

## CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SOCIAL NETWORKING GUIDELINE

**Purpose:** CDPH allows access to some social networking sites. These Guidelines provide the necessary parameters that employees must follow if they need to engage in the access to, or use of, social networking sites for Department business related purposes. For the purposes of this guideline, social networking includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, message boards, online social networks or communities (e.g., MySpace, Facebook), or any other form of online publishing or discussion.

**Background:** The popularity of social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and others has exploded in recent years. These sites are popular not only for personal purposes, but the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), as well as other government agencies and private organizations, have come to realize the benefit these media offer in communicating with their customers. While there are many positive aspects of using social networking sites, it is also important to understand the potential security and other risks in doing so, and to know what precautions you must take to protect the Department, yourself, and your personal or CDPH-related information.

**Role & Responsibility:** The following items discuss your general responsibilities and obligations. Failure to abide by these guidelines can result in an adverse employment action.

- Read, understand and follow the CDPH Internet/Electronic Email Policy, Health Administrative Manual (HAM), Section 6-1010.4
- Be aware that CDPH has systems in place that allow internet usage to be logged and tracked. The Department doesn't routinely monitor social networking sites, however, as with other electronic resources, CDPH systems administrators may perform activities necessary to ensure the integrity, functionality and security of the Department's electronic resources. Be aware also that other employers, organizations, and individuals do monitor and share information they find on social networking web sites. Posted information is public information.
- In response to concerns or complaints or information provided by individuals, Department administrators may look up profiles on social networking sites and may use the information in informal or formal proceedings.
- Misuse or abuse of internet access is a direct violation of the CDPH Internet/Electronic Email Policy, HAM Section 6-1010.4.
- Access to social networking sites is for business related purposes only. Employees are not permitted to access social networking sites to check or update personal social networking sites, or to view social networking sites of friends or acquaintances.
- Please refrain from clicking on advertisements that may be found on social networking sites. Many times these advertisements contain active content that may have malware embedded in them. By clicking on advertisements the potential exists that malware may be loaded on to your system that could cause a security incident.

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- Social networking sites that are acceptable to visit are those that are maintained by government agencies or private organizations that are used to communicate business related information that has a direct correlation to your specific job function.
- When using Department electronic resources to access on-line social networks, employees must act with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights, privileges, privacy, sensibilities, and property of others. Employees must abide by applicable laws, including copyright, trademark and fair use laws.
- Do not expose and/or share confidential or other CDPH proprietary information.
- If you are considering asking to have material posted, consider the image you want to portray to the public. Be mindful that what you post may be viewed by business partners, your peers, supervisors, community members, and may stay public for a long time.
- Remember, there may be consequences to what you post. Consider your content carefully. If you are about to post something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review these guidelines first. If you still are uncertain about whether to post the material, check with your manager/supervisor.
- Employees or groups within the Department are not permitted to present personal opinions in ways that imply endorsement by the CDPH. If posted material may reasonably be construed as implying the support, endorsement, or opposition of the CDPH with regard to any personal statements, including opinions or views on any issue, the material shall be accompanied by a disclaimer: an explicit statement that the employee/group is speaking for himself/herself and not as a representative of the CDPH or any of its offices or units. An example of a disclaimer is as follows:

The contents, including all opinions and views expressed or implied, in my profile [or on my page] are entirely personal and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of any other person or organization, including the California Department of Public Health. The California Department of Public Health has not reviewed or approved, and is not responsible for, the material contained in this profile [or on this page].

- The Department's name, telephone numbers, email addresses, and images are not to be posted on social network profiles for employees for personal purposes. However, an employee may use his or her Department title for identification purposes. If the use of the title might imply endorsement, support or opposition of the Department with regard to any personal statements, including opinions or views on any issue, an explicit disclaimer must appear proximate to the material. See disclaimer above.