SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & GUIDELINES OF THE MISSOURI BAR

These are the official guidelines for social media use on behalf of The Missouri Bar. These guidelines apply to Missouri Bar staff and Missouri Bar volunteers including, but not limited to, sections, committees, boards, departments and related groups ("entities") who use the State Bar’s name and/or logo in conjunction with a social media platform that is affiliated with The Missouri Bar. We expect all who participate in social media on behalf of The Missouri Bar to understand and follow these guidelines, and to be aware that they will continually evolve as social media evolves.

Purpose

The Missouri Bar’s use of social media platforms is designed to increase member engagement, to provide information and resources to members and to the public, and to raise awareness of State Bar services, benefits and programs, with the goal of providing greater value to our members and the public. The State Bar’s social media presence will provide an online meeting place for Missouri’s legal community.

Administering the Social Media Presence

The information on The Missouri Bar’s social networking sites should be regularly updated with postings on Bar events and news. A Social Media Committee, made up of State Bar staff and chaired by the Media Relations Director, will make determinations about the content that should be posted. All items for posting from State Bar entities must be submitted to the Committee for approval. These entities should regularly provide the Committee with content for posting to the social media sites. The Committee is encouraged to post material that has already been released and approved for publication in other Missouri Bar communications (e.g., press releases, articles, program information and other practice resources).

The Missouri Bar’s Web/Communications Specialist, under the direction of the Media Relations Director, will have exclusive rights to post items on The Missouri Bar’s official Facebook page, Twitter account and LinkedIn account, and will serve as the Administrator for each social media platform.

With respect to Facebook, sites will be created so that only the site’s administrator can post to the “wall” of the site. State Bar members and the public will be able to “fan” the site and comment on postings so long as those comments are consistent with these guidelines. The Missouri Bar will constantly monitor the sites for inappropriate posts and retain the right to remove posts deemed to be inappropriate and/or to be deemed outside of these guidelines. The attached disclaimer regarding comments will be posted on all Missouri Bar social media sites.

State Bar staff members can become a “fan” of the State Bar’s Facebook page and a “follower” of the State Bar Twitter account. However, in order to maintain a consistent and official
message, staff, other than those designated as an administrator, will refrain from posting or commenting directly to any page or account. Additionally, State Bar staff members will refrain from sending and/or confirming Facebook “friend” requests with State Bar members and State Bar staff, unless the staff member is related to or has a personal relationship with the State Bar member or fellow staff member that was established apart from the staff member’s employment at The Missouri Bar. Staff members may establish connections with State Bar members and staff on LinkedIn; however, staff should not seek recommendations from or post a recommendation for any State Bar member or staff member.

One Official Presence

The Missouri Bar will maintain one official presence on any social networking site in order to maintain control of content, provide for the most effective use of staff time and avoid confusion over what is deemed the official Bar message. The exception to this policy are the Facebook accounts of the CLE Department and Young Lawyers Section, and the Twitter accounts of the Media, CLE and Governmental Relations departments, which existed at the time these guidelines were adopted, and which are governed by these guidelines. The Board of Governors has ratified the sites then-existing at the time of the adoption of these guidelines and, going forward, approval for new accounts must be sought from the Board of Governors.

Other entities within the Bar (Departments, Sections, Committees, etc.) are encouraged to submit appropriate information through communication with their Bar staff liaisons, who will provide information for the site administrator to post items to the official site.

To create consistency and community on the Web, The Missouri Bar has established standard logo templates, disclaimers, and naming conventions. In order to maintain one official presence, the use of The Missouri Bar’s name and/or logo may be used only on official Missouri Bar social media sites, which have been approved by the Board of Governors.

Guidelines

At all times, be professional, respectful and discreet in your online dialogue. Represent The Missouri Bar and our profession well. Exercise good judgment. Entities and individuals who fail to do so, or who fail to comply with these guidelines, may forfeit the right to participate in social networking activities sponsored by The Missouri Bar.

In addition, be mindful that in some circumstances, inappropriate use of social media may result in discipline for failure to adhere to applicable Rules of Professional Conduct, as well as civil or criminal penalties, as warranted.

1. **Be responsible.** You are personally responsible for the material you post. All statements must be true and not misleading. Carefully consider content; what you publish will be widely accessible for a long time and, in some cases, indefinitely.
Protect your privacy and the privacy of others and adhere to all legal proscriptions governing the privacy of individuals and confidential information of The Missouri Bar.

2. **Be relevant and add value.** Comments should be related to and in response to the topic of the original post. Posts also should be relevant to The Missouri Bar’s mission and/or goals. Write about what you know. Contribute knowledge, not self promotion. Information adds value if it contributes to the legal community’s knowledge or skills, improves the legal system or public understanding of the legal system, or builds a sense of community.

3. **Be upfront; identify yourself.** Use your real name and, if relevant, your role or interest in the topic discussed. Make it clear that your views are your own and not those of The Missouri Bar. Only the Social Media Committee, with prior approval from the Executive Director, and the President are authorized to speak for The Missouri Bar.

4. **Be civil and respectful.** It is all right to disagree with others’ views, but do not use defamatory, libelous, or damaging innuendo; abusive, threatening, offensive, obscene, explicit, racist or illegal material. Avoid sensitive and/or potentially objectionable or inflammatory topics.

5. **Be quick to correct an error.** Be the first to respond to your own mistakes and quickly provide the correct information. If appropriate, modify an earlier post to make it clear you have corrected an error.

6. **Follow copyright and fair use laws.** Always give credit for the work of others. Make sure you have the right to use the material with attribution before publishing. In general, it is a good practice to link to others’ work rather than reproducing it on the site.

7. **Protect confidential, proprietary or other privileged information.** Do not discuss or misuse proprietary or confidential information. Protect the personal information of yourself and others.

8. **Avoid politics.** Refrain from advocating for or against any candidate or campaign, including persons running for elected positions within The Missouri Bar. Avoid commenting on any political policy, cause or legislation on which The Missouri Bar has taken no official position. Nothing in these guidelines should be read to prohibit the use of social media as part of a response to the criticism of judges or courts in accordance with The Missouri Bar Plan for Response to Criticism of Judges and Courts.

9. **Refrain from making uninformed or unsubstantiated claims.** You should not make any claims about your experience with a Missouri Bar program, service, product or activity unless you have personally used the service or product or participated in the program or activity. Comments should not be misleading or unsubstantiated. If you have a relationship with The Missouri Bar, clearly disclose
such relationship when making comments. Such disclosures are necessary to ensure that third-party readers are appropriately informed of the relationship and can take them into account when considering the comment.

10. **Comply with Missouri rules governing lawyer conduct.** Comply with all legal restrictions and obligations governing professional conduct, particularly those regulating communication and advertising.

11. **Do not violate antitrust laws.**

12. **Abide by the social network’s rules.** By joining a particular social network, you agree to abide by that community’s terms of use, so review those items carefully.

13. **Avoid blatant marketing.** Blatant marketing or advertising by individuals is inconsistent with the purposes of general dialogue and information exchange and is not in accord with the purpose and strategy of The Missouri Bar’s social media presence. The Missouri Bar may use its own social media site to promote its programs, products and services.

**Enforcing these guidelines**

The Missouri Bar reserves the right to monitor all sites covered by the policy and guidelines herein and will take appropriate action to enforce these guidelines.

Approved by the Board of Governors on May 13, 2011
**Disclaimer**

The Missouri Bar does not agree with or endorse every comment that individuals post on our pages. Our goal is to share ideas and information that contribute to The Missouri Bar’s mission: Improving the administration of justice, the laws and the legal profession on behalf of the public. Our policy is to accept comments that contribute to this mission.

Posted comments and images do not necessarily represent the views of The Missouri Bar. External, non-Missouri Bar links on this site do not constitute official endorsement on behalf of The Missouri Bar. All links posted as comments on official Missouri Bar posts will be reviewed and may be deleted.

While we encourage fans to share thoughts and opinions on The Missouri Bar Facebook page, we expect that this will be done in a respectful manner. A comment will be deleted if it contains:

- Hate speech;
- Profane, obscene, explicit or vulgar language;
- Nudity in profile pictures;
- Defamatory, libelous or threatening language toward an individual or group;
- Name calling and/or personal attacks;
- Objectionable or inflammatory language;
- Comments whose main purpose are blatant marketing or advertising;
- Comments that infringe on copyrights or other intellectual property;
- Misuse of proprietary, privileged or confidential information;
- Spam comments, such as the same comment posted repeatedly on a profile;
- Comments in violation of the Facebook guidelines; or
- Any other comments that The Missouri Bar Social Media Committee deem inappropriate.

Repeated violations of The Missouri Bar comment policy may cause the author to be blocked from The Missouri Bar Facebook page.

We understand that social media is a 24/7 medium; however, our monitoring capabilities are not. We may not see every inappropriate comment right away, and we are trusting members of our community to ignore personal attacks and negative speech or respond politely.

Please contact [socialmedia@mobar.org](mailto:socialmedia@mobar.org) if you have any questions.