



QUICK FACTS

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SOCIAL MEDIA & THE EMPLOYER

Social media can be a fun way to share photos, jokes, frustrations, thoughts, and milestones. There can be a misconception however, that what you post on your own online profiles or timelines are shared only with those whom you choose to share. Unfortunately, as social media permeates all aspects of our personal and professional lives, what you post online can have serious and lasting consequences.

Reasons to be Careful About What You Post on Social Media

Nothing is private. Even when your social media security settings are set high, it is important to know that everything you post, share, comment on, and promote online can easily be made available to the public. How? "Friends" can screenshot your social media posts or images and can show them to the employer. People you are connected to online can also "share" your posts if your privacy settings aren't strict enough.

Content has a long shelf-life. Screenshot images, sharing posts, and archiving features of some social media sites make it possible to save your posts, even if you delete them. The employer, with the right tools and time to do so may access your deleted posts.

Your posts are searchable. Many social media platforms have search features to promote trending topics and issues. This means that the employer has access to search out your posts, even if you made them a long time ago.

Not all jokes are funny to all people. You may mean something in jest, but if a joke or comment offends the wrong "friend", they may share your post with the employer in complaint. (Yes! This has happened in our district). Suddenly, you could find yourself in the Principal's office (literally) as they hand you a screen shot of your online joke and tell you a colleague has filed a complaint.

Employers are looking online. More and more employers are verifying and evaluating their current employees based on their social media profiles and using what they find when reviewing job applications. Candidates are often vetted online... you don't want what you post on social media to disqualify you from the pool of applicants applying for a job.

How to Post Safely Online

There is no need to shut-down your social media accounts out of concern of making a mistake and damaging your reputation. You need only to be mindful when using social media.

Think Before You Post. Because your social media presence can be accessed by the employer, think twice before posting status updates, pictures, videos or opinions about the employer. Be especially mindful about "checking-in" to a location during your regular shift. Be careful about posting revealing images, particularly photos of you drinking or using drugs.

Choose your "friends" wisely. Be wary of linking on social media with colleagues or students who you don't know very well and trust completely. Because others can screenshot your posts and share them with the employer, you want to ensure only the people you truly trust have access to your online musings.

Go incognito. To help shield yourself from the employer's eyes, you can use an alias or nickname for your social media profiles. Don't list the employer or your city of residence in your profile and leave your "job title" blank.

Shine on! To minimize risk of the employer taking issue with your social media posts, keeps rants and complaints to a minimum. If you

need to complain about your boss or colleagues, don't post on social media – call a union executive. They are there to help!

Your Social Media / Your Choice

Ultimately, what you choose to do on social media is entirely up to you. You have the choice to express and represent yourself on social media in any way that you wish.

There are laws in Canada which give the employer the power to use your social media presence against you in matters of discipline and even to discipline you based solely on your social media posts. Your union executive wants to ensure that you are armed with the knowledge that the employer does have access to our social media posts and can use them against us in matters of our employment.

If you are concerned about your social media posts or are ever contacted by management about your social media presence, please contact a union representative as soon as possible!

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