

Social Media and What to Expect from a Registered HRP Member, Student and Firm: A Guide for the Public

People use social media for numerous purposes such as to express their opinions or creativity, to show their affiliation for a sports team, to access news, to communicate with an audience or their very own followers or, to support their favourite celebrity.

Along with the many benefits of social media come a host of risks if users, including Human Resources (HR) professionals are not mindful of how they engage with others across various platforms. HRP created a practice guideline that registered HRP members, students and firms are expected to be aware of, outlining the risks associated with social media use. Below you will find FAQs to answer important questions you may have about HRP's guidance to registered HRP members, students and firms regarding social media use on public and personal platforms.

DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this resource is in respect of the law of the Province of Ontario and is intended for general information only. This resource is not provided for the purpose of providing legal advice or a complete statement of the law on the particular topics. Every situation is unique and involves specific legal issues. Please seek legal advice, as applicable, if needed on the topic of social media use in the workplace. Further, this resource is to be read in conjunction with the applicable employment standards, occupational health and safety, and human rights legislation and does not supersede or replace the legal requirements set out in the legislation.

What are the expectations of registered HRP professionals, students and firms related to social media use?

All registered HRP professionals, students and firms must comply with HRP's [Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct](#), which includes exhibiting **professionalism** and **trustworthiness** by:

- Demonstrating good judgement before sharing or re-sharing content on social media.
- Maintaining professional boundaries where professionals should explicitly distinguish professional content from personal content.
- Considering how their online activities reflect on their professionalism and on the human resources profession, as well as their employer(s) they work for.

- When/if providing or sharing Human Resources-related advice/information, making sure it is accurate, factual and evidence-based.
- Respecting the privacy of clients and colleagues.
- Refraining from discussing or sharing information about an HRPAs complaint and/or discipline matter.
- Not making, posting, or sharing inappropriate, harassing, malicious, misleading, inflammatory, violent, obscene and/or discriminatory remarks, threats or images.
- Considering how content and remarks posted on social media might impact others.
- Following their own employer’s social media policies and codes of conduct– if there isn’t one, always exercise good judgment and follow these guidelines.
- Following user agreements, confidentiality and privacy policies, settings, and rules for the social media services used.

HRPA members, students and firms must also always comply with the law by following and abiding by all legislation relevant to social media, including privacy legislation and regulations, occupational health and safety legislation, human rights legislation and laws related to cyber-bullying, criminal social media use, defamation, copyright, and plagiarism.

In addition to the [Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct](#), HRPA’s [Practice Guideline on Social Media Use](#) is to be followed by HRPAs members, student and firms, where applicable to their roles. This Practice Guideline contains guidance about:

- Recognizing the risks of social media use (and misuse) and what to avoid.
- Being aware of ways to maintain professionalism and professional boundaries when online.
- Recognizing the importance of maintaining confidentiality and privacy when using social media.
- Knowing the legal and regulatory obligations of social media use.
- Referring to a list of questions before making, sharing, commenting on, or “liking” social media posts to prevent risk of harm to the public and to the profession.

How can I submit a complaint if a registered HRPAs member, student or firm is acting unethically and/or unfairly?

We understand that potential professional misconduct by an HR professional can be extremely challenging. If you believe that an HR professional has acted unethical or unprofessional, then we would strongly encourage you to consider filing a complaint with HRPAs.

First, check the [public register](#) to confirm the HR professional is registered with HRP. Unfortunately, HRP can only accept and investigate complaints against a registered member, student or firm.

Second, review the [Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct](#) and note any sections that you believe may have been breached by the registered HR professional's actions.

Third, complete the professional complaints form to share your experience – what happened, when did it happen, who may have witnessed the situation and what supplementary documents do you have that may support your statements. You can find a copy of the professional complaints [form](#) here. Once you've written out your experience, link your allegations and any supporting documents or witness statements to the sections of the Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct you had previously identified as having been breached.

Finally, submit your assembled complaints package to registrar@hrpa.ca.