

Attachment B

Department of Consumer Affairs Social Media Use Guidelines

Purpose

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and certain of its Boards and Bureaus have a business and public service need to use social media to augment their existing communications efforts. Current social media use by other state, local, and federal government entities demonstrates that social media can be effective in enhancing communication with consumers and licensees at little or no cost.

DCA supports the use of social media to communicate with consumers, partners, stakeholders and other governmental entities. This document establishes social media guidelines for DCA and its constituent Bureaus to ensure efficient and appropriate use of social media technology. DCA's Boards are invited and encouraged to adopt these guidelines, or to adapt them as needed to serve their particular needs.

Accountability

Deputy Director, Communications

- The Deputy Director, Communications is responsible for overseeing the use of social media by DCA, its Bureaus, and other constituent entities under the direct control of the Department, and shall determine which social media outlets may be suitable for their use. The Deputy Director is ultimately responsible for all content on DCA social media sites.

Bureau Chiefs and Division Managers

- Bureau Chiefs and managers of DCA divisions using social media are responsible for the content on their social media sites. The employees they authorize to publish material on their social media sites shall be employees who will properly and appropriately represent their bureaus or divisions.

Employees

- DCA social media sites can be viewed by anyone, but only authorized DCA employees may access and post to DCA social media sites. Employees using social media on behalf of DCA are expected to conduct themselves at all times as representatives of DCA and of their Bureaus or divisions.

Acceptable Use

- Social media use is for official DCA communication only. The use of DCA social media sites for personal communication is prohibited.

Account Management

Definition of roles

- Administrator – The Deputy Director, Communications, Bureau Chiefs, and Division Chiefs or their designees. Administrators shall be responsible for content on DCA’s social media sites.
- Publisher – An employee who has been authorized by an administrator to access social media sites in order to post information. Administrators may name a publisher or publishers as their designee(s) for site management purposes.
- Contributor – An employee who creates material to be posted and provides it to a publisher to post.
- User – A member of the public who views a social media site.

Passwords and Log-in

- The Deputy Director, Communications is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date database of all social networking application domain names in use, the names of all employee administrators of these accounts, and the associated passwords.

This information is to be held simultaneously by the Deputy Director, Communications, the Office of Public Affairs’ Staff Services Manager II, and the Office of Publications, Design and Editing’s Information Officer II.

- Administrators are responsible for keeping the Deputy Director, Communications informed of any changes in social media accounts or passwords.
- When an authorized individual with access to password and log-in information separates, the passwords to which that individual had access should be changed as soon as possible and those changes communicated to the Deputy Director, Communications.

Functionality

- The Deputy Director, Communications may block or prevent certain functionalities within social media outlets, such as instant messaging, file exchange, and “friends” if necessary to reduce the risk of exposing a government user or users to a link that leads to inappropriate or unauthorized material.

Mobile Devices

- Authorized publishers may manage DCA social media sites from personal mobile devices with social media applications. Publishers will only be authorized to do so if they protect their mobile devices using passcodes. In the event that a social media publisher who uses a phone loses the device, they must immediately inform the Deputy Director, Communications, the Office of Public Affairs’ Staff Services Manager II or the Office of Publications, Design and Editing’s Information Officer II so that administrative rights for that publisher can be temporarily removed.

Notification

- On all DCA social media sites, “notification of account activity” settings must be set so that administrators and publishers are immediately notified when comments are posted in order that they may ensure these guidelines are being followed.

Content

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Deputy Director, Communications has overall responsibility for content on DCA’s department-wide social media sites and for content on Bureau social media sites.
- The Deputy Director, Communications and his or her staff will monitor content on each of DCA’s social media sites to ensure adherence to these guidelines and for appropriate use, messaging, and branding.
- The Deputy Director, Communications, or his or her designee, may remove content without notice from any DCA, bureau or division site that does not adhere to these guidelines or is otherwise inappropriate.
- The Deputy Director, Communications is responsible for approving content before it is posted on DCA’s department-wide social media sites. The Office of Publications, Design and Editing’s Information Officer II or the Office of Public Affairs’ Staff Services Manager II may do this in the absence of, or at the discretion of, the Deputy Director. Approval authority may also be delegated to other DCA managers from time to time as circumstances warrant.
- Bureau chiefs and division chiefs, or their designees, are responsible for developing content on their social media sites.
- Bureau chiefs or division chiefs, or their designees, are responsible for approving content that is to be posted on bureau or division social media sites.

Initial Set-Up and Branding

- DCA’s Deputy Director, Communications is responsible for approving the look and feel (branding) of each social media site used by DCA, its Bureaus or Divisions.
- DCA’s Communications Division will aid in the initial set-up and will design each site in consultation with Bureau and Division chiefs or their representatives. Any subsequent design or design change must be approved by the Deputy Director, Communications.

Approval and Review Process

- All blog postings and articles must be reviewed before being posted, regardless of who posts it.
- At a minimum, the review process must include a peer review or some other “fresh eyes” review.
- The need for additional review, such as review by the Legal Affairs Division or Executive staff, will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate managers.
- All postings by DCA’s component entities must be approved by the Bureau Chief or Division Chief, or their designee prior to publishing.

Public Comments

- Comments from the public are welcome on DCA social media sites, but must be monitored regularly to ensure they meet user conduct guidelines below.
- The Deputy Director, Communications, the Office of Public Affairs’ Staff Services Manager II, and the Office of Publications, Design and Editing Information Officer II are authorized to remove postings that fail to meet the user conduct guidelines. If a comment is removed, a screenshot of the topic and the offending comment must be saved for documentation purposes.
- Publishers are not required to respond to users’ comments or questions. However, a response that provides useful information to other viewers is encouraged.
- Publishers should only engage users on social media sites if their responses can be short and factual, and/or if the response corrects misinformation posted by users. For a publisher to engage users on a social media site on behalf of DCA, they must first obtain approval from the Deputy Director, Communications, the Office of Public Affairs’ Staff Services Manager II, or the Office of Publications, Design and Editing’s Information Officer II.
- Any public comments of a sensitive nature or that raise concerns should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Director, Communications immediately in order to address it appropriately.

Providing information to users

- Wherever possible, links should direct users back to the DCA website or to Bureau or Division websites to verify a license, file a complaint, or obtain more information, forms, publications, or other services.

Conduct Expectations and Disclaimer Language

- All DCA social media sites that allow comments must publish the following text on the “About Us” or similar pages on the sites:

IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ!!

The purpose of this site is to communicate matters of public interest. This is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum. The California Department of Consumer Affairs reserves the right to remove any comments or content that it deems inappropriate. Such comments and content include but are not limited to:

- Vulgar language or sexually explicit comments;
- Personal attacks of any kind;
- Comments about other posters;
- Spam or links to other non-governmental sites;
- Content that is off-topic or not directly related to the business of DCA;
- Promotion of illegal activities;
- Infringements on copyrights or trademarks; and
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or intellectual disability, or sexual orientation.

The appearance of external links on this site does not constitute an endorsement of the linked sites and their content by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

The comments expressed on this site do not necessarily reflect the opinions and position of the Department of Consumer Affairs or its employees.

Posts and responses to this (name of social media) site are updated Monday through Friday during normal business hours, except on State holidays.

Comments on this site are considered to be in the public domain. Do not post private, confidential or sensitive information.

Please visit [DCA's home page](#) for our [privacy policy](#).

Tips and Tricks for Administrators and Publishers

- ✓ Operating a social media site is a commitment, so it is necessary to create and post timely and relevant content regularly. You don't have to post every day, but postings should be somewhat regular. If too much time elapses between postings, people will lose interest in following the site.
- ✓ While it's okay, even desirable, to write in a less formal style than we normally use for government documents, grammar and punctuation are still important. Shorthand like "u" for "you" or "r" for "are" should only be used on sites such as Twitter where the number of characters per message is limited. Even in those instances, however, writers should use them only when absolutely necessary.
- ✓ Be prepared to make time and devote resources to moderating all comments that are posted. As new comments come in, they should be immediately screened to ensure they do not violate the guidelines. If a response is in order, time may be required to research the response.
- ✓ Be prepared to respond on the blog to posted comments, especially negative ones. Blogs build credibility and readership when they are as open as possible. Remember, DCA's Communications staff can help you if necessary and you should seek their help in crafting appropriate responses to negative comments or sensitive matters.
- ✓ Try to have as many people as possible within the organization contribute to the sites, especially to blog sites. This will help ensure that postings occur regularly.
- ✓ If you see the same question over and over again, consider creating boilerplate responses to some questions or creating special messages to try to improve awareness.
- ✓ Remember that people will find your site, especially your blog, in a variety of ways (such as search engines, e-mail alerts, RSS feeds, other social networking sites, bookmarking sites, e-mail from friends or family, etc.). This means individuals will often be reading only a headline (or title), or a headline and a couple of sentences. It thus pays to make your headline and the content intriguing and interesting.
- ✓ Don't hesitate to ask DCA's Communications staff for help generating ideas, writing headlines, or for grammar and punctuation questions. We're here to help.