



OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE

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Supersedes:

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Subject: **POLICY ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees do not engage in online communication that is disparaging and/or discriminatory towards the WA Health and/or colleagues. Communication may include, but is not limited to emails, blogging and posts via social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. Disparaging communication includes negative, adverse, inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory and abusive blogs/posts that criticises WA Health and/or colleagues in a public way.

The use of online communication via social media to post or blog disparaging comments about WA Health and/or colleagues is a breach of an employee's duty of fidelity and good faith which will result in disciplinary action and in some cases termination of employment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff within WA Health entities including:

- Department of Health
- Metropolitan Health Service
- WA Country Health Service

POLICY

This policy covers all online communication via social media sites made by an employee, whether during work hours on a work computer, or during work hours on a personal electronic device, or outside work hours on a personal electronic device. Online communication via social media sites that is prohibited includes, but is not limited to, communication that:

- Mentions the WA Health by name, its business operations or confidential information;
- Is defamatory;
- May be construed as discriminatory or bullying;
- Bullies, harasses, discriminates or vilifies work colleagues;
- Includes abusive status updates and/or blogs that criticise work colleagues, offends others and/or breaches their employment obligations in public ways; and
- Publicises or comments on workplace disputes.

Prohibited online communication via social media sites may also be in contravention of:

- WA Health Code of Conduct;
- WA Public Sector Code of Ethics;
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994*;
- WA Health policies, including the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination in the Workplace Policy, Use of Official Information and Public Comment; and
- Health Services policies, including Confidentiality policies.

An employee that engages in online communication to make disparaging comments about the Department, management, colleagues and/or patients will be in breach of their duty of fidelity and good faith. Such conduct will be found to be misconduct which will result in disciplinary proceedings and may lead to termination of employment.

Any queries regarding this directive can be sent to industrial.relations@health.wa.gov.au.

Kim Snowball
DIRECTOR GENERAL

This information is available in alternative formats upon a request from a person with a disability.