

Please consider the following sample Guidelines and Social and Digital Media Code of Conduct that may help in the administration of your ministry. These Guidelines and the Code of Conduct are not intended to be inclusive of every aspect of social media in your organization but rather to be used as a general program that can be implemented in whole or part. Also, these are not specific to each state and, instead, are based upon global information obtained through the legal representation of religious organizations and review of current policies used by other groups. Please add your own practices or changes according to your faith and beliefs, facility, and state laws.

As you read through the sample Guidelines and Social and Digital Media Code of Conduct documents, please amend this program to fit your needs. In the places where we have placed the word **RELORG**, you may place your own organization's name. Also, we encourage you to hire counsel in your own state and review your own and other religious organizations' guidelines in your community in your process of implementing this program.

Once complete, the program is more effective when it is reviewed and discussed regularly with those involved in the use of social media in your ministry.

CHURCH MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY AND HERMES SARGENT BATES WISH TO POINT OUT THAT NO WARRANTY ATTACHES TO THESE DOCUMENTS, AND IN FACT, THESE DOCUMENTS MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF A PARTICULAR ENTITY. THESE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD PRACTICE, PROPER SUPERVISION, AND DILIGENT OVERSIGHT AND CONTROL. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THESE DOCUMENTS WILL PROTECT ANY FACILITY THAT CHOOSES TO USE THEM. BEFORE USING THESE DOCUMENTS OR ANY SIMILAR DOCUMENTS, YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH YOUR OWN ATTORNEY TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE DOCUMENT YOU EVENTUALLY USE IS CORRECT AND CURRENT UNDER THE LAW OF YOUR PARTICULAR JURISDICTION AND THAT THE DOCUMENT MEETS YOUR NEEDS FOR YOUR PARTICULAR SITUATION. FURTHER, THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED TO COMPLY WITH THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT.

Guidelines

Questions and issues to consider before drafting a Social and Digital Media Code of Conduct for your organization.

Social media has been defined in many ways. It includes electronic communications and online activities, such as text messages; email; wikis; and social networking like Facebook, Twitter, and the like; and posting comments, such as on blogs. Because of the blur between personal and professional communications, your Code of Conduct should help explain what is recommended and expected.

1. First, determine the current use of internet communication at your organization, if any. For instance, who uses the computers owned by the organization, and do you allow internet access? Do your employees use email for work and private communication, and do people have email addresses that include your organization's name?
2. Are there any ethical standards you want your employees and volunteers to follow? Do you have a designated technology resource/person for questions? Who will approve this Code of Conduct or deviations from it?
3. Organization leadership should determine how to allow its supervisors and managers to keep a personal presence on the social networking sites. One example is keeping both a public and private account for persons who lead the ministry.
4. Select one or a few people to maintain and monitor your organization's official social media channels. These should be the only individuals allowed to post and respond to other users in an official capacity on your channels.
5. Consider implementing a policy that use of the organization's name or brand must be approved by the organization prior to making a statement on the organization's behalf. Once that permission is granted, also state the permission can be revoked for violation of policy.
6. Once you have finalized your Code of Conduct and had it reviewed by a local attorney, go over it with all current and future employees or volunteers and have them each sign a copy. Keep the signed copies in your personnel files.

Social and Digital Media Code of Conduct

*Adopted by **RELORG** on MONTH/DAY/YEAR*

Social media has been defined in many ways. It includes electronic communications and online activities, such as text messages; email; wikis; and social networking like Facebook, Twitter, and the like; and posting comments, such as on blogs. Because of the blur between personal and professional communications, this Code of Conduct helps explain what is recommended and expected.

1. Remember all internet postings are permanent — able to be duplicated and may go viral.
2. Use your common sense. If you wonder whether or not to communicate or post, don't do it until you consult with **RELORG** leadership.
3. For your protection and the protection of **RELORG**, you are prohibited from using internal or external social media channels to discuss confidential items, legal matters, litigation, or the organization's financial performance. Confidential information includes anything labeled as such or information not available to the public. When asked by others to discuss any of these matters, you should relay that "Our social media policy only allows authorized individuals to discuss these types of matters. I can refer you to an authorized individual if you'd like to ask them," and then refer the question to the APPROPRIATE TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL.
4. Be open and honest about who you are when you communicate. **RELORG** trusts and expects you to exercise personal responsibility whenever you use social media, which includes respecting the trust of those with whom you are engaging. However, these policies are not meant to interfere with your legal rights to bargain collectively or engage in concerted or protected activities.
5. Respect your privacy, your coworkers' privacy, and the organization's privacy by not providing personal or confidential information without permission. Also, employees/volunteers are prohibited from sharing anything via social media channels that could violate another employee/volunteer's right to personal privacy.
6. Only those officially designated may use social media to speak on behalf of the organization in an official capacity, though employees/volunteers may use social media to speak for themselves individually. If and when designated persons use social media to communicate on behalf of the organization, they should clearly identify themselves as an employee/volunteer.

7. If you are communicating with youth through any digital or social media, act as you would if you were communicating in person. Specifically, communicate with minors using transparency and in a group, or do not communicate at all. If it is necessary to send an individual message outside of a public area to a minor, copy another adult or a parent. Do not initiate a one-on-one relationship (such as friending from a personal profile) with a minor.
8. Do not violate copyright and fair use laws and do not plagiarize another's work. Obtain permission if you wish to use material created by someone else.
9. Do not use **RELORG's** email address or social media channels for personal use.
10. Harassment, threats, intimidation, ethnic slurs, personal insults, pornography, obscenity, racial or religious intolerance, abuse, and any other form of behavior prohibited by law is also prohibited via social media channels. Do not engage in any such behavior and do not make or comment on any such behavior, comments, or remarks.
11. If you are not officially authorized to speak on behalf of **RELORG**, use a disclaimer saying that what you communicate is your personal opinion and not that of the organization when you are engaging in conversation on **RELORG's** social media channels. Two sample social media disclaimers include: (1) "I work for **RELORG**, and this is my personal opinion."; and (2) "I am not an official spokesperson, but my personal opinion is . . ." This requirement is not meant to interfere with your rights to bargain collectively or engage in concerted or protected activities but rather to ensure that others can easily distinguish the official position of the organization or the organization's leadership from those of our employees/volunteers.
12. Users should use their best judgment when engaging in social media activities and should be on guard against actions and discussions that could harm the interests of our community, faith, or other persons.
13. Before posting photographs of any person, obtain his/her permission.
14. If you see a violation of this Code of Conduct, report it to **PASTOR/PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATOR/OTHER** at **RELORG**. If you have questions about the Code of Conduct, please contact **DESIGNATED PERSON**.
15. All of the **RELORG's** other policies apply to the use of digital and social media. All communication by employees or volunteers should take into account the organization's values, reputation, and workplace policies.

16. Any violations of **RELORG's** Code of Conduct may result in discipline and/or termination of employment or volunteer opportunities.

I have received a copy of **RELORG's** Social and Digital Media Code of Conduct. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of **RELORG**.

Print Name

Signature

Date