

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

This Policy is intended to provide employees with guidelines for appropriate online activity. Although this Policy cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use, it is intended to offer guidelines to employees, thereby helping employees to avoid potentially costly missteps online. The nature of the Internet is such that what you “say” online will be captured forever and can be transmitted endlessly without your consent or knowledge. Employees should remember that any information that is shared online instantly becomes permanent and public.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees’ use of the Internet, including participation in and use of social media, regardless of whether such use occurs in the workplace and regardless of whether such use involves the Organization’s electronic equipment or other property.

“Social Media” Defined

The rapid speed at which technology continuously evolves makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify all types of social media. By way of example, social media includes: (1) social-networking sites (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn); (2) blogs and micro-blogs (i.e. Twitter, Blogger); (3) content-sharing sites (i.e. Scribd, SlideShare); and (4) image-sharing sites (i.e. Flickr, YouTube). This list is for illustrative purposes only, however, and all online activity is governed by this Policy.

Application of Other Policies

All of the Organization’s employment policies apply to conduct that occurs online in the same way that they apply to conduct that occurs in the workplace. For example, Employees’ online conduct must comply with the Organization’s Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, Confidentiality, and Conflicts of Interest policies.

Association With the Organization

Employees who identify themselves online as being associated with the Organization must comply with the rules set forth in this section.

Federal law requires that, when endorsing or promoting his or her employer, an employee must disclose his or her affiliation with (i.e., employment by), the Organization. Thus,

although the Organization appreciates the loyalty and enthusiasm of its employees, employees must disclose their employment if they endorse the Organization online.

If you disclose your affiliation or relationship with the Organization, for example in your online profile, you must use an appropriate disclaimer to make clear that you are speaking only on behalf of yourself and not on behalf of or as an agent of the Organization. An example of an appropriate disclaimer follows:

The opinions and viewpoints expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position or opinion of the author's employer.

To ensure continuity of the Organization's message, employees may not represent themselves to be speaking on behalf of the Organization unless expressly authorized to do so.

Prohibited Conduct

Employees are prohibited from engaging in any of the following in their online activities and posts:

- Disparaging the Organization's services, clients, executive leadership, employees, or strategy;
- Making any false or misleading statements;
- Promoting or endorsing violence;
- Promoting illegal activity, including the use of illegal drugs;
- Directing any negative comment towards or about any individual or group based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, or other characteristic protected by law;
- Disclosing any confidential or proprietary information belonging to the Organization or obtained by the employee as a result of his employment with the Organization; and
- Posting, uploading, or sharing any recording or images (including audio, pictures, and videos), taken in the workplace or at any Organization-sponsored event without express advance authorization.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to or will be applied in a manner that limits employees' rights to engage in protected concerted activity as prescribed by the National Labor Relations Act.

Duty to Report

Employees have an ongoing duty to report any violations of this policy by any other employees. The Organization considers the duty to report to be a critical component of its efforts to ensure the safety of its employees and to preserve the Organization's reputation and goodwill in the community. Therefore, any employee who fails to report any conduct that reasonably appears to be in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline for such failure.

Questions About This Policy

Social media changes rapidly and there will likely be events or issues that are not addressed in this policy. If, at any time, you are uncertain about the application of this policy or if a question relating to the appropriate use of social media arises that is not fully addressed by this policy, you should seek the guidance of the appropriate person *before* posting or otherwise engaging online. When in doubt, employees always should ask for guidance first because, once the information is online, it can never be deleted.