Social Media Policy

Preamble: Social media platforms are now widely used as an inexpensive marketing tool and as a way to keep informed in real-time. AFAC is increasingly engaging in the use of these platforms. This policy governs the use those used in the course of AFAC business.

Objective: The objective of this policy is to ensure that employees, contractors and members responsibly and respectfully utilise social media as a communication and engagement tool, and governs the publication of, and commentary on, social media. AFAC recognises that social media is an effective form of communicating with its members as well as the broader community, and seeks to enhance its professional image and reputation by utilising the internet and social media. It is not the intention of this policy to enforce strict rules and regulations.

Through the use of Social media, AFAC seeks to:

a) Promote AFAC's goals;
b) Promote the work of AFAC;
c) Promote the work of AFAC's members;
d) Inform the public of the functions and activities of AFAC; and
e) Increase and raise awareness of AFAC within the emergency management industry.

Scope: This is the official policy for the use of social media for the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC). This policy provides guidance for employees, including contractors and members, on their professional and personal use of social media. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers and AFAC’s Email and Internet Policy. All employees of AFAC are responsible for knowing and understanding these policies.
**Procedures**

Employees using social media in a service related manner must be aware that social media is a form of broad public communication and as such, are responsible and accountable for any content posted using a social media channel that has a bearing on AFAC and is not in line with the integrity of AFAC’s Code of Conduct. This includes but is not limited to behaviour which could:

a) Be misleading or deceptive;

b) Result in victimisation or harassment;

c) Lead to criminal penalty or civil liability;

d) Divulge confidential or sensitive information;

e) Reasonably be found to be vexatious, offensive, obscene, threatening, abusive or defamatory.

AFAC reserves the right to remove any posts which it believes fall under the above categories.

When posting content using social media, the follow procedures apply:

1. **Responsibility**

   It is acceptable to talk about your place of work in a positive manner and have dialogue with the community, however it is not acceptable to post negative comments, discuss or post confidential information relating to AFAC and its employees. Confidential information includes information such as policies and procedures, details of current projects not yet made public, financial information, research and other details deemed private and confidential by AFAC.

   What an employee posts on a social media channel is ultimately the responsibility of that employee, as are any possible repercussions. If there is anything in a post that causes uncertainty it should not be posted. Time should be taken to review the social media policy and this service standard to try and identify what is causing the hesitation. If a member is still unsure about whether or not to post a particular item they may wish to discuss it with their manager or CEO. These posts can be seen as official communication from AFAC.

2. **Transparency**

   It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward on any issue on one of AFAC’s social media channels, are those of AFAC or the individual posting. If an employee is posting information about or on behalf of AFAC, the individual must ensure that they clearly identify that they are an employee of AFAC as well as their role and real name. Employees should disclose any vested interest in topics that are being discussed. Such honesty will be quickly noticed within social media circles and will enhance their online reputation.

3. **Expectation**

   In the online world the lines between personal and professional use are easily blurred. Being an AFAC staff member may raise certain expectations from the...
public and other members of the industry about knowledge and online behaviour, even when posting as a private individual. As a result there is a need to ensure that any content posted is consistent with AFAC’s Code of Conduct. Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information you deem appropriate. Other privacy settings that may allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limited access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

4. Tone
All content should reflect positively on the professionalism of AFAC. Staff should ensure posts are written in a positive manner that is respectful of other people and their views, even if they do not agree with them. The tone of a post should be appropriate for the audience and not sound overly scripted.

5. Knowledge
Staff should only post about their areas of expertise, experience and knowledge. If they are not an expert in the topic area they may seek input from a relevant subject matter expert. When quoting information given by another individual, the post should acknowledge the author and ensure that the individual is aware that the information is being posted through a social media channel.

6. Mistakes
Be the first to respond to your own mistakes. If a staff member inadvertently makes a mistake by posting inaccurate or misleading information, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.

7. Sources
It is general good practise to cite the source of all information by including hyperlinks, videos, images or other references of the copyrighted material to the original author/source. Link to other’s work rather than reproduce it.

8. Value
One of the best ways to build reputation within an online environment is to write content that adds value. Wherever possible, content should be well cited, detailed, spelling and grammar has been checked and thought provoking. It should encourage a sense of community within that particular online channel. Content that invites responses, increases the knowledge of others and skills, encourages people to become involved, helps them solve problems or enhances their understanding of AFAC will all add value.

9. Timeliness
Where possible, staff should respond in a timely manner (for that particular channel) to relevant posts. However, this should not be at the expense of ensuring that posts are considered and well-articulated responses. It is better to take time to craft a well-structured and detailed response than to rush and inadvertently offend someone or have to correct mistakes later.

If you want to respond to an existing post on a social media channel, the
flowchart at the end of this policy should be used to identify the appropriate response.

10. Privacy and Confidentiality
Staff must ensure that they do not infringe on copyright or intellectual property laws by publishing photographs, videos or other content via online channels unless consent has been received from the owner of the content.

Staff must not publish the names, images or video of people under the age of 16 without written parental consent.

11. Don’t Forget Your Day Job
Make sure that using social media channel and tools, including posting on behalf of AFAC, does not interfere with your job or commitments.

Definition:
For the purpose of this policy, social media means any tool or service that uses internet based technologies and channels to facilitate conversation, commentary and publication using online communication and engagement tools.

Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Vimeo, LinkedIn, blogs, Wiki’s, Flickr, forums and groups, Yammer, Google Plus and Instagram. These communication channels have the potential to either enhance or negatively impact the professional image and reputation of AFAC.

Responsibilities:
All staff are required to adhere to this Policy.

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Failure to comply or contravention of this policy could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Where necessary/appropriate, AFAC will consider legal action.

Policy Manager: Manager, Human Resources

Policy Stakeholders:
All AFAC Staff
AFAC Board Members
AFAC Members

Related Documents:
AFAC Code of Conduct
AFAC Internal Email and Internet Policy

Authorised: CEO
Date: 09/12/2017

Date Approved: 20/08/2012
Date Reviewed: 09/12/2017
Review Date: Dec 2019
APPENDIX 1

RESPONDING TO POSTS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Does the post breach terms of use? → NO ACTION

Record Post (Print Screen)

Assess the post: what action is required? → NO ACTION

Urgent action e.g. legal issue

→ Assess threat/risk involved with action or non-action. Involve suitable parties e.g. Manager or HR Manager as necessary

→ Contact the appropriate party as determined by assessment

→ Record Response: Send report of response to account administrator. Include information on date, time and the response. Include original post screenshot.

Non-urgent

→ Remove post from networking site if possible/suitable

→ Inform user post has removed & why. Invite them to repost

Respond Appropriately:
Considering: transparency, rapport, consistency, responsiveness and openness.

OR