



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Effective: 1 May 2020

To be reviewed: May 2023

***To help the public service
spend wisely***

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INTRODUCTION

1. This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking sites, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a simultaneous manner.
2. The Office of the Auditor General (“OAG” or “the Office”) recognises and accepts that its employees may keep personal web logs (blogs)/podcasts on the Internet and that internet social networking sites are a useful way of interacting with colleagues and friends.
3. While the OAG does not wish to discourage employees from accessing such sites on the internet it expects certain standards of conduct need to be observed to protect both its legitimate business interests and its employees from the dangers of inappropriate use. Employees need to know and adhere to the Office’s Code of Conduct when using social media.
4. Responsible *personal use* of social media is important for staff to practice because identities are easily associated with the Office and social media activity is easily tracked. There is the inherent risk when participating that opinions (including likes and tweets), images and other interactions may induce the public to question the Office’s impartiality or the wisdom of its staffing choices, given views or relationships expressed or implied. Statements made by staff or contractors on public digital forums may be permanently accessible and open to be re-published, represented in a partisan environment, misrepresented by others or otherwise depicted in inappropriate ways.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

5. All staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the OAG and our services, employees, and clients.
6. Breach of this policy will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

7. This policy applies to all employees’ activities both inside and, in certain circumstances, outside the workplace.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

8. The Auditor General has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The Deputy Auditor Generals, Audit Manager and Corporate Services Manager are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to operations.
9. All staff are responsible for their own compliance with this policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. All staff should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Corporate Services Manager.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WORKPLACE

10. Personal social media use during working hours should be minimized. The incidental use of social media websites is permitted for personal use subject to certain conditions set out below. However, this is a privilege and not a right. It must neither be abused nor overused and the right to withdraw our permission at any time can be made at the discretion of the Auditor General.
11. The following conditions must be met for personal use to continue:
 - a) use should be minimal during working hours;
 - b) use must not breach any of the rules set out in this policy;
 - c) use must not interfere with business or office commitments; and
 - d) use must comply with our Office's policies.
12. During such use, staff should not post information about the Office, its work, or work-related activities unless explicitly authorized to do so by the Auditor General. Only the Auditor General or his/her designate may speak for or represent the Office in any social media forum, blog or similar communication context.
13. Staff must not post information on an external social networking site which is confidential to OAG, its suppliers or clients.
14. Staff must refrain from making reference on a social networking site to OAG, its employees, its clients or its suppliers.
15. Staff must not post entries on any social networking site which are derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory or offensive in any way, or which could bring OAG into disrepute.

16. Staff should be aware that posts/blogs/podcasts may create information which the courts can order to be disclosed for use in litigation.
17. Consequently, staff will be assumed to have written any contentious items unless they can prove definitively that they have not done so.
18. The OAG can monitor its IT systems and individuals use logs as is deemed necessary in order to prevent inappropriate usage. Hard copy of posts/blog/podcast entries, postings may be used in any disciplinary proceedings.

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE

19. Staff must not make reference to the OAG, its employees or its clients on social networking sites without their prior approval.
20. Offensive, defamatory or inappropriate comments about OAG, its employees, its clients, or suppliers that employees write on social networking sites will not be tolerated.
21. Staff must not make discriminatory or offensive comments about work colleagues on social networking sites.
22. Staff must not divulge confidential information about, or belonging to, OAG, its clients or suppliers on social networking sites.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

23. Staff whose conduct breaches this policy in any way will be subject to disciplinary action potentially up to, and including, summary dismissal.
24. Any blog entries/podcasts or comments on social networking sites made inside or outside the workplace that are defamatory, derogatory, or discriminatory about OAG, its clients, suppliers or staff will be investigated as gross misconduct.
25. If substantiated, such conduct may lead to dismissal after the due process of the disciplinary procedure has been followed.