

Georgia Social Media Records Compliance Kit

For Georgia cities, counties, school districts, and state agencies: meet the Open Records Act and Georgia Records Act obligations that follow your social media — with a three-business-day clock.

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In Georgia, social media is a public record — and the clock is short

The Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.) applies to records "prepared and maintained or received in the course of the operation of a public office or agency" — regardless of format. A Facebook post announcing a road closure, the public comments under it, and the edited or deleted versions of both can all be requested. Agencies must respond **within three business days** of receiving a request.

The Georgia Records Act separately requires records to be retained under approved retention schedules. Together they create the practical problem this kit solves: content that changes or disappears on a platform's timetable, requestable on Georgia's.

The 5-step open records response workflow

1

Log & acknowledge — day one

With three business days, the request must be logged and routed the day it arrives. If records can't be produced in three days, you must provide a description and timeline within those three days — the acknowledgment template on page 5 covers it.

2

Scope the request

Confirm which accounts, platforms, content types (posts, comments, messages) and date range are in scope, in writing. Narrow, documented scope protects both sides — and shortens the search.

3

Collect & preserve

Pull records from an archive your agency controls, with metadata and timestamps intact. If content is still live and unarchived, preserve it immediately — deleted comments can't be produced after the fact, and you may need to explain why.

4

Review & redact

Apply exemptions as you would for any record, documenting each redaction and its statutory basis. Third-party commenter information is the most common judgment call on social content.

5

Produce & file

Deliver in a usable format, note any fees per the Act, and file the complete response package — request, scope, records, redaction log, response — as a record itself.

Your Georgia obligations at a glance

Obligation	Source	What it means for social media
Respond in 3 business days	Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-71	Produce responsive records, or describe them and give a timeline, within 3 business days of the request.
All formats are records	O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70(b)	Posts, comments, replies, and messages made in the course of agency business are public records, whatever the platform.
Retain per schedule	Georgia Records Act; retention schedules via the Georgia Archives	Social content maps to existing schedule series (e.g. general correspondence, public notices). Deleting before the schedule allows is unlawful destruction.
Litigation holds	E-discovery / spoliation rules	When litigation is reasonably anticipated, social content — including what commenters later delete — must be preserved.
Penalties are personal	O.C.G.A. § 50-18-74	Knowing violations carry civil penalties; "the platform deleted it" is not a defense if you never captured it.

General guidance, not legal advice. Statutory references current at publication (2026). Confirm requirements with your agency counsel and the Georgia Archives' current retention schedules.

Why manual approaches fail the 3-day clock

Platform "download your data" exports take days, arrive without public comments, and never include deleted content. Screenshot folders can't be searched and carry no metadata. A continuous archive turns a three-day scramble into a keyword search — which is the entire compliance battle in Georgia's timeframe.

The social media compliance checklist

Work through this once, then re-check quarterly. Anything unticked is your exposure.

Coverage

- ☐ **Complete account inventory**
Every official account — departments, parks, police/fire, libraries, schools, elected officials conducting public business — is listed and owned.
- ☐ **Comments and replies captured**
Public interactions are part of the record, including comments later deleted by the author or hidden by moderators.
- ☐ **Edits and deletions preserved**
You can produce the original version of any edited or deleted post, with timestamps.

Retention & readiness

- ☐ **Content mapped to retention schedules**
Social records are assigned to schedule series and kept accordingly — not deleted with the platform's defaults.
- ☐ **3-day search capability**
Staff can search by keyword, account, and date range and export results the same day a request arrives.
- ☐ **Litigation hold procedure**
A documented way to freeze relevant social records when litigation is anticipated.

Resilience

- ☐ **Platform-loss protection**
If an account is hacked, suspended, or a platform changes its API, your records survive in storage you control.
- ☐ **Response package filing**
Each open records response is itself filed as a record: request, scope, production, redaction log.

Acknowledgment letter template

For requests that can't be fully produced within three business days — send this within the three days, as the Act requires.

Dear [Requester name],

[Agency] received your request under the Georgia Open Records Act on [date received], seeking: [plain-language restatement of scope, including social media accounts, content types, and date range].

Responsive records exist and are being collected. We estimate production by [date]. The estimated cost, per O.C.G.A. § 50-18-71(c), is [\$ estimate or "no charge"].

If you would like to narrow or clarify the scope — which may reduce time and cost — please contact me at [phone / email].

Sincerely,

[Records custodian]

Make the next request a non-event

Brolly captures every post, comment, edit, and deletion across your accounts automatically — searchable, exportable, evidence-grade, and ready for Georgia's three-day clock.

See your accounts captured live

Trusted by government agencies to keep social media records complete and producible. Book a 20-minute demo and watch Brolly back-capture your own accounts.

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