

COMM 502: WSBA Social Media Guidelines and Protocol

Adoption Date: 10/18/2020, Executive Leadership Team

The Washington State Bar Association includes social media in its overall communication strategies to promote awareness and use of its programs, to facilitate member-to-member engagement, and to provide an opportunity for the organization to listen to the trends and concerns raised by the membership, parties with special interests and concerns about the administration of justice and the practice of law, and members of the general public.

Purpose: To connect with and inform Washington State Bar Association members and other social media followers, as a primary source of news and information using a strategic mix of legal news and engaging content.

Goals:

- Drive awareness for the WSBA brand and its mission;
- Engage new and existing audiences in real time;
- Generate goodwill and credibility for WSBA's commitment to members and the public.

WSBA employees and authorized volunteers responsible for managing the Bar's social media platforms are expected to represent the organization and the legal profession well and to exercise good judgment at all times. (These guidelines do not extend to personal use of personal social media in a way that is not identified with the WSBA.) At a minimum, WSBA staff and authorized volunteers who act as editors and administrators of WSBA social media platforms are expected to:

- Be responsible. Editors and administrators of WSBA's social media platforms are personally responsible for material they post.
- Carefully consider content. What they publish will be widely accessible for some time and, in some cases, indefinitely. All statements must be true and not misleading. Editors and administrators must not post information about themselves or others that might reasonably be expected to be private in nature. They must keep posts relevant to the organization's mission and goals.
- Be known. Administrators and editors must use their real names and, if relevant, their role or interest in the topic being discussed. When appropriate, they should make it clear they are speaking for themselves and not on the organization's behalf.
- Be civil and respectful. While it is acceptable to disagree with others, comments should not include defamatory, libelous, or damaging innuendo. The use of abusive, threatening, offensive, obscene, explicit, or racist language is prohibited, as is the posting of illegal material.
- Be accurate. If an administrator or editor makes a mistake, they should admit it and quickly provide the correct information; and, if appropriate, modify an earlier post to make it clear they have corrected an error.
- Be relevant and add value to the conversation. Administrators and editors should write about what they know; information adds value to a conversation if it contributes to the legal community's knowledge or skills, improves the legal system or the public's understanding of the legal system, or builds a sense of community.
- Follow copyright and fair use laws. Administrators and editors must give proper credit for work done by others. They must ensure the right to use material with attribution before publishing. It is preferable to link to others' work rather than reproducing it. They should not use any material that may be proprietary in nature. They must recognize the



potential professional and legal consequences of any failure to follow applicable laws governing the use of others' materials.

- Protect proprietary and client information. Editors and administrators must not discuss or misuse proprietary or confidential information and follow all professional and ethical rules governing the disclosure of information shared with you by clients. When in doubt, leave it out.
- Not endorse political positions contrary to GR 12.1. The activities of WSBA are defined by Washington Supreme Court rules (GR 12.1), and those rules apply to social networking activity as well as a variety of other activities. Across social media platforms, WSBA and its entities (sections, boards, committees, etc.) need to avoid even the appearance that they directly or indirectly:
 - Take positions on issues concerning the politics or social positions of foreign nations;
 - Take positions on political or social issues which do not relate to or affect the practice of law or the administration of justice; or
 - Support or opposes, in an election, candidates for public office.
- Refrain from political activities. Political activities including but not limited to endorsements or advocacy are not appropriate on the WSBA's social media platforms.
- Comply with the WSBA Rules governing lawyer conduct. When posting content to any social media site, administrators and editors must comply with all requirements of the WSBA Rules of Professional Conduct.
- Do not violate antitrust laws. Antitrust laws prohibit postings that encourage or facilitate agreements between WSBA members of different firms concerning the following, as they pertain to legal services: prices, discounts, or terms or conditions of sale; salaries; profits, profit margins, or cost data; market shares, sales territories, or markets; allocation of customers or suppliers; or any other term or condition related to competition.
- Abide by all social networks' terms of use. By joining a particular social network, administrators and editors agree to abide by that network's terms of use. Review those terms carefully before agreeing to participate.

In accordance with the above expected behaviors and responsibility, all WSBA volunteers will sign a WSBA Social Media Editor agreement prior to being authorized to act in an official WSBA capacity. *The WSBA will actively monitor all of its social media sites and take appropriate action to enforce these guidelines.*

Code of Conduct: The WSBA welcomes comments, replies, and other interaction to its posts via social media channels and to share content directly related to the program. All content posted on WSBA social media platforms is expected to be relevant and respectful.

Inappropriate Comments: The WSBA has the right to delete any inappropriate content from its social media platforms, including but not limited to: irrelevant content, redundant content, hateful content, malicious content, uncivil or disrespectful content, attacks or complaints against an individual, financial solicitations, endorsements of a political candidate or party, opposition to a political candidate or party, and content that violates the social media platforms' terms of use, codes of conduct, or other policies. Content that violates a platform's policies may also be reported through the platform's oversight procedures. Repeated inappropriate comments will result in the user being blocked.

Disclaimer: Regarding content posted by outside social-media users (i.e., not WSBA staff or authorized volunteers serving as account editors and administrators), the WSBA accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for the contents of any target site linked from its social media accounts. The WSBA also accepts no responsibility or liability for any data, text, software, music, sound, photographs, images, video, messages, or any other materials or content whatsoever generated by users (i.e., not WSBA staff or authorized volunteers serving as account editors and administrators) and publicly posted via its social media accounts.

The WSBA reserves the right to modify, change or revoke this policy at any time.