SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

For Red Cross People

INTRODUCTION

Stronger communities make the world a better place. We know this, because we see it happen every day through the work of Red Cross People in Australia and around the world.

Australian Red Cross embraces the fact that today's communities exist not only in the physical world, but also online. We recognise the wide reach that communication in online communities can have - both positively and negatively. We encourage all staff, volunteers and members of Australian Red Cross ("Red Cross People") to use new and social media responsibly to communicate about topics within their areas of work. (As long as this doesn't interfere with their primary duties or the security of Red Cross IT systems.)

While social media communication on behalf of the organisation is the primary responsibility of the social media team, we recognise that other Red Cross People can also further the organisation's goals by using their social media networks.

As a Red Cross person you represent the organisation in your day to day activity – including your online activity. Social media is a great way to let people know about your involvement with Red Cross, and it's something that your networks would find interesting. So whether you work or volunteer in a particular service, are holding an event or fundraiser or have learnt about something new through your involvement with Red Cross, why not talk about it on social media and inspire and inform others?

These guidelines provide you with helpful, practical advice when using your personal social media accounts and also protect Australian Red Cross staff, volunteers and members.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Social Media Lead (socialmedia@redcross.org.au).

Who these guidelines are for

If you are using social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr or YouTube, if you have your own blog, or if you are posting comments on other people's blogs, then these guidelines are for you.

Why "personal" and "private" are not the same

While communication through social media networks is primarily a personal matter, this is not the same as it being private. In a lot of cases, written conversations inside these networks can be found through search
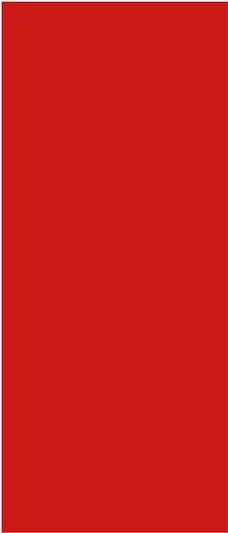
engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, there is a possibility that one of them will forward what you say and make it visible to a wider audience. As a result, personal conversation within social media networks should at all-times be considered public rather than private.

It is important to understand that the [Australian Red Cross Ethical framework](#) extends to social media. When posting or commenting on social media you must ensure that your behaviour is aligned to our values and principles. For example, if you post a racist comment on social media and it causes offense to others, the code of conduct would apply in the same way as if you had made the comment in a meeting.

GUIDELINES

These guidelines consist of two parts:

- Best practice, with recommendations by the Digital Engagement department.
- A summary of the rules and obligations that are already in place and how they apply to staff, member and volunteer use of social media.

Best practice

Be a good ambassador

While it is everyone's personal decision whether or not to use social media networks and tools, you should always be aware that your behaviour and opinions reflect on the organisation.

Get advice

If your program, department, membership group etc wants to use social media to promote Australian Red Cross activities or open a local Facebook page, please contact the Social Media Lead (socialmedia@redcross.org.au), who leads on social media activities for the organisation and can ensure consistency and help with best practice. See also the Local Facebook Page Guidelines.

Be passionate

Passion is contagious. Share the passion you feel for your work and talk about the successes you have been part of.

Think of ABC, your mother and your boss

Don't say anything online that you wouldn't be comfortable seeing quoted on the ABC, being asked about by your mother or having to justify to your boss.

Add value

Australian Red Cross believes that sharing information and experiences benefits the whole humanitarian community and ultimately the people we serve. Feel free to share and discuss topics in your field of expertise. If Red Cross People are perceived to be knowledgeable and helpful this will reflect positively on you and on the organisation.

Obviously, use common sense where information is concerned that is internal and/or confidential. If in doubt - ask the owner of the information you want to share. Refrain from commenting on the work of colleagues in this or other organisations that are outside your field of expertise.

Feel free to correct others but stick to the facts

Australian Red Cross is a complicated organisation and we work in complicated legal and operational contexts. People frequently misunderstand or choose to misunderstand us. If you come across a misrepresentation of the Movement, feel free to identify yourself and organisational affiliation and correct their mistake, but do so with respect and with facts.

If you don't feel comfortable doing it yourself, please contact the Social Media Lead (socialmedia@redcross.org.au).

In most cases people won't mind being corrected and they will frequently even distribute the correction themselves. However, if you get the feeling that someone deliberately misinterprets everything you say, just ignore them.

Be the first to admit a mistake

If you have made a mistake, be upfront about it. Admit and correct the mistake. If you correct an earlier post in a blog do so visibly, e.g. by using the strikethrough function and adding a paragraph that explains the update at the end or for social media by doing another update.

> **Example: "**Apologies, we've made a mistake in our last tweet. 5 of our colleagues lost their life in the explosion. More are missing.**"**

Use your best judgement

If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, let it sit for a few more hours or a day and think again whether this is what you want to say. If it still makes you feel uncomfortable and it is related to the Movement, ask a colleague or your manager for advice.

Protect your own privacy

A lot of websites allow you some form of control over who can see your material. Use these features.

> **Example:** On Facebook you can control your privacy settings under "Settings -> Privacy Settings -> Profile". We recommend that you set all of these settings except for "Profile" and "Basic info" to "Only friends".

Keep security in mind

Be particularly careful with what you are discussing online if you are in an operational context. Please make sure that you have read and follow your service's security requirements. If in doubt, talk to your manager/Red Cross contact.

Never post personal details such as the home addresses of yourself or colleagues. Bear in mind that personal details of Red Cross People working overseas can be very security sensitive in many operational areas – this includes their names and pictures. To guard against theft, do not post information about your travel dates.

Spread the word and connect with your colleagues

Talk about the achievements of your clients or colleagues (with their permission). Connect with them through social networks and spread their success stories. To get you started, we have included links to Australian Red Cross' most active social media profiles in the appendix.

Be polite

You might be in a bad mood, or someone might point out a typo or a mistake in a rude way, nevertheless you have to stay polite. It's best to take the high road and uphold our values.

Rules and obligations

Observe neutrality and comply with the Ethical Framework

It is important to understand that the Australian Red Cross Ethical framework extends to social media. When posting or commenting on social media you must ensure that your behaviour is aligned to our values and principles and so you must not engage publicly in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. This is especially true when you identify yourself as a Red Cross person on a social media platform. Please consult the Australian Red Cross Ethical framework for more details. In the context of social media, it is important to remember that the Ethical framework applies not only when you represent the organisation or during working hours but around the clock and even when you are on leave. For example, if you post a racist comment on social media and it causes offense to others, the Ethical framework would apply in the same way as if you had made the comment in a meeting.

Use a disclaimer

If you talk about Red Cross-related issues on any digital platform (blog, social media, etc.), add a disclaimer to each platform making clear that the views you express are yours alone. Be aware that this disclaimer doesn't free you from the obligations you have under the Ethical Framework or the Fundamental Principles.

> **Example: "**The postings on this site/platform are my own and don't necessarily represent positions, strategies or opinions of Australian Red Cross.**"**

Don't use the emblems or the Australian Red Cross logo

You cannot use the emblems or the Australian Red Cross logo or any photos containing the emblems or Australian Red Cross logo as any part of your blog or personal social media profile. If you have any question about this, please refer to the [Australian Red Cross Emblem and Logo Use Policy](#).

One small exception is made for a local Red Cross page created in relation to Australian Red Cross activities (i.e. services, programs, Uni Clubs, community centres, etc.). Please contact the Social Media Lead (socialmedia@redcross.org.au) and refer to the *Local Facebook Page Guidelines* prior to using the emblems or the Australian Red Cross logotype for a local Facebook page.

Confidentiality

Only disclose publicly available information on social media and do not use or disclose any confidential information that you have learnt through you association with Red Cross.

Keep your manager in the loop

If you are a Red Cross staff member or volunteer, inform your manager before publishing anything related to your function or assignment. This also applies to blogs and similar online publications. To avoid problems, discuss your work-related social media activities with your manager.

Observe Australian Red Cross IT security rules

If you're using Australian Red Cross hardware, don't download or install software that you find through social networks on your work computer. Please re-read the [Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy](#), if you are not familiar with it and pay special attention to the parts about prohibited activities and personal use.

Respect privacy

Respect people's right to privacy and don't take photos or videos without their written permission. Not only they will be in their right to take legal action but keep in mind that many people who have just been through a traumatic event may be in shock and might say "yes" to something they might later regret. Even, if you take photos or videos for personal use only, make sure that you respect the dignity of the people portrayed (see also: [Australian Red Cross Ethical framework](#)). If in doubt, don't post a photo or video. It is your job to protect vulnerable people. Focus on positive images so that you do not run the risk of exploiting someone at a vulnerable time.

Respect the rights of children and protect their privacy. Don't post anything about any minors that could lead to anyone identifying them by name or where they live. (see also: [Child Protection Policy](#))
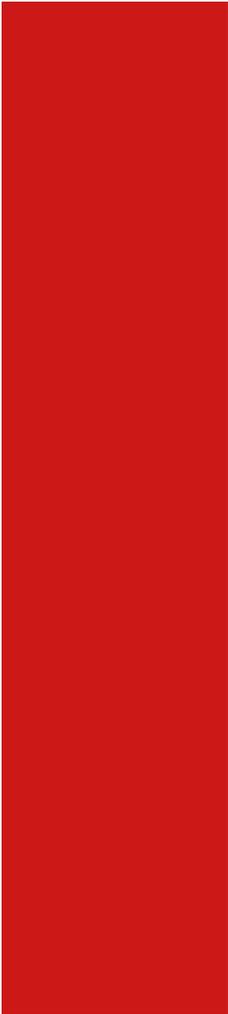
Quoting other news sources

Be careful when quoting other news sources that you are accurate and that you refer to the source of your information.

Be careful when quoting numbers of casualties. Red Cross is very careful about listing numbers of dead or wounded, as these can change and initial information may not be reliable. If you are writing about casualties, clearly reference the source, e.g. the police or the ministry of health. Numbers are very attractive for the media and if you don't reference the numbers correctly, a personal blog post could quickly turn into a headline that reads "Red Cross says 10,000 dead in Alphaland".

Copyright law

Ensure you comply with copyright law. For example you should not copy large chunks of text and you should use quotation marks and reference the source of any copied text. Be careful if you post any photos or videos that you have the copyright owner's permission to do so.

Don't break the law!

Ensure the comments you post do not break the law for example by condoning illegal activity or defaming someone's reputation.

Promoting products or services

You must not use your association with Red Cross to promote a product, a commercial enterprise or for commercial gain.

APPENDIX

Selection of Australian Red Cross profiles

If you want to connect with Australian Red Cross through your own social media profiles, please take a look at these:

Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/AustralianRedCross
https://www.facebook.com/AustralianRedCrossIHL
https://www.facebook.com/redcrossbloodau/

Twitter
https://twitter.com/RedCrossAU
https://twitter.com/redcrossbloodau

Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/redcrossau/
https://www.instagram.com/redcrossbloodau/

LinkedIn
https://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-red-cross/
https://www.linkedin.com/company/388451/

Australian Red Cross

For more information, please contact:

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E-mail: socialmedia@redcross.org.au
Web site: http://www.redcross.org.au

Credit – These guidelines are built on similar documents produced by a wide range of organisations. We benefitted particularly from the efforts of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, British Red Cross, IBM, Intel and Kivi Leroux Miller.