

Guidelines for use of messaging platform & Social Media by the officers of Revenue Department, Government of Gujarat

**Government of Gujarat,
Revenue Department
Circular No. ITP/102019/35/H2
Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar.
Dated: 21/01/2019**

Read:

1. DST Circular no. SCM/10/2018/ 614021/ IT dated 29/11/2018
2. GAD GR no. CEL/102009/686/GH dated 9/2/2011

Circular

With the advancement of digital revolution, novel modes of communication have also emerged such as emails, SMS, Video Conference and smart clients that provide for unified communication across different communication channels. Peer to peer and group messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Skype etc. have increased efficiency of communication for various functionaries.

As a part of digital revolution, as new means of communication platforms evolve, it is necessary to dynamically evaluate available platforms for their effectiveness consistent with the need for sufficient security and the need for maintaining official record in relation to the Government communication. As the available platforms themselves emerge, mature and sometimes fade away in view of the intense competition, it is necessary to prescribe appropriate guidelines for the Government officials to ensure that they take the best advantage of available technologies without compromising on the need for record keeping and security.

Science & Technology Department, Government of Gujarat has, vide Circular No. SCM/10/2018/ 614021/IT provided guidelines for use of messaging platform & Social Media by the officers of Government of Gujarat. In this regard, Revenue Department, Government of Gujarat issues following guidelines in relation to the use of digital communication platforms:

1. Officials will use government provided email (.@gujarat.gov.in) or the NIC email for their official communication and will not use email accounts provided by any other entity for official communication.
2. For disaster co-ordination and for other co-ordination related work such as meeting instruction or communicating for seeking information or for event co-ordination messaging platform of 'WhatsApp' should be utilized. With reference to GAD GR

CEL/102009/686/GH dated 09/02/2011 which makes provision for purchase of a smart phone, it would be mandatory to keep such a smart phone for all Secretary & Officers in Super Time Scale and above personnel of Revenue Department, who are directly involved in Revenue related functions. It is also highly recommended that officers such as Deputy Collector and Mamlatdar level who are directly involved in Revenue related functions, also keep such a smart phone for official use. All such personnel of Revenue Department are to be made part of following WhatsApp groups with their official numbers,

- i. **State Level** – To be monitored/administered at the State Level by, ACS, Revenue and Secretary, LR with District Collectors and other important functionaries as members.
- ii. **HoD Level** – To be monitored /administered at the by respective HoDs, Settlement Commissioner & Director of Land Records and Superintendent of Stamps & Inspector General of Registration, with important functionaries of respective Department as members.
- iii. **District Level for each District** - To be monitored/administered at the District Level by District Collector with important functionaries of respective District.

However, while using such platforms, care will be taken to ensure that confidential information or policy proposals are not shared or discussed on such messaging platforms.

3. The social media platform of 'Twitter' has been found useful in dissemination of information to public at the time of any occasion/disaster etc. In order to further utilize social media for citizen engagement, Secretaries, HoDs and Heads of Offices are encouraged to use social media platform of 'Twitter' to increase reach of their respective offices for connect and feedback with civic society. It is also strongly encouraged to have official social media accounts for all Deputy Collectors and Mamlatdar level officers, who are directly involved in Revenue related functions.
4. In relation to social media usage, Officials are encouraged to regularly post updates related to their work such as official tours, field visits, programs related to Revenue work and Government Resolutions/Notifications/important Policy related decisions by the Government for the benefit of people. While posting content or sharing or circulating content on social media platforms, such officials will take care to ensure that the content being shared does not conflict with rule 9 and 10 of the Gujarat Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1971 or rule 6 and 7 of the AIS (conduct) Rules as applicable.
5. In relation to social media usage, officials are encouraged to use their official accounts as separate from their personal accounts. The officers may take sufficient care for safe keep of the passwords for official accounts and for scrutiny of content that may get posted on the social media. Efforts should also be made to get the social media accounts verified by the social media service provider.
6. While creating social media accounts, officers may keep official email ids/phone numbers as credentials so that at the time of transfers of officials, credentials related official social media accounts can be handed over easily.
7. For social media accounts, the concerned officers may also set up a feedback and response mechanism in their office. Any factual inconsistency may be responded to with

accurate facts. Policy criticism may be taken in as constructive criticism for improvement of program or scheme. Deficiencies in delivery mechanism reported may be corrected and a response to the critique be posted on the message trail where such deficiency has been highlighted.

8. For social media usage, in relation to sharing or forwarding of content, officials may exercise caution for the factual accuracy of the content as well as for the nature of content. While officers in their discretion may decide on the content to be originally created and shared as well as shared or forwarded out of the content created by others, provisions of the Information Technology Act and other relevant penal laws may be kept in mind to not share or forward any content that may be defamatory, may create enmity or hatred among groups of people or may violate privacy or rights of other individuals. As a good thumb rule, reference to specific names may be avoided and aggregate information may be shared.
9. If any officer maintains his personal social media account then while posting on policy issues, while adhering to the requirement under the applicable conduct rules, the concerned officer may add disclaimer that the views are his/her own and not of the Government.
10. The main communication platforms for the Government communication will continue to be email and telephones. To ensure that use of social media or messaging platform by officials does not impact program delivery due to time commitment required, only occasional and need based use of messaging platforms or social media is permitted during office hours.

By order and in the name of the Governor of Gujarat,



(Hareet Shukla)

**Secretary to the Government of Gujarat
Revenue Department**

To

1. *Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Governor, Raj Bhavan, Gandhinagar.
2. Chief Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Minister
3. Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Minister
4. Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Minister
5. Personal Secretary to Hon'ble Revenue Minister, Government of Gujarat
6. *Deputy Secretary to Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat
7. Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue Department, Government of Gujarat
8. *Registrar, Hon'ble Gujarat High Court, Ahmedabad
9. *Secretary, Gujarat Civil Service Tribunal, Gandhinagar

10. **Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat**
11. **Settlement Commissioner and Director of Land Records, Government of Gujarat**
12. **Inspector General of Registration and Superintendent of Stamps, Government of Gujarat**
13. **Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA), Government of Gujarat**
14. **Relief Commissioner, Government of Gujarat**
15. **Director of Relief, Government of Gujarat**
16. **Special Secretary, Dispute, Revenue Department, Government of Gujarat**
17. **Revenue Inspection Commissioner, Revenue Department, Government of Gujarat**
18. **All Collectors.**
19. **All AS/DS/US/SO of Revenue Department**
20. **DDG and SIO, NIC, Gujarat**
21. **Account General (A&E) Gujarat, Post Box No.2201, Rajkot**
22. **Account General (A&E) Gujarat Ahmedabad Branch, Ahmedabad.**
23. **Account General (Audit-1) Gujarat MS Building, Ahmedabad.**
24. **Director, Account & Treasuries, Gujarat State, Gandhinagar**
25. **Pay & Account Offices, Ahmedabad/Gandhinagar**
26. **All District Treasury Offices**
27. **Resident Audit Officer, Ahmedabad/Gandhinagar.**
28. **Select File.**

***By Letter**

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