




<b>Approved by:</b> Juan Williams, Commissioner	<b>Policy Number:</b> 12-058 (Rev. 07/01/2024)
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Supersedes:</b> 12-058
<b>Application:</b> Executive Branch Agencies and Employees, Human Resources Officers	<b>Effective Date:</b> February 1, 2015
<b>Authority:</b> T.C.A § 8-30-104	<b>Rule:</b> N/A

## Personal Use of Social Media

Social media is a term that encompasses various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. It includes, but is not limited to, social networking, the use of websites that allow users to share content, interact, and develop communities around similar interests.

This policy is intended to provide guidelines to ensure that social media tools are used properly, and to address potential risks. These guidelines are designed to protect State employees and ensure consistency across agencies. Every State employee is responsible for reviewing and complying with the following policy at work and outside of work.

State employees must be cognizant that they still represent the State in their private, personal settings. The lines between public and private, personal, and professional are blurred in online social networks, and content or information an employee creates, posts, or shares on their personal account may reflect on the State. Therefore, employees must be aware of their association with the State and be thoughtful of how they present themselves online. A personal social media account, while an appropriate place to share personal opinions, is not a place to present a personal opinion while acting in an official capacity within State government. Despite privacy controls, whatever an employee publishes may be seen by many different people, including supervisors, co-workers, customers, and media.

- Personal use of social media must be consistent with the terms of use outlined in the [Employee Acceptable Use Policy](#). State employees cannot use personal social media sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities during business hours and with State-issued property. State employees are also prohibited from using social media to violate any other applicable state, federal, or local laws, policies, and regulations.
- Employees' personal use should not be attributable to an agency or department of the State of Tennessee or the employee's job function at an agency or department. An employee's use and comments made on social media sites are subject to First Amendment protections; however, any personal use must be conducted in such a manner that a reader would not think that the employee is speaking for or on behalf of his/her agency or department. If an employee identifies the State of Tennessee as their employer on personal social media profiles, any information an employee posts will be held to a higher level of scrutiny.

# DOHR Policy:

## Personal Use of Social Media

**Policy Number:** 12-058  
(Rev. 07/01/2024)

- Personal social media postings shall be consistent with the State's Policies on [Workplace Discrimination and Harassment](#), [Violence in the Workplace](#), [Abusive Conduct in the Workplace](#), and the [State's Code of Conduct](#). Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may be subject to investigation either by DOHR's Office of General Counsel or the employee's respective agency under one or more of the policies listed above. Examples include communications that could reasonably be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation, or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age (40 and over), sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, or any other protected category under state and/or federal law.
- Any work-related information that is considered confidential shall not be released on any social media account. Confidential information is generally defined as information disclosed to an individual employee or known to that employee as a consequence of the employee's employment at a company. Confidential information can include information in any form, such as written documents and records or electronic data. Confidential information includes business secrets or other information not otherwise available to persons outside of the employer, confidential financial data, or other non-public proprietary information, or confidential information regarding business partners, vendors, or customers. Furthermore, any information released in relation to an investigation conducted involving the State's Policies on Workplace Discrimination and Harassment, Violence in the Workplace, Abusive Conduct in the Workplace, and the State's Code of Conduct, may also be subject to the confidentiality provisions of said policies.
- Respect the laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and third-party rights. Do not infringe on the State's or individual agency logos or other trademarks.
- Personal usage of social media on State equipment is prohibited. Accessing personal social media accounts on State equipment may be subject to monitoring without notice or consent. Exception to this provision include employees using social media on state equipment if done in furtherance or carrying out work-related duties.
- Violation of any of the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

All employees shall review and acknowledge this policy on an annual basis. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the agency's human resources office or DOHR's Office of General Counsel.

**Attachment – Employee Acknowledgement Form**

**Personal Use of Social Media**

**Employee Acknowledgement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that I have received a copy of the Social Media Policy. I understand that violation of this policy may subject me to discipline, up to and including termination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Human Resources Office Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* By acknowledging this policy via the Edison system, I agree that my acknowledgement is the equivalent to my handwritten signature.