



COLLEGE OF OPTICIANS OF ALBERTA

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Created/Last Revised: January 1, 2022

Introduction

The College of Opticians of Alberta (the "COA") has adopted a social media policy to guide communications by and with the COA. The intent of this policy is to establish guidelines for social media usage by the COA's employees, volunteers, and contractors, and for the public to engage with the COA using social media.

Definitions

Social media refers to a variety of online communities that facilitate organizational communication and engagement with the public. Social media platforms and channels are the tools used to support this communication and engagement. The COA's social media channels include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. For the purposes of this document, "user" will refer to employees, volunteers, and contractors using social media on behalf of the COA.

Guiding Principles

In addition to the COA's values of accountability, ethicality, fairness, effectiveness, openness, and transparency, the COA uses the following principles to guide employee, volunteer, and contractor social media usage:

- a. **Disclose:** Users must identify themselves (or the COA) in each social media post to ensure transparency and accountability in external communications.
- b. **Protect:** Users must take extra care to protect their own reputation and the reputation of the COA.
- c. **Use Common Sense:** Users must always communicate professionally and ethically.

Personal Use of Social Media at Work

The COA recognizes employees may need to access social media while at work and permits such use. However, it is expected that the personal use of social media during work hours is responsible, limited, and does not affect productivity.

Use of Official Accounts

The COA's CEO and Registrar will have executive oversight of the organization's social media accounts and will delegate the use of social media to employees as appropriate. Access to the COA's official social media accounts will be limited to designated employee(s).

The COA's social media usage shall comply with relevant laws and regulations, including privacy, copyright, anti-spam, and defamation legislation. The COA's social media usage shall also embody the spirit of the COA's commitment to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for the public, registrants, volunteers, staff, and other stakeholders. Employees who are managing the COA's social media accounts shall adhere to the following principles:

- Be respectful, polite, and patient.
- Avoid speaking on matters outside of the employee's field of expertise without first consulting expert advice (e.g., legal counsel).
- Adhere to all COA regulations and policies.
- Seek approval from the CEO and Registrar before sharing information that impacts the COA's operations and reputation.
- Avoid deleting or ignoring comments from the public.
 - Wherever possible, respond with appropriate information or request that the commentor contact the COA for support.
 - Exceptions to this principle may include hate speech, obscene content, or defamation, which should be referred to the CEO and Registrar for review against the COA's anti-bias and anti-discrimination policy and relevant law.
 - If a comment is deleted due to a contravention of the COA's policy or relevant legislation, the COA will be transparent about this decision and will post a comment indicating that the post was deleted for this reason.
- Ensure that no information shared is defamatory.
- Immediately correct or remove any misleading or false content as quickly as possible and include notification of the correction as needed.

Prohibited Behavior

Employees shall use social media with the understanding that even personal use can negatively impact the COA. Therefore, the COA forbids its employees from using social media in any manner and at any time, whether personal or professional, that can cause harm to COA, its employees, volunteers, registrants, other stakeholders, and the public.

As such, the COA expressly forbids:

- Plagiarized content
- Inappropriate jokes

- Derogatory comments
- Defamatory and inflammatory comments or obscenity
- Offensive images
- Images or content to which the COA has no rights
- Discriminatory remarks and hate speech
- Content that infringes on privacy rights and legislation

Respecting Confidentiality

While transparency and openness are considered important values inherent in the COA's operations, employees are still required to respect the organization's sensitivities.

Staff members must respect their employee confidentiality agreements and may not share information that includes confidential information about the COA, protected information about employees, volunteers, registrants, or other stakeholders. This applies to both personal and corporate social media use.

Security

To ensure the COA's social media channels remain safe, all passwords must be changed every 90 days.

Monitoring, Enforcement, and Discipline

The COA's social media use shall be monitored regularly by the CEO and Registrar and any staff designated to manage social media channels.

Violating the COA's social media policy may result in disciplinary action, ranging from a cautionary reminder to for-cause termination depending on the severity of the violation.

Disclaimers

No employee may speak on behalf of the COA unless they are an authorized spokesperson. This includes the use of social media.

In accordance with Council policy, the President is the authorized spokesperson for the COA and may delegate representation of the COA to the CEO and Registrar as needed. When the President or the CEO and Registrar speak on behalf of the COA, they must do so in accordance with Council policy and in alignment with decisions made by the COA Council as a whole.

All employees and Council members who are publicly recognized as being affiliated with the COA are urged to include a disclaimer in their personal social media accounts stating that their comments are theirs alone.

Social Media Terms of Use

The COA appreciates and is thankful for the public who engage with us via social media. The use of our social media channels is subject to these terms and conditions:

We are committed to providing accurate content about the COA and encourage open and respectful dialogue.

We, the COA, reserve all rights relating to our social media channels, including but not limited to:

- a. adding, removing, or modifying any content,
- b. (ii) blocking disruptive users; and (iii)
- c. discontinuing any of our social media channels at any time.

Periodically we may post information on our social media channels from key stakeholders when that information may be relevant to optical care and regulation in Alberta. Information of this nature does not necessarily represent the COA's views and opinions. The COA will make every effort to ensure, but cannot guarantee, that information from key stakeholders shared on our social media channels is accurate, complete, reliable, useful, timely, and current.

The COA may, in its sole discretion, delete irresponsible content or content that is otherwise inconsistent with the purpose of the COA, and we reserve the right to block any user who fails to follow these Terms of Use.

Examples of inappropriate or off-topic messages include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Defamatory, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, abusive, vulgar, sexually explicit, inappropriate with respect to race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, other intrinsic characteristic, or religion, threatening comments, or hate propaganda;
- Calls to violence of any kind;
- Activity that violates any law or regulation;
- Spam directed at the COA including any form of automatically generated content or repeatedly posting the same content;
- Any potential infringement upon any intellectual property rights;
- Content posted by fake or anonymous users.

The COA appreciates your understanding of and agreement with our terms and conditions.

Adding Social Media Accounts

The COA may, at its discretion, add or remove social media channels. Any change in social media channels does not affect this social media policy.

Maintaining Relevance

The COA shall review this social media policy annually or as the need arises. Any changes will be communicated to all affected parties as required.

Contact Information

If you have questions, comments, or complaints concerning our social media usage, please contact:

Tammy Kohut
CEO and Registrar
587.760.1884
ceo@albertaopticians.ca