

514 Social Networking Websites and Online Communications

Effective Date: 01/01/2019

Social Networking Websites

Social networking sites present unique opportunities for you to communicate with others and express yourself in a public forum. However, social networking also poses significant risks to the workplace, even if your social networking activities are conducted completely on your own time and on your personal devices and networks. As a result, you need to always be mindful of how the things you post and do online might impact your coworkers, our reputation, and your professional reputation.

Online Code of Conduct

Although you are solely responsible for what you post or endorse online, since what you say and do can impact us and your coworkers, we've come up with some examples of online behaviors that we consider to be unacceptable:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, defamatory, harassing, bullying or threatening messages or images (including photographs or videos) regarding any current or former employee
- Making any defamatory, slanderous or derogatory reference or post against any prospect, client, customer, vendor or business partner that may harm or interfere with the working relationship or current contracts
- Posting any confidential, proprietary or non-public information or documents, including, but not limited to, information listed in our Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure policy
- Posting comments or opinions regarding our products or services, and which may be construed as violating state or federal law (e.g. the FTC's Endorsement Guidelines)
- Failing to respect the financial disclosure laws by posting our financial information, which could be perceived as giving outsiders an unfair advantage or insight ("tip") in violation of state or federal laws
- Posting any confidential information pertaining to employees or customers, which may otherwise be protected under state and federal laws such as state privacy and disability laws, Red Flag Regulations, ADA, HIPAA or GINA
- Disclosing any information protected by attorney-client privilege, legal hold or spoliation order
- Representing (or otherwise giving the impression) that you are speaking on our behalf
- Failing to use proper disclaimers with anything that might be connected back to us, such as "postings on this site are my own and do not represent others' opinions, philosophies or business strategies"
- Posting photographs, videos or images of other employees without proper authorization, or failing to remove such images when requested by another employee
- Unlawfully gaining access to another employee's social networking website or profile
- Demanding or otherwise requiring applicants or employees to give you their social networking passwords

Resolving Conflict

When communicating online, be fair and courteous to current and former employees, customers, clients and vendors. Work-related issues are more likely to be resolved by speaking directly with the person at issue or going to your Department Head.

Should you decide to post complaints or criticisms, avoid using statements, photographs, videos or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, harassing, threatening, intimidating, bullying, or that disparages customers, clients or vendors. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, or legal action initiated by a third-party.

Monitoring and Consequences for Policy Violations

While we have no general practice of reviewing your personal profiles on social media sites, you should be aware that if such profiles contain information suggesting conduct that violates this or any other policy, such information may form the basis for an appropriate investigation and/or discipline.

Nothing in this policy prohibits you from exercising any legal right under any state or federal law, nor will you be subject to discipline for any posts that are legally protected. However, you should be aware that most posts to personal social networking sites are not entitled to legal protection, and any such posts may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, if they violate this or any other policy.

If you have been the subject of online harassment or bullying, notify the Human Resources Department or your supervisor or Department Head.