Media Committee
  - 1. Chief Judge and/or his/her designee will appoint Court employees to the website and social media committee. Representatives should include an employee from each Court department: Friend of the Court, Juvenile Court, District Court, Circuit Court, Probate Court and Specialty Courts.
  - 2. The website and social media committee shall meet in June of each year to review and update roles, responsibilities, oversight of the process, and new content development.
- H. Purpose and goals of Van Buren County website and social media platforms:
  - 1. The purpose of Van Buren County website and social media platforms:
    - a. To provide a source of one-way communication, public information and services to the general public, legal community, and litigants in an efficient, timely and easily accessible manner.
    - b. To enhance customer service, accessibility and public trust and confidence in the judiciary.
  - 2. The goal of the Van Buren County Court's website and social media presence is to engage judges, employees, stakeholders, community partners, the legal community and the public. Articles, press releases, videos and photos may be posted.
- I. The Court's Website and Social Media Platforms and Permitted Uses:

The Court's current website and social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Buffer and Van Buren County Government website hosted by Land Information Access Association (LIAA).

Each website and social media platform will have the following in its appearance:

- The Court's name and/or seal will be placed on the page profile image.
- The username clearly identifies the Court.
- The Court's email address or phone number is displayed.
- The Court's website is listed as part of the contact information.
- The following disclaimer and terms of service statement: "No public comments are posted and reposts and likes do not constitute endorsements".

- 1. On Van Buren County Website, the Court:
  - Shares a variety of content including information graphics, notices of Court closings, quotes, job postings, court and legal community events, statistics, program highlights and press releases.

- Updates website regularly.
2. On Facebook, the Court:
    - Posts a variety of content including information graphics, notices of Court closings, quotes, job postings, court and legal community events, statistics, program highlights and press releases.
    - Shares relevant content from courts, judges, and stakeholders from Van Buren County and the legal communities.
    - When necessary, obtains a signed release for photographs used.
    - Posts regularly.
  3. On Twitter, the Court:
    - Tweets a variety of content including information graphics, notices of Court closings, quotes, job postings, court and legal community events, statistics, program highlights and press releases.
    - Retweets and quotes relevant content from Courts, judges, employees, stakeholders, community partners, and the legal community.
    - Tweets regularly.
  4. On LinkedIn, the Court:
    - Posts a variety of content including information graphics, notices of Court closings, quotes, job postings, Court and legal community events, statistics, program highlights and press releases.
    - Allows LinkedIn subscribers to list the Court as their employer. (The Court does not control this feature.)
  5. On Buffer, the Court:
    - Schedules social media posts to be released on a future date.
    - Monitors the Court's social network channels.

## J. Security

1. Security controls and provisions shall be in place to ensure confidential information is not disclosed, information is resistant to tampering to preserve accuracy and information/service is available as intended by the court and expected by the users.
2. Account administrator(s) will ensure utmost security measures are in place based on the recorded security settings for each social media platform within the social media setup guide located in the Chief Judge sharepoint folder.

## PROCEDURES:

### **A. Account Management.**

1. All website and social media administrative access will be determined by the Chief Judge or his/her designee.
  - a. Maintain a list of all social networking application domain names in use, the names of all employee administrators, as well as, the associated user identifications and passwords currently active.

### **B. Employee Access.**

1. All website and social media content requests must be submitted to the account

administrator(s) in order to be added to the social media accounts.

### **C. Content Management**

1. The account administrator(s) are responsible for establishing, publishing, and updating the website and social media platforms.
  - a. Each post will be reviewed for any policy or legal issues as well as spelling and grammatical errors.
  - b. Accuracy and relevance of content will be reviewed.
  - c. Links to outside websites or resources will be reviewed to ensure they are active and reflect the information intended by the court and expected by the user.
2. The Content will be monitored by the account administrator(s) to ensure:
  - 1.) consistency across all platforms and
  - 2.) adherence to the Website and Social Media Policy.
3. Access to a disclaimer will be provided. All login information for website and social media platforms will be saved on a document within the Chief Judge sharepoint folder.
4. The account administrator(s) may edit or change the content on the website or on social media platforms as needed.
5. Content shall not be replicated. Content that is posted outside the trial court portal sites should refer to or identify and link back to the original content.
6. Content shall not violate city, state, or federal laws, and regulations.
7. Posts and/or comments shall not contain anything related to legal matters or litigation without appropriate approval.
8. Personal opinions shall not be presented as Trial Court-endorsed views or policies.
9. All inquiries, comments and posts must be addressed within a reasonable time frame.
10. Trial Court website must contain the minimum following elements:
  - a. Court name and/or Court seal on every page that is linked to the home page.
  - b. Contact information (i.e., name, email address, phone number).
  - c. Search Function.
  - d. Location, hours and contact information.
  - e. Sitemap.
  - f. Privacy statement/disclaimer/policies/security.
  - g. Link to Language Access.
  - h. Link to Michigan Legal Help.
  - i. Name and contact information of ADA coordinator.
  - j. Grievance procedure for complaints under the ADA.
  - k. Local language access plan (LAP) and name and contact information of LAP coordinator.
  - l. Local administrative orders.
  - m. List of persons authorized to seize property and conduct evictions.
  - n. List of approved bondsmen.
  - o. If established pursuant to MCL 257.907, the schedule of civil fines, costs, and assessments to be imposed for civil infractions.
  - p. Local court rules.
  - q. External policies concerning the processing of cases.

### **D. Acceptable Use**

1. Trial Court employees must adhere to all regulations and policies according to the courts Information and Technology Policies as well as the Michigan Model Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees and Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct.
2. All proposals to create and/modify a Trial Court website and social media platforms must be approved by the Chief Judge.
3. Unauthorized use will result in loss of access for users and, depending on seriousness

of the infraction, may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

**E. Employee Conduct**

1. Professional conversational language must be used.
2. The account administrators shall not use non-court (personal) accounts to respond to inquiries or postings.
3. The account administrators must not use the trial court's name or graphical representation to endorse any view, product, private business, cause, or political candidate.

FORMS:

VBC-1875 Website Privacy and Disclaimer Statement  
VBC-1876 Social Media Disclaimer

Effective Date: 11/15/2019

APPROVAL:

11/20/2019  
Date

  
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Kathleen M. Brickley – Chief Judge