




Approved by: Juan Williams, Commissioner	Policy Number: 12-058 (Rev. 07/01/2023)
Signature: 	Supersedes: 12-058
Application: Executive Branch Agencies and Employees, Human Resources Officers	Effective Date: February 1, 2015
Authority: T.C.A § 8-30-104	Rule: N/A

Personal Use of Social Media

Social media is a term that encompasses various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. It includes, but is not limited to, social networking, the use of websites that allow users to share content, interact, and develop communities around similar interests.

This policy is intended to provide guidelines to ensure that social media tools are used properly, and to address potential risks. These guidelines are designed to protect State employees and ensure consistency across agencies. Every State employee is responsible for reviewing and complying with the following policy at work and outside of work.

State employees must be cognizant that they still represent the State in their private, personal settings. The lines between public and private, personal, and professional are blurred in online social networks, and whatever you post on your personal account will likely reflect on the state. Therefore, be aware of your association with the State and thoughtful of how you present yourself online. A personal social media account, while an appropriate place to share personal opinions, is not a place to present an individual opinion in your official capacity with the agency. Be mindful that despite privacy controls, whatever you publish can be seen by many different people, including your supervisors, co-workers, and customers.

- Personal use of social media must be consistent with the terms of use outlined in the [Employee Acceptable Use Policy](#). State employees cannot use personal social media sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities during business hours and with State-issued property. State employees are also prohibited from using social media to violate any other applicable state, federal, or local laws, policies, and regulations.
- Employees' personal use should not be attributable to an agency or department of the State of Tennessee or the employee's job function at an agency or department. An employee's use and comments made on social media sites are subject to First Amendment protections; however, any personal use must be conducted in such a manner that a reader would not think that the employee is speaking for or on behalf of his/her agency employer. If you list the State of Tennessee as your

employer on your personal social media profiles, any information you post will be held to a higher level of scrutiny.

- Personal social media postings shall be consistent with the State's Policy on Workplace Discrimination and Harassment, the State's Policy on Violence in the Workplace, the State's Policy on Abusive Conduct in the Workplace, and the Code of Conduct. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may be subject to investigation by DOHR's Office of General Counsel under one or more of the policies listed above. Examples include communications that could reasonably be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation, or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age (40 and over), sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, or any other protected category under state and/or federal law.
- Any information that is considered confidential shall not be released on any social media account. Confidential information is generally defined as information disclosed to an individual employee or known to that employee as a consequence of the employee's employment at a company. Confidential information can include information in any form, such as written documents and records or electronic data. Confidential information includes business secrets or other information not otherwise available to persons outside of the employer, confidential financial data, or other non-public proprietary information, or confidential information regarding business partners, vendors, or customers. Furthermore, any information released in relation to an investigation conducted involving the State's Policy on Workplace Discrimination and Harassment, the State's Policy on Violence in the Workplace, the State's Policy on Abusive Conduct in the Workplace, and the State's Code of Conduct, may also be subject to the confidentiality provisions of said policies.
- Respect the laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and third-party rights. Do not infringe on the State's or individual agency logos or other trademarks.
- Personal usage of social media on State equipment is prohibited. Accessing personal social media accounts on State equipment may be subject to monitoring without notice or consent.
- Violation of any of the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

All employees shall review and acknowledge this policy on an annual basis. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the agency human resources office or DOHR's Office of General Counsel.

Attachment – Employee Acknowledgement Form

Social Media Policy

Employee Acknowledgement

I, _____, hereby certify that I have received a copy of the Social Media Policy. I understand that violation of this policy may subject me to discipline, up to and including termination.

Employee Signature*

Date

Human Resources Office Signature

Date

* By acknowledging this policy via the Edison system, I agree that my acknowledgement is the equivalent to my handwritten signature.