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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

BEST ONLINE PRACTICES FOR AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB AND SQUADRONS

INTRODUCTION

This Social Media Policy should act as a guide for our conduct and behavior across all social media platforms. All squadrons and representatives of America's Boating Club should follow this set of standards when posting or commenting on national or squadron social media pages.

GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES

Today, there is an array of social media platforms people can use, each with their own specific purpose and terms of service, but there are best practices that can be applied to any platform, especially for organizations. We will cover those here. National, local squadrons, and other representatives of America's Boating Club are encouraged to follow these day-to-day suggestions regarding their social media accounts and behavior on said accounts.

All pages should adhere to [America's Boating Club branding guidelines](#). (For more information on how to set up a squadron social media page, refer to the "Social Media Playbook" document.)

As an organization, America's Boating Club and its representatives should adopt a friendly, personable tone when communicating on social media. This helps us appear more approachable and accessible to the public, encouraging engagement and attracting prospective customers. Additionally, regular communication on social media keeps us relevant and increases the perception of our organization as accessible and responsive. Thus, timely replies to comments and messages are key.

Posts on social media can be, but are not limited to, information about classes, upcoming events, photos from events, links to relevant boating articles or stories, or reshares of other posts or articles from squadrons, America's Boating Club or other boating organizations. When feasible, any posts we make should encourage and promote safe boating practices and behaviors. For example, photos of members on boats or on water should ideally depict them wearing life jackets.

There are a few fundamental rules we should abide by:

- Avoid political or controversial posts or commentary.
- Do not post profanity, or harmful or inappropriate content that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit, or that could be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or political beliefs.

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- Do not promote unethical practices or any activity prohibited by law, USPS Standing Rules and [Bylaws](#), or administrative regulations.
- Where possible, avoid the use of abbreviations: i.e., America’s Boating Club, not ABC; United States Power Squadrons, not USPS.

ACCOUNT SECURITY & SAFETY

While social media is a great way to connect and share information, it can also open you to risks that potentially harm you, your squadron or the organization as a whole. The following guidance can help you to protect against online risks and threats.

- All social media accounts should have a minimum of two administrators. If an administrator leaves, becomes locked out of an account, or is otherwise unable to manage the account any longer, a second administrator ensures continued access to the account.
- When using a personal account to manage a squadron page, such as on Facebook, ensure the personal account has a unique password (one not used for any other site/account). Passwords should include numbers, symbols, and both uppercase and lowercase letters. Avoid using words that can be found in the dictionary. ([LastPass](#) is a great password management site and can also generate unique passwords.)
- Never use shared passwords to manage accounts.
- Always log out of social media accounts when done posting.
- Avoid clicking on suspicious links, especially from accounts or pages you don’t recognize. Do not give out personal information even through messages. Emails about your account will only come from fb.com, facebook.com or facebookmail.com.

RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE COMMENTS

Inevitably, we will receive criticism on social media. It is important to respond as soon as we have received a negative comment or message. If unable to do so, we should respond as soon as possible. Complainants expect a fast response even on off hours. No one likes to be criticized; however, do not delete negative comments unless it is obvious trolling, abusive, hate speech, spam, or irrelevant to the organization.

When responding to a negative comment,

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- thank them for their opinion (“Thanks for reaching out to us”)
- apologize for the inconvenience (i.e., “Sorry to hear that you’re having problems with our product /you didn’t like our services”)
- encourage them to send you a private message. Do not discuss problems in public!

Once you get in touch with your customer in private,

- again, thank them for reaching out
- gather additional specific information about their concern or complaint
- try to explain what happened: be clear, precise and don’t try to excuse yourself if you’ve made a mistake,
- explain what you are going to do and when you’re going to get back to them,
- follow up with the customer.

Some issues cannot be resolved by the social media administrator alone. If necessary, let the customer know you are looking into the complaint and will get back to them as soon as possible with a response or resolution. Depending on the problem, take it to the appropriate committee or staff member. Once you have an answer, make sure you circle back to the complainant as soon as you can. Lastly, understand that there will be some be who will not be satisfied, no matter what you do. If nothing more can be done, apologize and disengage with the user.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Members, employees and department heads are not prohibited from having personal social media accounts. However, anyone representing America’s Boating Club is strongly encouraged to follow the guidelines set forth in this Social Media Policy on their personal accounts, or set their personal accounts to private.