

Corporate Policy

Social Media Policy

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| Last Review Date: | July 2016 |
| Next Review Date: | July 2017 |
| Approved by: | ELT |
| Owner: | National Manager Communications, Corporate Services |

Purpose

This policy aims to provide guidance for, and set out the obligations of, Corrections employees using social media both as a representative of the organisation and in a personal capacity.

Nothing in this policy modifies the principles and obligations described in the Code of Conduct.

The Communications team oversee this policy, and Corrections' Social Media Strategy.

Staff with questions about Corrections' use of social media should email socialmedia@corrections.govt.nz or contact the Communications team.

Staff with questions about the safe and careful use of social media in a personal capacity should speak to their manager or the Integrity Support Team.

Policy statement

The Department of Corrections promotes the use of social media where there are clear objectives, the benefits outweigh the risks, and activities are managed appropriately.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and contractors of the Department of Corrections.

The policy is broad to accommodate the changing nature of social media.

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Department of Corrections Code of Conduct
- IT Acceptable Use Policy and Mobile Phone Policy
- Code of Conduct for the State Services
- Department of Corrections Media Policy
- Department of Corrections' Privacy and Personal Information Guide
- Privacy Act 1993

Policy principles and standards

Staff access to social media at work

Given the sensitive nature of the work undertaken by Corrections, the use of social media at work is restricted to those staff managing authorised Corrections social media platforms or those who have an authorised business need. Authorised Corrections social media platforms include the Corrections' Facebook page, Twitter account and Youtube channel. All staff are able to access to LinkedIn, to support recruitment initiatives. Corrections staff are able to view the latest content from Corrections' Facebook and Twitter feeds via widgets on the Corrections website, www.corrections.govt.nz.

Principles

Social media is an increasingly well-used and popular form of communication for individual, businesses and organisations. Its benefits as a communications platform include increased audience reach and reduced reliance on mainstream media. However, there are significant reputational and legal risks to Corrections, including to staff, if processes are not followed.

Corrections, and its staff, are required to implement government policy. Public servants must be politically neutral and respect the authority of the government of the day.

All Corrections employees are expected to follow these principles when using social media tools as a representative of the organisation or in a personal capacity:

- Professionalism and integrity
- Personal responsibility
- Personal safety, and of your co-workers and offenders
- Consideration of personal privacy as well as that of the organisation, colleagues, stakeholders, offenders and their families
- Avoid comment or criticism of government policy
- Respect copyright laws
- Respect for their audience

Standards

The following policy standards must be followed at all times when using social media tools as a representative of the organisation or in a personal capacity:

Remain politically neutral

- Corrections employees are personally responsible for the content they publish through any social media tool. Public servants must avoid public comment or criticism of

government policy and are required to follow the guidelines set out in the Department's [Code of Conduct](#).

- Generally, public servants have the same rights of free speech and independence in the conduct of their private affairs as other members of the public. However, as public servants, Corrections staff also have a duty not to compromise Corrections or the Minister through public criticism of government policy.

Don't comment on Corrections matters

- Corrections employees can use social media tools freely in their personal lives and time, but should remember that they **cannot** comment on Corrections related matters, whether they relate to their role within Corrections or not, without specific authorisation. This excludes 'liking', 'sharing', 're-tweeting' or other promotion of content published to Corrections authorised social media platforms. Caution should be used when 'liking', 'sharing', re-tweeting' or promoting content from other users as this can be seen as a view being expressed or supported.
- Employees must make sure they do not disclose or use information that is confidential or copyright to Corrections.
- Employees must not disclose any organisational material or information that they are not specifically authorised to disclose.
- Employees must honour the privacy rights of current Corrections employees, offenders and stakeholders by seeking their permission before writing about or displaying internal Corrections happenings that might be considered to be a breach of their privacy and confidentiality.
- Employees using social media for personal use must consider their association with Corrections. If there may be uncertainty about the capacity in which an employee is acting, they should make it clear to others that their contribution is as a private individual.

Be safe

- Refer to Corrections' [Social Media Safety Tips](#) and the guide [Ensuring Your Personal Safety](#) to make sure you are using your social media safely. More tips can be found on www.connectsmart.govt.nz.
- Prisoners and offenders are known to use social media to obtain personal information about staff. Journalists and media outlets also use social media as a source of information. Employees are encouraged to be selective about who they connect with and regularly review their privacy settings and ensure that their personal information isn't publicly available.
- Even social media sites with restricted privacy settings are in effect public, as you cannot control what friends may do with the information.

Personal responsibility

- Employees are responsible for anything they publish online. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action by Corrections for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, breach copyright, or personal privacy rights, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- Employees should be aware that even if they are not identified as a Corrections employee, it should be assumed that readers can and will identify them as such. You should not identify your employer when to do so would bring the organisation into disrepute.
- Employees should be aware that comments made by them on social media platforms may be reproduced and published by mainstream media. Comments remain permanently available.

Social media etiquette

- Corrections employees should respect copyright laws when publishing content through social media. Employees should always give proper credit for other's work and make sure they have the right to issue something with attribution before they publish.
- Employees must respect their audience and must not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Corrections' workplace. Employees should remember that readers of social media include stakeholders, the media, current/past/future employees and offenders and their friends and family.

Seek advice if you're not sure

- If an employee is in any doubt whether comment could impact upon the role of Corrections or cause embarrassment to Corrections they should discuss the matter with their manager and the Communications team before making any comment.
- For more information about personal use of social media and your obligations under the Code of Conduct, as well as tips for keeping yourself safe, please refer to the 'related documents' section of this policy, the [Social Media Safety Tips](#), the [Ensuring Your Personal Safety](#) guide and www.connectsmart.govt.nz.

Requirements and responsibilities

| Person/Party | Responsibilities |
|---|--|
| Executive Leadership Team (ELT) | Approves the policy. |
| National Communications Manager | Owns the policy and strategy and has oversight of social media use. |
| Managers | Ensure new and existing staff in their teams are made aware of this policy, how it affects them and how they can comply with it. |
| All staff | Ensure they are familiar with this policy and understand how to comply with it. |
| Staff managing Corrections' social media platforms | Ensure that social media initiatives they are responsible for comply with this policy. |

Definitions

| Word/ phrase | Definition |
|---------------------|---|
| Social Media | <p>Social media is the term used to define a category of websites and tools based on user participation and user-generated content.</p> <p>Social media tools include wikis, blogs, micro-blogging, video sharing, photo sharing, podcasts, social networking tools such as Facebook LinkedIn, Youtube, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and any other form of online publishing or discussion.</p> |