

Missouri VFW

Social Media Policy

Purpose

The Social Media Policy describes the guidelines adopted by the Missouri VFW, a Department of the National Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, (shall be referred to individually or collectively as "VFW"), respecting the personal conduct by VFW Personnel while engaging in online conversations as representatives of the VFW.

This Social Media Policy applies to all offices of the VFW and to all VFW Personnel.

Definitions

VFW Personnel means all Officers, Members, Auxiliary Members, staff members, interns, volunteers, temporary employees of VFW and agents acting on behalf of the VFW.

Policy

As a veteran service organization and charitable foundation, VFW is held to a different standard when it comes to its online communications. Certain ethical rules must be followed by all VFW Personnel participating in social media to keep the VFW from violating these rules. The VFW is subject to rules under the following government regulations, but not limited to, Internal Revenue Code 501C(19), 501 C (3), The Office of Civil Rights Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and other local, state and federal laws.

Most conversations on social media platforms are held in an informal manner, so strict application of the VFW writing style is not required for social media communications. However, professional discourse is expected. The main focus of this Social Media Policy is avoidance of the unique pitfalls online communication holds for veteran service and charitable foundation professionals. In view of these facts, below are suggested guidelines and a list of things to avoid when communicating with the public via any social media outlet.

All social media accounts, blogs, Web pages and related content carrying the VFW brand identity are and will be owned and licensed by VFW as appropriate. Personal accounts, blogs, Web pages and related content that do not carry the VFW brand identity can be owned, licensed and operated by any VFW Personnel. However, any and all use of VFW's name, logo and/or related marks requires prior, express, written consent of the VFW. If the VFW is referenced in any media, all social media guidelines apply.

Scope

Generally, these guidelines set forth in this Social Media Policy should be applied to any online medium where information may reflect back on the image of the VFW, any VFW Personnel and clients. This Social Media Policy applies to all forms of social media including, but not limited to: blogs, Facebook, MySpace, Wikipedia or other wikis, Twitter and LinkedIn. These guidelines also apply to any comments VFW Personnel may leave on others' blogs or Facebook/MySpace pages, edits to wikis, responses to tweets, postings on message boards/forums, opinions on online polls or any product/services VFW Personnel might author or photos taken and tagged with themselves or others.

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Guidelines

1. The Internet is not anonymous, nor does it forget.

Everything written on the Web can be traced back to its author one way or another and very easily. Information is backed up often and repeatedly, and posts in one forum are usually replicated in others through trackbacks and reposts or references.

2. There is no clear line between your work life and your personal life. Always be honest and respectful in both capacities.

With the ease of tracing authors back from their posts and the amount of information online, finding the actual identity of a poster from a few posts and a screen name is not impossible. This creates an avenue for outside parties to link your personal writings to those you've done in a professional capacity. Always write as if everyone knows you. Never write anything you wouldn't say out loud to all parties involved.

3. Avoid hazardous materials.

Do not post or link to any materials that are defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, or indecent.

4. Don't promote other brands with our brand.

Do not promote personal projects or endorse brands, political affiliation, causes or opinions when posting from a VFW or personal account using the VFW name or logo. Be sure to respect third party copyrights. If a personal opinion must be posted, clearly state to all readers that it does not represent the opinions of the VFW.

5. Maintain confidentiality.

Do not post any confidential or proprietary information regarding the VFW, its clients (e.g., client confidences, insider information, and VFW's financial information) and vendors. This also means that the personal information of the employees and other individuals associated with the services that we are delivering to our clients (e.g., members, applicants) and our own VFW Personnel should not be shared on or disclosed through social media under any circumstance.

6. Don't pad your own stats.

Do not create anonymous or pseudonym online profiles to pad link or page view stats. Also, do not comment on your own or another's posts to create a false sense of support.

7. Always trackback.

When reposting or referencing a post on one of VFW's online sites, provide a link to the original post or story.

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8. Identify yourself.

Do not hide your Identity with a Post or District Name. Use of your Personal Identification is highly requested. When relevant, identify your affiliation with VFW and your area of concentration. This will add credibility to your profile and VFW's profile/communications and will increase the visibility of VFW and you personally.

9. Post or District Social Identities

The Post or District Webmaster may create a Post or District Accounts (Facebook, Twitter) for further distribution of their Post / District Activities. Postings to these accounts will be done by linking your Post or District Website Stories to your Post of District Fan Pages.

10. Do not return fire.

If a negative post or comment is found online about VFW or yourself, do not counter with another negative post. Instead, publicly offer to remedy the situation through positive action. Seek help from the State Adjutants office in defusing these types of situations.

11. Do not offer or appear to offer legal advice.

We should not give legal advice or otherwise form what can be perceived as attorney-client relationships in using social media. Formation of these relationships must be done only through our regular procedures to avoid conflicts and other ethical problems.

12. No fundraising for ANY organization other than the VFW.

We agree that Wounded Warriors, Fischer House and other organizations are great causes however, they have never given anything to the VFW and using your Non-Profit status as a VFW to fundraise for another non-profit on this page will not be tolerated.

13. No Politics allowed, post your political views on your own page, not this one.

If in doubt about what you want to Post on this site you may always contact the site admin with a Private Message (PM) for an interpretation and authorization prior to posting.