



Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

Social media gives individuals, groups, organisations and businesses the opportunity to instantly share information with online communities. Blogs, forums, social networking and video sharing sites are the most popular types of social media sites, however, any forum which allows a user to upload and share information is considered part of the social media space. It is also important to note that information that is shared need not be written; it could take the form of an image or audio visual material.

Equestrian Australia (EA) supports the use of social media as a timely and effective method of communication. In addition to engaging with members of the equestrian community, social media can help the organisation reach members of the broader public and traditional media.

EA proactively seeks positive media coverage and does so for the benefit of its athletes and members. Traditionally this media coverage has been through TV, radio and print media outlets however the rise of social media has widened this landscape. Given these changes, all EA representatives, including employees, members, coaches and officials have the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the organisation simply by maintaining an online presence.

Whilst social media provides great opportunity to raise equestrian's profile and reach new audiences, it also has the potential to harm the reputation of the organisation, its athletes, members and stakeholders. It is crucial therefore that individuals representing EA are aware of the implications of using social media.

The purpose of this document is to provide representatives of Equestrian Australia with guiding principles for using social media. EA encourages each of its representatives to use social media within the parameters outlined in this policy.

Persons bound by these guidelines include athletes, coaches, employees, independent contractors and other EA members.

2. Scope

Individuals bound by this policy include athletes who have been named on an EA national squad, EA employees, coaches, officials, volunteers, state branches and national discipline committees including committee members (including but not limited to committee chairs and committee volunteers). For the purpose of this document, the above mentioned will be collectively referred to as EA representatives.

All forms of social media activity are covered under this policy, including, but not limited to:

- Creating and maintaining social or business networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn.
- Sharing audio-visual content on sites including Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest (photo sharing) and YouTube and Vimeo (video sharing)
- Authoring and commenting on blogs or forums

- Editing a Wikipedia page

3. Guiding principles

EA representatives should be mindful that information shared on social media appears in public so careful consideration should be given to content before it is posted. Never forget that information shared within online communities could have implications for the sport and those associated with it.

Information which is shared online can be difficult to retract. A representative might be able to remove his/her original comments however the very nature of social media encourages a person to share information which makes it difficult to know where the information they post finishes up.

Representatives should assume that all posts and information they share via social media can be traced back to them.

Adhering to these guidelines will ensure the reputation of EA, its athletes, coaches, officials, employees, volunteers and stakeholders is protected.

- Defamatory, disrespectful and hateful comments about individuals or organisations will not be tolerated.
- Representatives must not bring EA or the sport of equestrian into disrepute. The use of obscene language and threatening comments targeted at an individual or organisation will not be tolerated. Comments which are contrary to the spirit and integrity of sport will not be tolerated.
- EA representatives should ensure that comments made on social media abide by EA's Code of Conduct and are in line with EA's Member Protection Policy, specifically:
 - *Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others*
 - *Refrain from any form of harassment of others*
 - *Retrain from any behaviour that may bring EA, its member associations or affiliated clubs into disrepute.*
- An EA representative who shares information online should consider themselves a spokesperson for the organisation and must never reveal confidential or sensitive information that could jeopardise EA's relationships with its commercial or government partners.
- Personal sites, blogs and accounts that have an EA 'look and feel' and could be perceived as being EA or one of its disciplines is strictly prohibited.
- National discipline committees and committee members are not permitted to host discipline specific accounts. Information that discipline committees and committee members wish to share with EA subscribers must come through EA's head office and its authorised EA social media accounts.

Please note: athletes, coaches, officials and other representatives that are selected on other teams and participate in major events such as the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games should also adhere to the guidelines imposed by the governing bodies of those organisations.

4. Breach

If a representative fails to follow these guidelines EA has the right to issue the representative with a take-down notice. Representatives who are found to not comply with a take-down notice will face disciplinary action.

Repeated breaches of this policy could lead to disciplinary action. EA also has the right to administer sanctions and take legal action

5. Legislation

As with any form of public communication, online communication can also be subject to legislation. Representatives should be mindful that unsubstantiated claims, false statements, defamatory, offensive and threatening comments could lead to prosecution.

6. Amendments/Interpretation

These Guidelines may be amended by EA as it deems appropriate. The EA Board will be the ultimate authority with respect to the interpretation and implementation of these Guidelines.

7. Conclusion

EA understands that social media is a new method of communication and as such encourages its employees and representatives to seek clarification from the EA Commercial Team if they are unsure what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate content.