Royal Mail Group

Social Media
Guide for employees

This guide outlines the standards of behaviour expected from all employees when using social media as part of their job for Royal Mail and also for personal use where it impacts Royal Mail's business

Main topic areas

- Purpose and scope

- What is social media?

- Risks of using social media

- General advice for using social media in both work and personal lives

- Shared principles for using social media in work and personal lives

- Key principles for personal use of social media

- Key principles for use of social media for Royal Mail's work

- Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- Where to go for further information

Getting help

Contact your manager if you have any queries about this guide.

Managers can obtain advice by:

Calling the HR Services Advice Centre on 0845 6060603 / 5456 7100

Managers working for Parcelforce Worldwide should call 0845 604 787 / 5456 4747

For web access please go to:
https://www.psp.royalmail group.com

Social Media
Guide for employees

Purpose and scope

Royal Mail Group recognises that many of its employees use social networking sites both in a personal capacity and sometimes as part of their job if the role requires it. Social media tools play a positive role in everyday life, but can also be damaging to both businesses and individuals if used inappropriately.

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance for employees (including consultants, contractors, agency workers and casual workers) and managers to help protect them and Royal Mail from the pitfalls of using social media.

It also provides details of the behaviours and standards expected of all Royal Mail Group employees whenever they use social media tools, either as part of their job at Royal Mail or in a personal capacity.

This should be read in conjunction with the *Acceptable Use Policy* and the social media information on the 'Think Secure' pages of myroyalmail.com - https://www.myroyalmail.com/thinksecure/social-media.

What is social media?

Social media is a term used to describe forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content.

Some examples of social media tools are:

- Blogs
- Wikis e.g. Wikipedia
- Social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Bebo, Second Life
- Podcasts
- Message boards
- LinkedIn

Risks of using social media

There are risks to both Royal Mail's business and individuals when using social media.

Royal Mail needs to make sure it is protected from:

- Internal, Confidential and Strictly Confidential company information being leaked externally
- Serious damage to Royal Mail's reputation, brand and business
- Potential claims for defamation, discrimination or harassment
- Legal action for breaches of copyright laws

Employees who use social media are personally at risk of:

- Claims for defamation, discrimination, harassment
- Conduct action under the Conduct Policy for breaches of the Acceptable Use or Stop Bullying and Harassment policies
- Identify theft
- Damage to personal property
- Personal harm

General advice for using social media in both work and personal lives

When using social media both in a business and personal capacity, employees should be mindful of the following:

- Employees are personally liable for what they communicate on social media. Any information will stay online for a long period of time and may reach a very wide and often unintended audience
- There is no such thing as a private social media site despite privacy settings. Once published online, the user's control is lost as comments can be forwarded or shared by other users

Employees should:
- When deciding to make a post online, consider whether the post could be used against them in the future
- Be familiar with Our Code: Code of Business Standards and how it impacts social media use
- Consider whether they would feel comfortable saying the same thing offline as they would online
- Make sure they follow the guidance provided in this document
- Let their manager know if they see content on social media that could be harmful to Royal Mail's business

Employees must ensure they:
- Avoid saying anything that might seriously damage Royal Mail's reputation and brand
- Do not put themselves or the business at risk when using social media

To help managers and employees be clear about what actions on social meda could seriously damage Royal Mail, a number of principles are set out below.

Shared principles for using social media in work and personal lives

The following principles apply to employees using social media in both a work and personal capacity:

- Employees must not use social media to make defamatory or discriminatory comments; neither should they use it to harass or bully

- Employees should not display behaviour online which may cause offence to other employees, customers or clients of Royal Mail Group, that could subsequently cause serious damage to the company

- Internal, Confidential and Strictly Confidential information about Royal Mail Group must never be disclosed on any social media sites. Disclosure of such information may amount to gross misconduct under the Royal Mail Group Conduct Policy. It may also be a criminal offence

- Employees must not make comments on behalf of Royal Mail Group without prior consent the Director of Strategy and Communications

- Employees must not take or distribute images (including videos) inside any Royal Mail Group sites. By disclosing such images, employees could put their colleagues, themselves and Royal Mail's business at risk Employees of Royal Mail Group are bound by the Official Secrets Act or Personal Declaration, which would have been signed when starting employment. This is a contractual document which applies during and after employment with Royal Mail Group and so any information should not be disclosed without prior authorisation

- Information gained in the course of employment relating to other Royal Mail employees, clients, regulators, shareholders, partners or suppliers should not be published, unless their written approval has been given

- Copyright and fair usage restrictions (where some limited activities are allowed that don't infringe copyright law) should be respected and prior permission should be given to use copyright protection material. The unauthorised use of copyright may result in legal action

- If an employee is asked to make any comment on behalf of Royal Mail Group they must direct the request to the Managing Director of Strategy and Communications rather than providing a response themselves

- Avoid making damaging or libellous comments about Royal Mail Group and its products. If an employee has concerns about serious wrongdoing within the business (such as fraud) they should refer to the Speak Up: Whistleblowing Policy. If they believe they have a genuine grievance, they should raise this with their manager or use the Grievance Policy

Key principles for personal use of social media

Royal Mail respects its employees' right to a private life. The company recognises that many employees use social media in their personal lives. While employees are not acting on behalf of Royal Mail during personal use of social media, they must be aware that they can seriously damage the company if they are recognised as being an employee or undertaking work for Royal Mail (see the section on Risks).

The Acceptable Use Policy does allow for reasonable and occasional personal use for email and internet, but social media sites should only be accessed outside of an employee's normal working hours or during their lunch break, so that it does not interfere with the efficient running of Royal Mail's business.

In addition to the General advice and Shared principles noted above:

- Employees are allowed to state that they work for Royal Mail, but their online profile (e.g. blog or Twitter name) must not contain Royal Mail Group's name

- Royal Mail Group brands or logos must not be used

- If employees discuss their work on social media sites (particularly Twitter or blogs), they are recommended to use an appropriate disclaimer along the lines of, 'The views I express here are mine along and do not represent the views of Royal Mail Group'

- Be aware that any messages posted could be visible to other web users (e.g. Royal Mail employees, customers, suppliers who the employee is connected to), even if intended for a specific person or group of people. Employees are advised to check privacy settings regularly as sites such as Facebook have a tendency to adjust them when they make updates

- Employees should be security conscious by avoiding publishing their personal contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people they did not intend to see them. By restricting the amount of personal information they can help protect themselves from identity theft, damage to their property, or personal harm. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords

- Employees are responsible for their comments and contributions. Before posting a comment, video or image, they should think about how they would justify their reason for publishing it, making sure it is in line with the Acceptable

Use Policy

Key principles for use of social media for Royal Mail's work

Employees who use social media as part of their job at Royal Mail can access social media sites during working hours.

In addition to the General advice and Shared principles noted above, in any communications that employees make as part of their job at Royal Mail, they must:

- Make sure the communication has a purpose and benefit for Royal Mail

- Get permission from their manager and the Strategy and Communications team before publishing a communication

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

If an employee's behaviour is seen to either potentially harm their relationship with Royal Mail Group or the reputation of the business, their actions may be addressed under the *Conduct Policy*.

Breaches could lead to disciplinary action and in cases where the behaviour is serious enough to be considered gross misconduct this could lead to dismissal.

If the unacceptable behaviour is shown by contractors and agents it could result in the termination of a contract.

Any breach of the law may also result in criminal prosecution or civil action.

Where to go for further information

The Getting help box on the front page tells you where to find further information.

Guidance is also available on, the Policy and Information Site on PSP, the HR pages on the intranet (for non-PSP users) and the Think Secure section of myroyalmail.com.

For access to Information Security policies please go to: Group Policies intranet site.

Documents relating to this guide:

- Our Code: Code of Business Standards

- Acceptable Use Policy

- Acceptable Use – Inappropriate Use of Internet, Email and other Royal Mail Systems Guide for Employees

- Acceptable Use – Conduct Cases Relating to Social Media Guide for Managers

- Conduct Policy and guides

- Communications Policy

- External Digital Communications Policy