



# Navigating the Fallout of a Controversial Social Media Moment

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ACWA Conference – Fall 2025

December 3, 2025

Hello, my name is...April Coady

Assistant General  
Manager  
Public Affairs and  
Water Efficiency

18 years at EMWD  
20+ years in  
industry

Nearly 30 years in  
the public sector

# The Scene

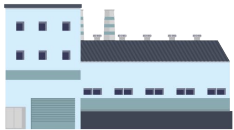
ESTABLISHED IN  
**1950**



SERVES:



WATER / WASTEWATER / RECYCLED



WHOLESALE



RETAIL



POPULATION NEARLY:

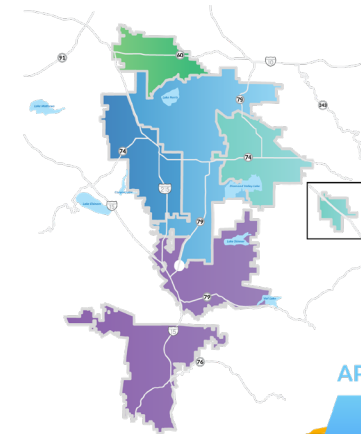
**1,000,000**



ONE  
OF THE



member agencies  
of The Metropolitan  
Water District of  
Southern California



**682**

SQUARE MILE  
SERVICE AREA

APPROXIMATELY



**43%**

CURRENTLY  
BUILT OUT

# The Situation

## Early one Tuesday morning...

- TikTok video
- Off duty employee; not in uniform
- Outside of service area
- Verbal exchange included racial slurs
- Video posted by third party
- 10k+ views and climbing
- Comments tagging EMWD

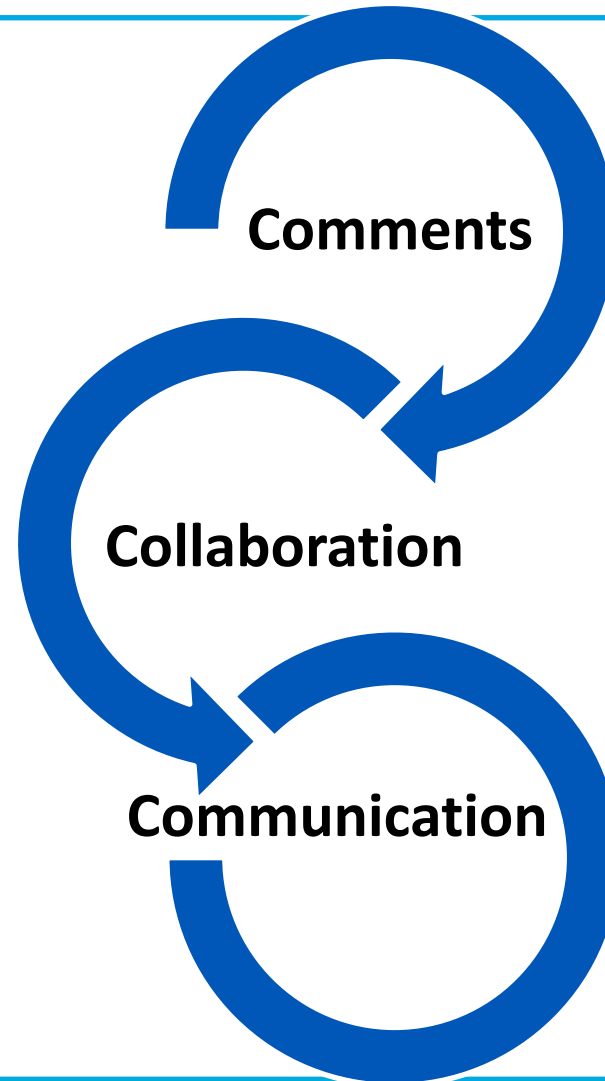
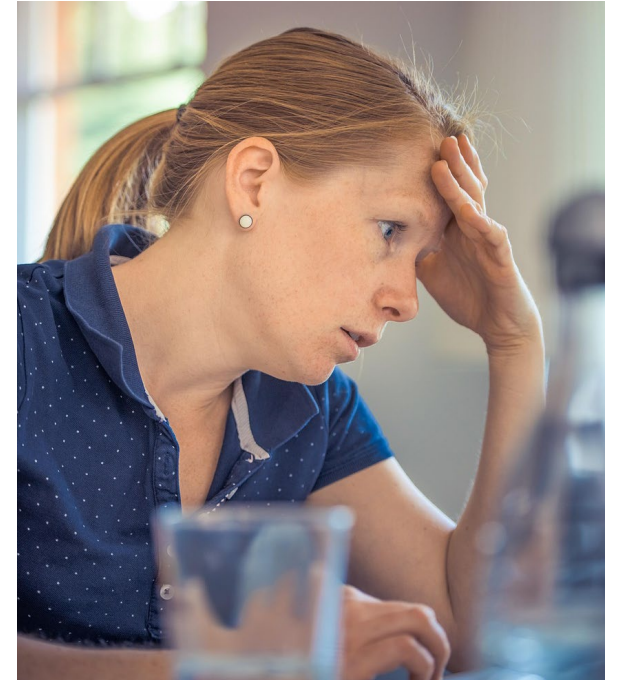


# Going Viral

6 am



6 pm



# Riding the Roller Coaster



## Wednesday

- Calm before storm
- Reels expired at end of day

## Thursday

- Threats escalate

## Friday

- Email to employees
- New statement on accounts
- Protest rumor

# Roller Coaster Turned Merry-Go-Round

- TikTok
- Instagram
- Facebook
- X
- YouTube
- Mainstream media
  - International tabloids
- Final statement posted on all social media accounts
  - Discontinued comments
- DMs continue to date

Last week, we were made aware of an incident posted on social media. The individual involved is no longer an employee at EMWD.

EMWD is committed to guiding principles that include respect, integrity, accountability, and maintaining a safe environment for all employees, customers, and the communities we serve.

We remain dedicated to our mission, vision and guiding principles to provide safe, reliable services to our customers and ensuring that every individual is treated with dignity and respect.



# Social Media Awareness

- Private vs. public sector
- Risks of online identification
- Third party posts
- Private-account posts
- Impacts to workplace operations



## Action Plan

- Social Media Policies and Guidelines
  - Account statements
  - Employees
  - Board of Directors
- Code of Conduct Language
- Training
  - Social Media Awareness
  - Implicit Bias
  - Emotional Intelligence





## Contact Information

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