

****SAMPLE** SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKING POLICY**

INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all lawyers, staff and occasional employees or contractors of _____ who participate in what are known as social media or social networking technologies, whether for purely personal or business-related reasons. These technologies include, but are not limited to, blogs; wikis; RSS feeds; social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn or MySpace; microblogs such as Twitter; photo sharing sites such as Flickr; content sharing or bookmarking sites such as Digg and Delicious; customer feedback sites such as Yelp; and video sharing sites such as YouTube.

Social media have become an extremely important communications channel. This technology, and the capabilities of the World Wide Web, often blurs the line between personal and professional communications. While this creates new opportunities for communications and collaboration, it also creates new responsibilities for individuals. Posted material can, when matched with an identity or photograph, reflect not only on the individual, but also on that individual's employer, clients, associates and profession.

When you participate in social networking or use social media, use common sense and good judgment when posting or sharing material. There may be consequences that can include, among other issues, negative publicity, regulatory attention and confidentiality or copyright concerns. This policy applies only to work-related sites and issues. It is not meant to infringe on your personal interaction or commentary online, inasmuch as it does not pertain to _____. You should also understand that any posted material will be available on the Internet indefinitely – it is virtually impossible to recall or permanently or completely delete material once posted. The overall goal of social media participation from a business perspective is one of adding value and providing worthwhile information and perspectives. The firm's brand is best represented by our people; what you post may reflect on our brand.

POLICY STATEMENT

- Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- Even if your employment with the firm is not explicitly stated when using a social media site, your use of the site reflects on the firm. Your actions that are captured via posted images or videos, as well as commentary, can reflect on the firm.
- When participating in a professional context, make an explicit statement that the views expressed by the author represent the author's alone and do not represent the views of the firm. Write or speak in the first person to help identify that you speak for yourself and not the firm.
- Abide by existing firm policies especially in the areas of privacy/confidentiality, intellectual property and technology/acceptable use when writing or posting any content or comments on social media sites.
- For non-business participation on social media sites, you must use a personal e-mail address. A firm email address necessarily identifies your employer.

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- Practice respect for clients, competitors, our lawyers and staff, vendors and other business partners in any posting on social media sites.
- Do not post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially/ethnically hateful or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material on any site under an identity that can be tied to your employment with the firm. This includes any posting under a screen name behind which is a profile – even if “private” – that includes your actual identity, whether or not that profile itself identifies you as an employee of the firm.
- Postings should not include the firm’s logo or other trademarks unless this has been approved by the Client Relations Department.
- If you are uncertain about any post on a social media site, contact the Client Relations Department for additional guidance.
- If a member of the news media contacts you about an Internet posting that concerns the firm’s or a client’s business, please refer that person to the Director of Communications. You should also advise the Director of Communications regarding this referral.
- If a negative post or comment is found online about the firm, a client or you in a business context, do not counter with another negative post. You should seek assistance from the Client Relations Department when crafting a response.
- Do not give legal advice or form attorney-client relationships when using social media. The firm’s standard intake procedures should be used to avoid conflict or other ethical problems.
- The firm does use Internet tracking software and reserves the right to block access to specific Internet sites.