

New York State Public Health Association

Social Media Guidance and Procedures

Purpose – Social networking with web-based and other electronic social media tools is commonplace in everyday life. Social media can help organizations with branding, employee and volunteer recognition, productivity and sharing, as well as with culture and camaraderie. It can also hurt productivity and image or lead to a breach of confidentiality or possible harassment. The lines between work and personal life can become blurred. As such the New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA), member organizations and individuals may be held legally responsible for posted content. Electronic content of a personal nature could compromise records-retention efforts as well as be subject to Freedom of Information legislation.

Rules Statement – These rules apply to all users of NYSPHA’s social media pages. Social media publication and commentary carry the same obligations as any other type of publication or commentary. All social media users must follow the same ethical standards required of the NYSPHA Board of Directors, employees and volunteers. For the purposes of this document, “social media” means any service or facility used for online publication, commentary, image hosting, video sharing or other user-generated content, including, without limitation, blogs, wikis and social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr YouTube and Instagram. NYSPHA staffers, members and volunteers are free to publish or comment through social media consistent with these rules. Each person is personally responsible for the content he or she publishes on any social media outlet. Staff and volunteers must be thoughtful about how they present themselves in online social networks and must abide by all applicable laws, policies and regulations. These rules are intended to provide NYSPHA staffers, members and volunteers with procedures, rules and guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning social media use.

NYSPHA Staff, Member and Volunteer Responsibilities – Each NYSPHA staffer, member or volunteer with responsibilities or administrative privileges to post on NYSPHA social media sites is required to abide by these rules and guidance. All new social media administrators will receive training on policies and procedures. Any future updates will be delivered by email or in a training meeting, as appropriate to the extent of the update.

Procedures – Official NYSPHA Social Media:

NYSPHA staffers, members and volunteers are subject to these procedures to the extent that they identify themselves as a NYSPHA staffer, member or volunteer (other than as an incidental mention in a personal blog on topics unrelated to NYSPHA).

Before creating any new NYSPHA-related social media accounts, staffers, members and volunteers must discuss the purpose of the proposed social media account with NYSPHA's Executive Director and Director of Communications. Please be mindful that:

- NYSPHA social media accounts are deemed the property of NYSPHA.
- Posting NYSPHA proprietary or confidential material is prohibited. (For more, see "Don't Tell Secrets" on Page 4.)
- The intention of NYSPHA social media accounts is to promote and celebrate the work of NYSPHA members, public health "wins" in our state, and to promote important activities and events that are in alignment with NYSPHA's mission. Posts may include information about NYSPHA member events, state and national efforts, advocacy, research articles, blogs, photos celebrating NYSPHA member activities, commentary from NYSPHA members on current public health issues, and promotion of members and member organizations.
- Photographs used on NYSPHA social media sites must follow NYSPHA policies for release or your own agency's policies. If you use a photograph or image of any minor or adult, for either recognition or promotion, and the person's face is clearly visible (from a side or front view), you must have a fully executed photo release (signed by the photographed person or, in the case of a minor, the person's parent or legal guardian) on file with your agency. It is expected and presumed that all member organizations posting photos on their own social sites have the appropriate release forms signed. NYSPHA may re-share these photos from a member organization's website or social media site without having a release form on file. Photos of people from the back or with blurry faces are generally acceptable to use without a signed release. Photos not owned by NYSPHA or member organizations must not be used (see "Respect Copyright Laws" on Page 4), unless they automatically show up when you link to another organization's website or post.
- NYSPHA complies with all laws and regulations. It is essential in your role as a NYSPHA social media site administrator to maintain our association's highest standards of ethical conduct. For example, driving while blogging is not simply dangerous; it could also implicate NYSPHA and your member organization if you have an accident while performing a business function. Failure to comply with laws and regulations as well as the rules of this policy may result in the staffer or volunteer being removed from a position

with social media administrative privileges or being blocked from commenting on a NYSPHA social media site.

Guidelines – Personal and Professional Social Media:

Be Honest

We at NYSPHA believe in honesty and transparency. We also want everyone associated with NYSPHA to abide by the same high standards they expect of others. In official NYSPHA social media, be clear who you are. Use your real name and identify your NYSPHA affiliation. Do not blog anonymously or use pseudonyms or false screen names. Always be civil. Do not post anything dishonest, untrue or misleading. Do not spread rumors. Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. In particular, **if you have a stake or conflict of interest in something you are discussing, point it out. Take responsibility for the accuracy of your work: If you write something that later proves erroneous, correct it quickly and transparently.** Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. Be accountable -- what you publish will be around for a long time. Consider the content carefully and be cautious about disclosing personal details. And be mindful that any opinions or personal information you disclose about yourself, friends or colleagues may be linked to NYSPHA.

Don't Tell Secrets

It is acceptable to talk about NYSPHA and have a dialog with the community. It is not acceptable to publish proprietary or confidential information. This information includes, but is not limited to, unpublished details about NYSPHA software, members, certain details about current projects or those in development, financial information, research and trade secrets. We must respect the wishes of our members regarding the confidentiality of NYSPHA projects. We must also be mindful of the competitiveness between varied member organizations and industries.

Protect Your Own Privacy

For official NYSPHA social media, privacy settings should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be seen on the NYSPHA website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post or see personal information should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see. Remember: **V**irtually nothing is truly private on the Internet.

Respect Copyright Laws

It is critical that you obey the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including NYSPHA-owned copyrights and brands. **If you acquire a photo from the Internet, you must be clear about its source and the copyright law that applies**

to it. We should preferably own the rights to photos we use on NYSPHA social media, unless a particular photo is associated with a link to another website or post. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author or source. It is a good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect Your Audience, NYSPHA and its Members

The public, NYSPHA staffers, members and volunteers reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. **Do not post anything contradictory or in conflict with the NYSPHA website, NYSPHA's mission, vision or values.** Remember: Only posts that align with the vision/mission of NYSPHA and support public health views in alignment with national organizations such as the CDC and APHPA are allowed. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but be respectful. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive or defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.), but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that some people may consider objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion. If you have a NYSPHA-related complaint or issue, the NYSPHA procedure is to meet with the Executive Director. Do not vent your issues on social media.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about NYSPHA in the media, you may point them out. Always do so with respect and with facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual. Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Do not try to settle scores or goad competitors or others into inflammatory debates. Show proper respect for people's privacy. Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention.

If comments by members or non-members on a post made on a NYSPHA social media site do not follow the guidelines below, the comments or the entire post will be removed. Posts must:

- Be contributed responsibly, keeping the theme of the site in mind.
- Treat other users/commenters with respect.
- Not be unlawful, defamatory, obscene or otherwise offensive.
- Not harass others with personal exchanges.
- Not be used to forward or post other contributors' personal data or private messages without their permission.
- Not be personal advertising or promotion for personal or business gain. Only posts that align with the vision/mission of NYSPHA and support public health practices (in alignment with national organizations such as CDC and APHA) from NYSPHA members are allowed.

- Not entertain political discussions about specific candidates or elected officials. Discussion about NYSPHA projects, such as the implementation of student chapters or the mobilization of advocacy days, is allowed, provided posts follow the above guidelines.

Protocol for Handling Negative Posts or Comments

If you come across a negative comment or post on any of NYSPHA's social media platforms (or NYSPHA's website), please notify NYSPHA's Executive Director or Director of Communications.

The ED or Director of Communications will respond accordingly by either:

- Leaving the comment/post as is (with no response)
- Responding to the comment/post appropriately
- Removing the comment/post

Be the First to Respond to Your Own Mistakes

If you make an error, correct it quickly and transparently. "Transparently" means if you correct or modify an earlier post, make it clear you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyright material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly -- better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Think About Consequences

Context matters, and it is all about good judgment. Using social media to intentionally disparage or embarrass NYSPHA, its members or your co-workers will not be tolerated. Examples of such conduct include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment or situation within the association.

In addition to the designated NYSPHA social media user/administrator below, NYSPHA Board members agree to the terms and conditions set forth in this policy. Failure of compliance in any part of this policy may result in the dismissal from a NYSPHA Board of Directors position.

Signatures: With my signature, which I voluntarily affix to this agreement, I acknowledge that I have read, understood and will follow the NYSPHA Social Media Policy.

NYSPHA Staffer, Member or Volunteer

Date

NYSPHA President (Print Name)

Date

NYSPHA President Signature