

Social Media Policy

The State recognizes that the Internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and similar outlets. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities.

To minimize business and legal risks, to avoid loss of productivity and distraction from employees' job performance, and to ensure that the resources and communications systems of the State are used appropriately, the State expects its employees to adhere to the following procedures, guidelines, and rules regarding use of social media.

Compliance with Related Policies and Agreements

The same principles and guidelines found in the State's policies and employee handbook apply to employee activities online. Ultimately, employees are responsible for what they post online. Before creating online content, employees should consider the potential risks and rewards. Any employee conduct that adversely affects that employee's job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects vendors, people who work on behalf of the State, or legitimate business interests of the State, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. At all times, including off-duty hours, employees are prohibited from using social media to violate any State policies, procedures, and practices including but not limited to:

- the State's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy;
- the State's Technology Use Policy;
- state and federal confidentiality laws, rules, and policies; and
- the State's other policies pertaining to employee conduct.

Official State Social Media

The State will designate employees authorized to represent the State on social media sites. Only authorized employees may represent the State on social media sites, which is the practice for all official State communications.

Personal Use of Social Media

Employees should refrain from using social media during work hours or on state-owned equipment unless such use is work-related or authorized by the employee's supervisor and is consistent with the State's Technology Use Policy. Employees should not use their state email address for personal use of social media. Under no circumstances may personal use of social media interfere with job duties or performance.

If an employee does disclose in social media that he or she is an employee of the State, the employee should include a disclaimer that his or her views do not represent those of the State. For example, employees should consider using language such as "the views in this post do not represent the views of the State of South Dakota."

Be Respectful, Honest, and Accurate

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, vendors, or individuals who work on behalf of the State. Employees should keep in mind that work-related complaints are most likely to be resolved by speaking directly to their co-workers or other individuals to address misunderstandings or conflicts. Posting such work-related complaints to a social media outlet is less likely to resolve conflicts or concerns.

However, if an employee decides to post complaints or criticism, he or she must avoid using statements, photographs, and video or audio that could reasonably be viewed as malicious, defamatory, obscene, threatening, or intimidating towards employees, vendors, or individuals who work on behalf of the State, or that may constitute harassment or bullying. In addition, the employee must refrain from disclosing confidential or legally protected information in any social media post. Examples of such conduct might include, but are not limited to, offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, military or veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. Inappropriate postings such as discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and will subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The State expects the same level of professionalism and honesty in social media as it requires in all business communications. Employees should use good judgment about the content of posts and remember that anything they say can reflect on the State even if they include a disclaimer. Employees should always strive to be accurate in every communication about the State and should keep in mind that their statements could have the potential to result in liability for themselves or the State.