

Social Media Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide practical advice to Members and employees of The American Legion, Department of Texas in the social computing space available on The American Legion website and on other online communications networks. The guidelines are as follows:

1. Know and abide by The American Legion's principles when participating on social computing networks.
2. Understand that you are personally responsible for any content you publish, regardless of whether or not you believe your publication is "anonymous." You should also understand that once published, content is immediately public and perhaps permanently available to others.
3. Do not misidentify yourself or your relationship with The American Legion. Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of The American Legion or any other entity that has not authorized you to do so.
4. Respect all relevant laws, including copyright and defamation laws.
 - a. Copyright infringement is a serious matter and can be very costly. The general law of copyright gives copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, create derivative works, and publicly perform and display their works. There are exceptions to this general rule, but these exceptions are often misunderstood. As a good rule of thumb, you should not necessarily assume that you may use content created by others simply because:
 - (1.) you believe the content is in the public domain;
 - (2.) the original content is publicly available elsewhere;
 - (3.) your use is for the purpose of criticism, commentary, education;
 - (4.) the content is newsworthy; or
 - (5.) others are using the content without apparent consequence.
 - b. To protect from allegations of copyright infringement, consider seeking written permission from copyright owners to use their content. Also, consider linking to original content rather than copying the content

as linking generally does not implicate the exclusive rights of copyright owners.

c. Defamation is generally any false communication that harms a person's reputation; decreases the respect, regard, or confidence in which a person is held; or induces disparaging, hostile, or disagreeable opinions or feelings against a person. Defaming others is against the law and can have serious consequences.

5. Respect the privacy of others. Divulging private information of others can be a criminal offense.

6. Respect others. Do not publish content that is defamatory, obscene, pornographic, abusive, offensive, profane, or otherwise violates the rights of others.

7. Demonstrate proper consideration regarding topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.

8. Do not plagiarize or mislead others as to the source of content. As a general rule, you should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's content and you should always cite the author. When possible provide a link to original content.

9. Employees.

a. The American Legion Department of Texas (Legion) respects the right of employees to use social networks for self-publishing and self-expression while adhering to our organizational guidelines.

b. As a Legion employee, your commentary is not only a direct reflection of you personally but also our brand. Commentary that is considered defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any offended party could subject you to personal liability and damage the Legion's reputation. Once it's on the Internet, it's there forever.

(1.) We do not distinguish between "personal time" and "work hours" usage, or personal devices and organization-provided equipment. You are at all times a representative of the Legion

regardless of how or when you are posting on social media.

(2.) Engaging with and sharing content posted by the Legion branded accounts is encouraged and appreciated.

(3.) Engaging personally with Legion stakeholders (donors, volunteers, offices, sponsors, vendors, etc.) is encouraged and appreciated.

(4.) Representing yourself as a Legion employee, on your personal profiles is encouraged.

(5.) The use of social media during “work hours” is left to the discretion of your supervisor. Any social media usage that distracts from work responsibilities will not be tolerated.

(6.) Have a problem at work? Work it out in person. Airing your personal grievances on social media rarely leads to positive outcomes.

(7.) Harassing, threatening, discriminating against or disparaging any individuals through social media will not be tolerated.

(8.) Sharing any organization-privileged information, including copyrighted information or organization-issued documents, through social media will not be tolerated.

(9.) Sharing photographs of other employees, clients, vendors, suppliers or Legion members without their permission through social media is prohibited.

(10.) You are to contact the Department Adjutant immediately if contacted by the media or press about any post that relates to Legion business.

c. Violations of any of the guidelines listed in this policy will be subject to corrective counseling and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Where necessary, we will advise appropriate officials of any violations of law. If you become aware of any violations

of this policy you should report the violation to your supervisor or the Department Adjutant.

d. Nothing in this policy is intended to create a contract of employment or for the provision of any benefit, and this policy does not in any way alter the “at will” nature of employment with our organization.