

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW & RODEO SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY, 2016

I. Introduction

Social media is a powerful form of communication that can have a significant impact on organizational, professional and individual reputations. Forms of social media include, but are not limited to: YouTube, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, MySpace, Pinterest, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr, as well as personal websites and blogs.

Organization volunteers must exercise care when participating in social media, as the lines between personal and professional content, lawful and unlawful, and between public and private content, are often blurred. Whether participating on behalf of the *organization* or personally, volunteers should follow the same standards of behavior “online” as they would if in “person.” Remember that the Internet is not anonymous and information published on it will very likely be around for a very long time. So, all content should be carefully considered prior to posting.

II. Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for volunteers’ participation in social media and online communications. Violations of this policy may result in corrective action.

A. Take Responsibility and Be Transparent

- » Each individual is responsible for anything he/she writes or shares online.
- » Use good judgment when posting and think about the consequences of what is being posted. Assume the post will spread.

B. *Organization* Policies Extend to Social Media Activities

- » Ensure that the communications or postings do not violate any of the policies set forth in the Volunteer Handbook. The *organization* maintains policies prohibiting sexual harassment and other misconduct which apply equally to social media activities.
- » Do not express, communicate or link to comments that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, pornographic, harassing or defamatory or which are a violation of the *organization’s* policies against retaliation, discrimination, hostility or harassment on account of age, race, religion, sex, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other protected class, status, or characteristic.
- » Social media is not for everyone, and many volunteers opt not to socialize with their peers, via social media or otherwise. To this end, volunteers are not required to connect with any volunteer and/or *organization* employee, or to “friend” them on social media sites.
- » Volunteers are prohibited from threatening other volunteers and/or *organization* employees to coerce them to engage in social media activities.

C. Testimonials and Endorsements

The *organization’s* marketing department is responsible for marketing the *organization*. The Federal Trade Commission has established detailed regulations (16 CFR Part 255.5) concerning information that must and must not be disclosed in testimonials and endorsements, including those made via social media, and the *organization* prohibits any social media posts concerning

the *organization* which are not in compliance with the FTC's mandate. Accordingly, testimonials or endorsements about the *organization* should be avoided, unless posted to the *organization's* official social media platforms for promotional and engagement purposes by the *organization's* marketing department. In the event that a volunteer uses social media for any testimonials or endorsements of the *organization*, the volunteer must clearly and conspicuously disclose his/her direct relationship to members and readers of the social media site or post. The following disclaimer is suggested: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent the *organization's* positions, strategies or opinions."

D. Protect the Intellectual Property Rights and Privacy Rights of the *Organization* and Its Employees, Volunteers, Sponsors and Vendors

» The *organization's* continued success depends on its confidential or proprietary *organization* information and intellectual rights remaining protected. To this end, volunteers are prohibited from posting any information on social media that would reveal confidential business plans, initiatives or trade secrets or compromise the *organization's* intellectual property rights in any way.

» Similarly, and in accordance with state and federal law, volunteers are prohibited from posting confidential personal information about other volunteers, the *organization's* employees, sponsors or vendors. This includes, but is not limited to, as applicable, social security numbers or tax ID numbers, addresses, birth dates, protected health information, credit card numbers and driver's license numbers.

» All *organization* volunteers are expected to abide by copyright laws. Volunteers may not use any *organization*, sponsor or vendor trademarks or logos without the owners' express written permission. The only exception is if the image is shared from the *organization's* official social media platforms and clearly stated that it is so.

(i.e., via @*organization*; "sharing" an image/video/post on Facebook, etc.)

E. Be Wary

» People who communicate online may not be who they claim to be. They may actually be associated with competitors, the media, regulators or others seeking "insider information" about the organization.

» Everything written online can be traced back to its author. Additionally, information is often repeated and linked to other sources. It is crucial to know that an incidental comment can go viral at any time.

» Further, there are countless viruses and spyware on the internet with clever methods for infecting computers. Be careful, and report any unusual behavior on company computers to the staff or managing coordinator and/or officer in charge.

» If a volunteer becomes aware of a violation of this policy, he/she should immediately report it to an appropriate staff coordinator, managing coordinator or the Human Resources Department.

» Additionally, if a volunteer feels he/she is being harassed, discriminated against or retaliated against for reporting a violation of this policy, he/she should immediately report to the previous personnel stated above.

IV. No Expectation of Privacy

Volunteers are reminded that they should have no expectation of privacy when using the Internet, including but not limited to social networking sites, during working time or when using *organization* equipment, in accordance with the *organization's* Computer, Email and Internet Usage Policy.

V. Criminal and Civil Liability

Volunteers who post information may subject themselves to liability for defamation or violation of privacy rights, trade secrets, other civil damages or criminal penalties. It is difficult to anticipate all the ways in which a seemingly innocent publication could become a serious legal matter.

Even though they may be unauthorized, there are times when postings by volunteers may create potential criminal or civil liability for the *organization*. If that is determined to be the case, the *organization* reserves the right to demand the posting be removed.

VI. Non-Interference With Applicable Laws

This policy is not intended to restrict or interfere with any volunteer's federal or state labor law rights, including any and all rights under the National Labor Relations Act or any whistleblower protections under federal or state law.

VII. Questions About This Policy

Please contact the marketing department regarding any questions about this policy.